



Volunteers keep railroad history alive in Abilene

By Donna Sullivan,
Editor

For young and old alike, there exists a fascination with trains and the rails they travel. In 1993 the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association was formed, and history came back to life as engines that once sat in a park in Abilene were restored and put into service. Countless hours by volunteers keep the excursion train traveling the ten-and-a-half mile round trip through the Smoky Hill River Valley to the little town of Enterprise and back. A 1902 wooden KATY covered passenger car that has been converted to a dining car, two covered gondola cars and caboose are usually pulled by a 1945 Alco S-1 with a 660-horsepower diesel electric engine. But about seventeen years ago they acquired and restored an ATSF 4-6-2 "Pacific" #3415 steam locomotive that roars down the tracks on special weekends like Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day, as well as during the Abilene Historical Society Heritage Days. Restoring the steam engine took four years to complete.

The past couple of years have presented challenges for the dedicated volunteers that keep the railroad operational. Last year flooding took out part of their tracks, which caused about a six-week suspension of their activities while they were repaired. This year the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing has forced the cancellation of their runs so far this season, including their Easter Bunny Train. But the volunteers are still hard at work, ensuring that when they are able to resume, they'll be ready.

Steve Schwarting, a retired family practice physician in Abilene, is the current president of the board of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association. He said he became interested in the railroad when Joe Minick, one of the founders, spoke at a Rotary Club meeting. "I went to see him in August and as soon as I started in December, I fell in love with it," Schwarting says he works on railroad projects five days a week. "It's kind of my full-time retirement," he laughed. "There's always stuff we can do."

Abilene auctioneer Randy Reynolds is another dedicated volun-



The steam engine recently underwent a rigorous inspection to be ready when the quarantine brought on by the coronavirus is lifted and it can begin running the rails again.

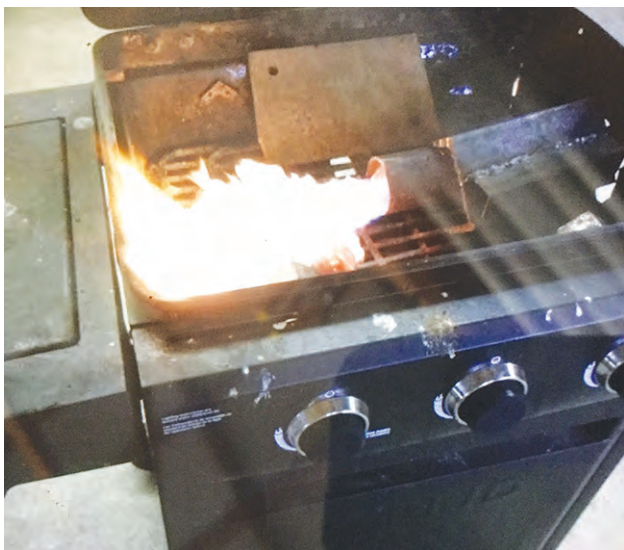
Photos by Randy Reynolds

teer who has more time to work on the railroad since stay-at-home orders forced the cancellation of his auctions. He works from about 9 till 4 or 4:30 each day alongside other volunteers. A recent project has been straightening railroad spikes. He uses a weed burner on top of his barbecue grill to get the spikes red hot, then straightens them.

While many of the volunteers are local, there are also those that come from Hutchinson, Wichita, Topeka, Newton, Derby

and other areas. They are from a wide variety of vocations, including a retired airline pilot who told Schwarting it was easier for him to fly a big jet than to operate the steam engine.

The engineers, conductors and brakemen are required to take an eight-hour course each year, be tested and earn certification. The pandemic forced the cancellation of the March and April training sessions, but Schwarting hopes they will be able to hold training soon. He



A weed burner on a barbecue grill became a forge for Randy Reynolds to straighten railroad spikes.



Volunteers work five days a week and log many hours keeping up the tracks and equipment.



A&SVRA president Steve Schwarting works inside the firebox of the steam engine in preparation for its inspection.



Using his grandfather's old anvil and a large hammer, Reynolds estimates he has straightened over 300 spikes. Everything is recycled and nothing goes to waste on the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad.

Courtesy photo

said the fellowship with the crew is a special part of the experience. "For most of us, the best part of our day is when we eat lunch together before we go on a run," he said. "We enjoy our passengers, too, but what keeps us coming back is the camaraderie of the crew." Some of the original volunteers from 1994 continue to put in hours.

The month of May is usually filled with school groups riding the train, but that hasn't been the case this year. In June they generally take two runs

a day Thursday through Sunday, but whether they will be able to do that this year is still unknown. In 2019 they had 3689 riders from 82 Kansas counties, 45 states and ten foreign countries. "We get a significant number of people from out of state," Schwarting reflected. "I'm in awe of how far people will come." He said that sometimes on weekdays, if there are no riders, the volunteers find other things to work on. And if there are just a couple of riders for an excursion, they will unhook the other

cars and let them ride in the engine.

Schwarting and the rest of the crew at the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad Association hope that 2020 is not a year the engines sit idle and the song of the rails is silent. They hope to welcome riders once again this summer, even if social distancing protocols cause it to look a little different than usual. To find out if the trains are running, visit them online at <http://www.asvrr.org> or phone (785) 263-1077.



The Eternal Hope of Farmers

By Jackie Mundt, Pratt County farmer and rancher

When I left my corporate job and moved to rural Kansas, I was making decisions for the good of my future family. Sometimes those decisions are at odds with my self-desires. We don't have a fancy house, high-speed internet or many of the creature comforts one finds in bigger cities.

Through the recent weeks of turmoil, my sense of irony keeps touting the rewards of this country life. I never feel cooped up because I can walk for a mile in any direction and not be in danger of encountering neighbors. Eating fewer meals out of the house has inspired me to put a dent in my "war chest" (freezer) of home-raised beef. My years of dealing with less-than-ideal internet has given me a sense of Zen when in-

creased traffic causes frustrating hang-ups for everyone else working from home too.

Honestly, the thing I am most grateful for in this time of crisis is the sense of solid, constant purpose our farm-centered life. I have friends who are climbing the walls because they feel lost and purposeless with their worlds on hold. Others are completely overwhelmed shouldering new burdens and doing their best to make it through this storm. In perspective of all that is happening in the world, farmers' lives remain largely the same.

Spring is a busy time on the farm. We are planting crops, spraying fields, working cattle and other livestock, prepping equipment for summer harvest or irrigation and ramping up for the "busy season." Even though much of the rest of the world is on hold,

farms are the original essential industry: feeding the world.

Recently, I was asked to provide some insight into how farmers would make the decision on whether to plant crops this year. It was a logical question to a non-farmer, but I was flummoxed. I had never really thought of it as a choice before.

Farmers are smart, logical people. Every day they use their knowledge of many subjects like plant physiology, animal nutrition, accounting and economics to name a few to maximize their potential yields and hedge against current market conditions. The one place farmers may not use logic is in career choice.

The decision to farm often comes back to the solid, constant purpose of feeding others. A purpose that is sweetened by everyday moments validating the choice. A feeling of wonder in seeing a newborn calf on shaky legs and seeking out its mother to nurse. A silent cheer of excitement for newly planted crops as they break through the ground.

Laughter at the sight of calves playing "reindeer games." The sigh of relief when raindrops finally fall after days of having "the feeling in your bones." The cordial sight of fields of wheat waving with all their might. The sense of purpose that comes from every truck leaving your farm going off to feed the world.

So even in uncertain times, farmers forget logic and plant a crop or buy cattle and they tell themselves prices will go up, the weather will cooperate, everything will work out. Farmers have an almost eternal sense of hope that the future will be better.

During this unprecedented time of challenge, I encourage everyone to think like a farmer. Here's to hoping prices will go up, the weather will cooperate and everything will work out.

"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

Prairie Ponderings

By Donna Sullivan

The coronavirus and subsequent social distancing mandate and stay-at-home orders have allowed my husband to engage in one of his favorite activities – shopping the bulk aisle. Few things give him as much pleasure as buying the necessities of life in the largest packages available. I could be wrong, but there's a little part of me that suspects that's why he was willing to have a fairly large family. More kids... more reason to buy ridiculously large containers of various and sundry items. I also sometimes wonder if living next to a military installation somehow affected, even warped, his thinking. Like someday we could

be unexpectedly called upon to feed a platoon or two, so by golly, we'd better be prepared.

Now that there are only two of us at home, and my work schedule severely curtailed my desire to do much cooking, there was little need for bulk purchases. Oh, occasionally he still succumbed to the temptation anyway, like the ten-pound bag of pancake mix he dragged home – and I mean that literally – about six months ago. It was guaranteed to make 260 pancakes. 260 pancakes for two people, one of whom (me) eats very few pancakes.

Then the pandemic struck and suddenly I was cooking again. Three meals a day. Every day. The governor told us all to stay home, to go out only for the necessities, and then as seldom as possible. It was the perfect storm – or as my husband saw it, a bulk buyers paradise. He was given license – by the governor herself – to purchase the biggest quantities of food he could find. And there wasn't a darned thing I could say about it and still consider myself a citizen in good standing of the great state of Kansas.

My pantry shelves are groaning under the weight of an industrial-sized bottle of BBQ sauce and his other bulk purchases, and I'll never live long enough to need all at one time the gallon can of pinto beans that caught his eye. The oversized can of coffee though, I'll make light work of that one.

The stay-at-home order will hopefully be expired by the time you read this. Don't expect to see me in a grocery store any time soon, though. My bulk-buying husband has made sure of that.

Kansas Farm Bureau endorses Marshall for U.S. Senate

The farmers and ranchers of the state's leading agriculture advocacy organization has announced their endorsement of Rep. Roger Marshall, M.D., for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by the retirement of Sen. Pat Roberts.

The formal endorsement came from Kansas Farm Bureau's (KFB) Political Action Committee, Voters Organized To Elect Farm Bureau Friends (VOTE FBF), comprised of active farmer/rancher members elected by their peers from each of

KFB's ten geographic districts.

The KFB endorsement process began earlier this year with individual recommendations coming from the 105 autonomous County Farm Bureau organizations, which were overwhelming in their recommendation of Marshall.

"We've heard loud and clear from our members that Rep. Marshall is the best candidate for the U.S. Senate," says Richard Felts, a Montgomery County farmer who serves as president of Kansas Farm

Bureau. "Rep. Marshall has shown his ability to be a leader for farmers and ranchers as a member of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, and I know he will continue to be a leading voice in shaping federal policy for agriculture and rural America."

Kansas Farm Bureau also calls on other GOP U.S. Senate candidates to unite behind Marshall as the consensus candidate.

"It's clear Roger Marshall has the momentum, both in grassroots support throughout Kansas and

in his ability to generate the resources needed to mount a successful campaign," Felts adds. "In every political campaign, there comes a time when hard, realistic decisions must be made, and we believe that time is now."

Given the unique circumstances that will likely surround this year's elections, Kansas Farm Bureau is also utilizing its grassroots network to en-

courage its members – and all Kansans – to strongly consider advance balloting.

Any registered voter can vote by mail prior to Election day. To vote by mail, voters are encouraged to contact their county election officer and request an advance, mail-in ballot application.

To learn more about VOTE FBF, visit www.kfb.org/votefbf.



It is May already. That is funny because I could swear we have not had April yet. If it were not for my smart phone, I really would have no idea what day of the week it is, let alone what month of the year we are in. Each day kind of melts into the other one, especially this week because we sheared ewes on Sunday and got out of our routine of watching church and eating a Sunday dinner. We try to keep a routine, I am fairly sure of the days of the week because Jennifer still goes into work Monday through Friday but when my routine is messed up, I really have no idea what day of the week it is and I am not sure it really matters.

If losing Sunday was not enough this week, Jennifer is taking two days off to help get the cows out on grass so I will be even more confused than normal. If I did not say I was excited about getting the cows worked and turned out I would be lying. I am also just as sure that the cows are more excited than I am. Each afternoon they are lined up along the electric fences just as close to touching it as they can be without touching it. When they see me, I hear just how displeased with their situation that they are.

Each time I leave the house my route is dictated by the need to drive by each of the places I winter cows so I can check and make sure they are in. I hold my breath until I see them lined up along the fence and on the right side of it. Each time the phone rings I get a nervous twitch and the sound of a cow bawling in the distance gets my blood pressure up. It is time for us to spend some quality time apart.

If all goes right (and I probably just jinxed myself) they will be all out on grass by Sunday. Chores Sunday will be gloriously quick, it is supposed to rain, and I have the whole day planned out. Church on the internet, a big Sunday dinner and a little time on the couch watching John Wayne movies. By the way, John Wayne movies are the perfect thing to watch and take a nap to. I have seen most of them a dozen times so no matter when I fall asleep or wake up, I will not miss a

beat. As you can tell I have not thought about this day at all.

Yes, the day the cows go out on grass is better than Christmas, Thanksgiving and my birthday all rolled into one. It is a huge relief to not have to worry about if the cows are in and if they need to be fed. My evenings are free and night chores take fifteen minutes tops. Life is good and the grass is green, it gives me hope for us moving forward, especially this year. There is not much that is normal this year and I guess getting the cows out on summer pasture and the corn in the ground is a sign that time moves on and some things are the way they should be.

I have probably jinxed myself, first by thinking those thoughts and, most importantly, sharing them with you. That means I will probably be up to my knees in mud either chasing cows back in or feeding them on Sunday or most likely both. I should have been a weatherman because nothing ever goes like I predict it will. The upside to that scenario this year is that I have the hay to feed them another few days or weeks, so I am not as desperate as I was last year.

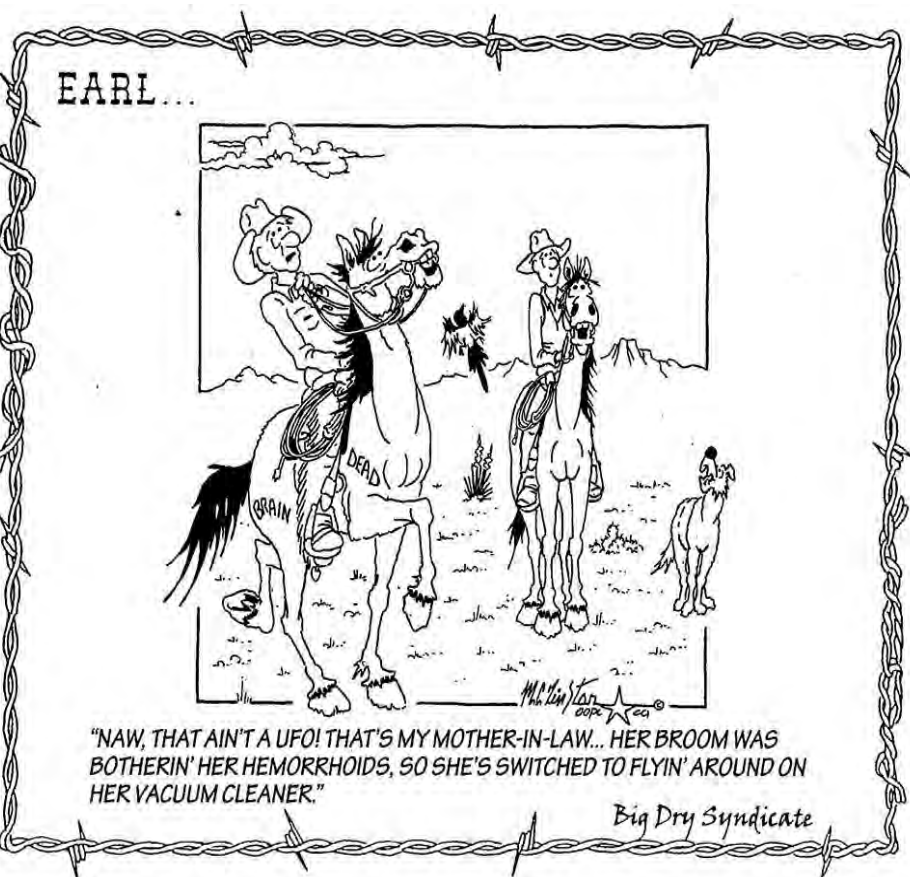
As I sit here on the eve of cow working time, I am giddy with anticipation and nervous with the sense of what might go wrong. I am sure the story will be a good one and there will be many calamities. However, in the end the cows will end up on pasture because like my old Dad often tells me, there has never been a year we did not get them out eventually. This all proves that there is a time and a season for everything and no matter what time moves on.

The funny thing about those of us with cattle is that by the time this fall rolls around we will be anxious to bring them home where we can keep a closer eye on them. I have heard many times that the only thing more hardheaded and dumber than a cow is the person that owns them. So here is to green grass, freedom and fewer chores to do, of course that is if everything goes right. If not, you will hear about it next week.

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K-State begins offering COVID-19 testing for university students, employees

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, Kansas State University is helping combat the virus by developing important diagnostic tests and offering testing services for the university community.

The university is now able to test K-State students, faculty and staff who need testing either because they are ill and have COVID-19 symptoms or because they have been exposed to someone with the virus. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has asked K-State to ramp up human testing and researchers are increasing their testing capacity.

The testing is a partnership that involves more than 20 faculty and staff from the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, the Biosecurity Research Institute in Pat Roberts Hall, Lafene Health Center, the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases. The collaborative team worked tirelessly through setbacks to make testing at

K-State a possibility.

"This demonstrates how critical investments in research can serve the greater community — that's our land-grant mission," said Peter K. Dorhout, K-State vice president for research. "The team was able to mobilize and stand up a first-rate facility to ease pressures on the health care community and provide test analyses because they are part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network that has trained and prepared to respond to animal and zoonotic disease outbreaks."

Students, faculty and staff can be tested at Lafene Health Center, and then testing samples are sent to the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, or KSVDL, for analysis. The laboratory has moved personnel, molecular equipment and computers into the Biosecurity Research Institute, or BRI, to conduct the analysis.

"Because of planning and preparation with the BRI over the last few years concerning foreign animal

disease, as part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, KSVDL was able to respond quickly to the request to assist with human pandemic testing," said Jamie Henningson, KSVDL director.

For now, the testing is on a case-by-case basis and is only available for K-State students, faculty and staff. K-Staters should call their primary physician or Lafene Health Center at 785-532-6544 before they visit the health center. After a phone discussion, if testing is warranted, Lafene Health Center is able to see the patients.

The testing schedule is set up for 12 hours per day, which will allow the laboratory to perform about 270 tests each day. The university currently is not able to do wide-scale testing, called surveillance testing, but researchers are working through logistics to make the testing available to a wider community beyond K-State students, faculty and staff.

Having the testing capability at K-State is a step in the right direction, said Kyle Goerl, medical

director for Lafene Health Center.

"Fortunately, with testing now being possible in town, the turnaround time is also much faster, which allows us to make more timely decisions for patient care," Goerl said. "Testing is important, but it is only one part of a comprehensive plan for any patient. Providers still need to consider the whole picture when making decisions about treatment for a patient."

The process of bringing testing to K-State involved many collaborators. Lafene Health Center, the Biosecurity Research Institute and the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory reached out to other diagnostic laboratories to see how other people were handling the testing process.

The Biosecurity Research Institute, or BRI, lab is an advantage because it already has the high-security laboratories, equipment and expertise required for COVID-19 testing. The BRI is a bio-safety level-3 facility that houses important multidisciplinary research programs on pathogens that affect animals, plants and insects as well as food safety and security. The BRI is one of the few labs of its kind in the nation.

The K-State collaborators worked to ensure

regulation and adequate oversight for the COVID-19 testing. All laboratory staff have been trained on the new test and all laboratory space and procedures follow Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments, or CLIA, requirements. The KSVDL rabies laboratory is CLIA certified, which involves federal regulatory standards required for all labs performing human testing. Laboratory staff have completed HIPAA training, too.

KSVDL also has developed a faster COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, test, which detects the presence of an antigen earlier to determine if a person has the virus. Researchers have

submitted an Emergency Use Authorization for Food and Drug Administration approval. The approval makes diagnostic tools available during public health emergencies. If the laboratory receives FDA approval, it would allow the laboratory to ramp up testing even further.

"I am extremely proud of the work it took to bring this into reality," Goerl said. "We have amazing, caring people here at K-State and this would not be possible without them. There were multiple times we could have simply given up due to one problem or another, but despite all the setbacks, we found a way forward."

USDA provides additional details on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), in conjunction with the Food and Nutrition Service and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, has published Frequently Asked Questions for nonprofit organizations seeking to receive food through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Read more about the Farmers to Families Food Box Program FAQs at the AMS website.

On April 17, 2020, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. As part of this announcement Perdue also created the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Through this program USDA will partner with regional and local distributors, whose

workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of restaurants, hotels and other food service entities, to purchase up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products. The program will begin with the procurement of an estimated \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products and \$100 million per month in meat products. Participating distributors and wholesal-

ers will then package a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy and meat products for delivery to food banks, community and faith-based organizations and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

Additional information on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program is available on the AMS website. Additional questions may be submitted to USDAFoodBoxDistributionProgram@usda.gov.

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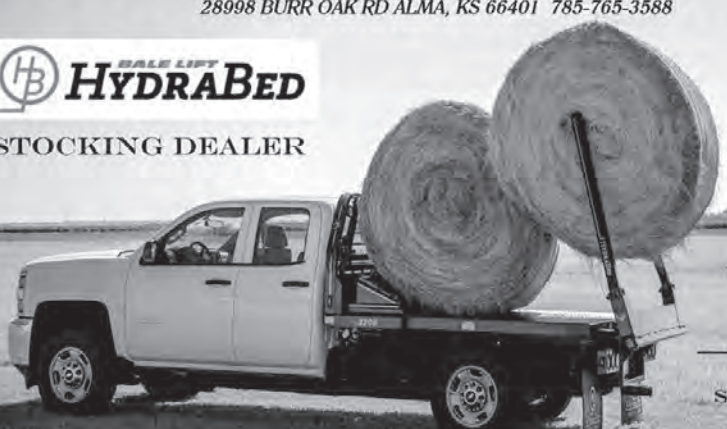
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Filling:
21-oz. can cherry pie filling
15-ounce can sour cherries, drained
1 teaspoon almond extract
Topping:
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 heaping teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup butter or margarine, softened
Start by making your favorite unbaked pie shell. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Mix all cherries and almond extract together and pour into unbaked pie shell. Mix dry topping ingredients together and add softened butter to make moist topping and spread it over pie. Bake about 40 minutes or until cherries bubble or topping starts to turn browner.

Linda Kepka, Dorrance: OREO DESSERT
16-ounce package of Oreos
8 ounces cream cheese
1 stick butter
1 cup powdered sugar
16 ounces Cool Whip
1 large box of instant vanilla pudding
3 cups milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
Candy (optional)
Crush the Oreos and put 3/4 of the crumbs in the bottom of a 9-by-12-inch pan. Reserve the remaining crumbs for the topping. Cream together the cream cheese and butter; add the powdered sugar and mix by hand. Add Cool Whip and mix again. In a separate bowl use a whisk to mix the pudding, milk and vanilla; fold this mixture into the Cool Whip mixture. Put this combined mixture on top of the cookie crumbs in the pan then add the remaining crumbs on top. You can add any type of candy on top of dessert for special occasions.

Rose Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma: FROZEN STRAWBERRY PIE
8-ounce package cream cheese
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 cups chopped fresh strawberries
12-ounce carton Cool Whip, thawed
1/2 cup chopped pecans
2 graham cracker crumb crusts
In a large bowl beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Stir in strawberries. Fold in Cool Whip and pecans. Pour into crusts. Cover and freeze the pies 3-4 hours or until firm. Remove pies from freezer 15-20 minutes before serving.

Darlene Thomas, Delphos: LAZY DAY PEACH COBBLER
3/4 stick butter
1 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk
1 large can peach slices, drained (I also use fresh peaches, drained 1 hour before putting in cobbler)
1/2 cup sugar
2 teaspoons cinnamon
Place butter in an 8-by-10-inch pan and melt. Beat flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and milk all together and pour over the butter in pan. Place peaches over batter. Sprinkle 1/2 cup sugar and 2 teaspoons cinnamon (mixed together) over all and bake 35 to 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve as is or put a dip of vanilla ice cream over the top of each serving.

Kellee George, Shawnee: FROSTED CAKE BROWNIES
1 package fudge brownie mix for 9-by-13-inch pan size
1 cup sour cream
1 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 can chocolate frosting
Prepare brownie mix according package directions. Fold in the sour cream, chocolate chips and walnuts into batter. Pour into a greased 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool completely on a wire rack. Frost and cut into bars.

Gin Fox, Holton: BEER CHEESE SOUP
3/4 cup finely chopped carrots
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup margarine or butter
1 cup biscuit baking mix
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
4 to 8 ounces beer *(1/3 cup) your choice of amount
2 cups half & half
(3) 10 3/4-ounce cans of chicken broth
2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
Cook carrots, onion and celery in margarine in a 4-quart Dutch oven until celery and onions are transparent. Stir in baking mix, paprika, pepper and the peppers. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in broth. Heat to boiling over medium heat stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Reduce heat and stir in half & half and beer and cheese. Heat until cheese is melted.



I have always been a creature of habit and I have always loved knowing what is coming next. I thrive off my normal and consistency. Monday evenings are for dinner with friends. Tuesday nights are movie night with my grandma at AMC. Saturday and Sunday mornings are for walks with Lucy, my dad's German Shorthair Pointer. Sunday afternoons are for my nieces and Sunday evenings are for a big family dinner. Most nights in between are for kickboxing and whatever else I muster up the bravado to do. Late nights are reserved for unwinding and the happiness that is baking.

I have never considered myself much of a social butterfly, but I am quickly realizing that during these crazy times I am missing not only my normal routine, but I am also missing people in general. I am officially to the point where those morning walks now quite possibly include some longer than necessary eye contact, just hoping someone will reply with a "Hello," back to my greeting and if for some reason someone wants to make random chit-chat about how cute Lucy is, I am all for it.

I've been one of the lucky people who has worked throughout this whole pandemic, but beyond that my social interactions have been restricted completely to family, and while I love them dearly I can't help but to be anxious to get back to having my normal and some of my favorite other people back in my life.

Technology is great, but it is just not the same as the face to face, person to person interactions. I am ready for those Monday night dinners and them convincing me that we need ice cream afterwards. Tuesday night movies with grandma and the friendly banter with the movie theater employees sounds delightful. I miss those twenty-minute drives back and forth to Manhattan where Grandma and I can just chat about literally anything and everything.

I cannot even begin to tell you how excited I am to get back to the nightly workouts and the gym family that has become such a huge part of my normal. Morning walks where a smile and nod will officially suffice again. The Sunday afternoon trips with my brother and nieces to McAlister's, Dairy Queen and HyVee while watching people smile and laugh as we chase the two cutest little girls in the world around; I cannot wait. Sunday night dinners where anyone and everyone can join again; it is one of my favorite parts of the week and it is just not the same right now.

The ability to possibly find Mr. Right; he has got to be out there somewhere, or at least what my nieces keep telling me, but I cannot find him trapped away from the world. Random trips to meet my best friend for dinner when the world all seems like too much. Those spontaneous trips to Target or any store for that matter, just to browse, and getting annoyed after being asked for the millionth time if I am "finding everything okay?" Or all those travel plans that were canceled in March, the trip to D.C., the trip to Florida, a road trip around Kansas chasing waterfalls, I am ready for it all.

Although I am fully aware that my normal will probably be a little different than I ever thought possible, I am excited for it, whenever it decides to join us, and however it decides to join us. In the meantime, I will stick with the normal that I currently have left and attempt to bake all of my stresses away.

Michele grew up in Junction City and graduated from Kansas State University. She worked in the restaurant management field for six years before deciding to switch careers and now works as an office manager for a company that manufactures oilfield products. Her passion for blogging and food can be followed on Instagram: boobsbrainsandbaking

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Precautions related to coronavirus have caused unexpected disruption in everyday life, but the Grass and Grain staff has made plans which will allow us to continue to produce the newspaper each week in the event an outbreak should occur locally.

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Kansas Profile – Now That’s Rural: Haley Stratmeier, Tonja’s Toffee

**By Ron Wilson,
Director of the
Huck Boyd National
Institute for Rural
Development at Kansas
State University.**

“That tastes so good, you should sell it!” Perhaps you’ve heard that phrase when someone shares a delicious treat. Today we’ll learn about a family which took that statement seriously, and their product became the basis of a remarkable business. Recently we met Phyllis Cheney, whose flower shop in Chapman sells various products including Tonja’s Toffee. The toffee is delicious, but the back-story is bittersweet. It involves a remarkable product made by a remarkable woman who battled cancer for many years. Now her family is continuing her legacy.

Tonja, the founder of this business, grew up in Scott County. She met Alan Williams at a church barbecue and the two married. She became a farm wife and teacher, raising four children.

As a little girl, Tonja had enjoyed making toffee with her mother Carrie Marion. Tonja continued making toffee as she grew older and tweaked the family recipe to make it her own.

After Tonja married and became a teacher, she would bring her homemade toffee in to school during the holidays. Her friends raved about it. “That tastes so good, you should sell it,” they would say. Tonja would modestly decline.

Then two things happened. First, her son needed to raise money for a mission trip to Ukraine, so they decided to sell her toffee as a fundraiser for the project. Secondly, Tonja was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and she knew she wanted to move forward with this project while she could.

The toffee sales for

the mission trip were a rousing success, and the money was raised in a matter of weeks. It was also a market test which demonstrated that there was a demand for the product.

“We were bombarded with orders,” said Haley, Tonja’s youngest daughter. “The business took off after that.” It was named Tonja’s Toffee. Haley remembers one craft show in particular where they sold 200 pounds of toffee in a single day.

“Mom was an excellent baker and cook,” Haley said. “She was creative and professional and very particular about how the toffee was made.” Those high standards of excellence led to good results as the business grew.

Tonja’s Toffee joined the From the Land of Kansas program offered by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. “The From the Land of Kansas program has been a huge help,” Haley said. “They’ve helped with tools for marketing, packaging, labels and finding suppliers.” Tonja’s Toffee was among the products promoted by the From the Land of Kansas program at national fancy food shows.

Daughter Haley and some neighbor girls would pitch in to help make the toffee whenever they could. Haley got married in 2015 and is now raising two children of her own. Meanwhile, Tonja was operating the business while continuing her treatment for cancer. On November 24, 2017, eight years after the original diagnosis, Tonja passed away. The family decided to close the business.

Then Tonja’s parents retired in Scott City and found they could convert one room in their house into a commercial kitchen. Haley’s husband took a job at a local feed yard and they moved back to



the home place where Tonja’s Toffee had begun. The farmhouse is in western Scott County near the tiny, unincorporated rural community of Modoc.

“There’s probably less than 20 people in Modoc,” Haley said. Now, that’s rural.

From these roots, Haley Stratmeier and her grandmother Carrie Marion, Tonja’s mom, have reopened Tonja’s Toffee. The company offers almond toffee with the choice of four toppings: milk, dark, or white chocolate, or butterscotch, as well as offering peanut brittle. The product is not just for Christmas. People order the products year-round as customer appreciation gifts or for special occasions.

“We’ve sold toffee from New Jersey to California,” Haley said. “People have been so great.”

For more information, go to www.tonjastoffee.com.

“That tastes so good, you should sell it!” Perhaps that phrase helped launch this business. We commend Haley Stratmeier, Carrie Marion, and the late Tonja Williams for making a difference by building a business from a family product. It tastes so good, I’m glad they’re selling it.

Audio and text files of Kansas Profiles are available at <http://www.kansasprofile.com>. For more information about the Huck Boyd Institute, interested persons can visit <http://www.huckboydinstitute.org>



By Ashleigh Krispense

This is a fun little recipe that is easy enough to make, even the kids can get involved! Serve as an afternoon snack or appetizer.

Quick & Easy Pizza-Stuffed Crescent Rolls

1 tube crescent roll dough (8 rolls)
4 cheese sticks (Colby or Mozzarella)
Marinara sauce
Several slices of pepperoni
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 egg

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and grease a baking sheet.



Beat the egg in a small bowl and then stir in the spices.



On a clean surface, roll out each crescent roll and spread over it a spoonful of marinara sauce. Top with two or three pepperonis and a piece of cheese.



Roll up like a regular crescent roll and use a pastry brush to coat each roll with the egg mixture.



Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Let sit for a couple of minutes and serve with warm marinara sauce! Enjoy!

Ashleigh is a freelance writer and the gal behind the website, *Prairie Gal Cookin'* (www.prairiegalcookin.com), where she shares step-by-step recipes and stories from the farm in Kansas. Follow PGC online or like it on Facebook for more recipes and ramblings!

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THE WAY WEST

By Jim Gray

The Logical Choice

The townsite of Fargo Springs was surveyed along the north bank of the Cimarron River in southwest Kansas on May 20, 1885. The location today is near the Highway 83 bridge over the Cimarron, approximately sixteen miles north of Liberal. The founders had every reason to believe that Fargo Springs, the first town established in unorganized Seward County, would become “The Metropolis of the Southwest.”

The town’s only rival was the much smaller settlement of Springfield established on a plateau less than three miles north. Although Springfield had the advantage of elevation, a low ridge of sand hills blocked the view between the two towns. Springfield was chartered September 18, 1885, but was not surveyed until the spring of 1886. The new townsite received a great boost when the town of Carthage, twenty-five miles northeast of Springfield, lost its bid to become the county seat of Meade County. On that loss Carthage fragmented as businessmen moved to Meade and nearby Mertilla. Much to the dismay of the boosters of Fargo Springs, some Carthage refugees chose to cast their lot with Springfield.

Kansas cattle on feed down 4 percent

Kansas feedlots, with capacities of 1,000 or more head, contained 2.29 million cattle on feed on April 1, according to the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. This inventory was down 4 percent from last year.

Placements during March totaled 345,000 head, down 27 percent from 2019.

Fed cattle marketings for the month of March

A required census was begun in March of 1886 as a prerequisite to the official organization of Seward County, just as Springfield was magically rising from its perch upon the prairie plateau. Fargo Springs was the logical choice for the county seat, but the good citizens of Springfield immediately began promoting to claim the seat of government in their new town. The transferred Carthage residents may have lost the fight in Meade County, but the experience gave them incentive to “boom” for Springfield.

Abe K. Stoufer, editor of the *Fargo Springs News*, confidently pointed to the advantages of his fair city in his May 6, 1886 edition. “Fargo Springs has a dozen excellent wells, at an average depth of 40 feet, with an abundance of clear, pure water. Springfield has but one well, at a depth of over 200 feet, and water so difficult to obtain that many of her citizens have to come to Fargo Springs for the water they use. And yet they have the supreme gall to ask that the county seat be located there.” He continued by reminding the farmers that would be doing business in the county seat. He noted that Fargo Springs

totaled 425,000 head, up 13 percent from last year. Other disappearance during March totaled 10,000 head, down 5,000 head from last year.

Access the national publication for this release at: <https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/m326m174z>.

Find agricultural statistics for your county, state, and the nation at www.nass.usda.gov

was situated “nearly in the geographical center of our grand county... and that the ease of procuring ‘sparkling water’ for themselves and their teams” would certainly be an advantage. Stoufer reminded voters that Fargo Springs already had most of everything required to deliver a successful trade center. Stoufer boasted that Fargo Springs was already a place “where you will find a market for your produce; where you can buy anything and everything you want; where you can do business at a first-class bank; where you will soon have a good flouring mill; where business of all kinds is represented by earnest, accommodating men; and where you will always receive fair and square treatment.”

Abe Stoufer first set eyes on Fargo Springs the evening of October 22, 1885. He had come by stage coach to visit to his brother Will. Stoufer owned the Lathrop (Missouri) Monitor and on his return to Missouri wrote a glowing account of Fargo Springs and the fine country that he found in the wilds of the “Great American Desert.” He, in fact, was induced to purchase one hundred sixty acres during his visit. By Febru-

ary, 1886, he was headed back to Fargo Springs.

The stage pulled up in front of a crowd of men standing in front of the office of attorney and land agent Charley Traxler. Within ten minutes the town boosters had subscribed by shares of fifty dollars each to establish the *Fargo City News* with Abe Stoufer as editor. The next morning, he was on the stage to Kansas City to purchase equipment. The first issue was released on April 22, 1886.

By May 13th Stoufer reported that Fargo Springs was experiencing the greatest boom in

the history of the town. Over one hundred wagon-loads of freight came to Fargo Springs the previous week. In just one day fifty teams had arrived. Strangers were everywhere and the hotels were crowded. Clothing salesman, I. A. Blanchard announced, “Fargo Springs has the lead and always will have.” Stoufer heartily agreed.

Governor John A. Martin’s announcement finally came that Seward County had been officially recognized. In his capacity as Kansas Governor Mr. Martin was required to designate a temporary county

seat until an official election could be organized. Fargo Springs was confident that it was the logical choice. Imagine their surprise when Springfield received the designation! The real fight for the Seward County Seat was just beginning. Alas, that is a story to be told another time on The Way West.

“*The Cowboy*,” Jim Gray is author of the book *Desperate Seed: Ellsworth Kansas on the Violent Frontier, Ellsworth, KS. Contact Kansas Cowboy, 220 21st RD Geneseo, KS. Phone 785-531-2058 or kansascowboy@kans.com.*

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Page 8 Grass & Grain, May 5, 2020

2019 Kansas county-level land values for cropland and pasture analyzed

By Mykel R. Taylor, KSU
Department of Agricultural
Economics

The value of Kansas cropland and pasture land has been changing rapidly over the past several years. As a result, many people are interested in current estimates of the value of an average parcel of ground for their county. Since Kansas is a non-disclosure state, there is very little publicly available information people may use for determining county-average land values. In an attempt to improve the amount of land value information available, the Kansas Property Valuation Department (PVD) provides K-State with data on agricultural land sales.

These data reflect agricultural land sales in Kansas from 2015 through 2019. To obtain estimates

that reflect land sold for agricultural purposes in an “arm’s-length” transaction, some observations were removed from the original dataset. “Arm’s-length” refers to land sold through typical market channels and does not include intra-family transactions, court-ordered sales, or other transactions that may keep the sale from being considered a market-based transaction.

The sales data used in the analysis were limited to bare land (undeveloped) parcels of at least 40 acres in size. These filtered data were used in a regression analysis to estimate county-specific land (non-irrigated, irrigated, and pasture) values, referred to as KSU-PVD.

The land-value model used characteristics of the parcels sold to determine

2019 Kansas Land Values at the County Level

Table 1. Estimated Agricultural Land Values for 2019 using PVD Land Sales Data														
CRD			Non-Irrigated, S/ac			Irrigated, S/ac			Pasture, S/ac			CRD		
County												County		
Northwest			Cheyenne			1,663			3,246			1,233		
			Decatur			2,013			3,929			1,492		
			Graham			2,080			4,059			1,542		
			Norton			2,241			4,375			1,662		
			Rawlins			1,941			3,789			1,439		
			Sheridan			1,966			3,836			1,457		
			Sherman			1,624			3,170			1,204		
			Thomas			1,865			3,639			1,382		
Average:			1,924			3,755			1,426					
West			Gove			1,616			3,154			1,198		
Central			Greeley			1,365			2,665			1,012		
			Lane			1,553			3,031			1,151		
			Logan			1,447			2,824			1,073		
			Ness			1,681			3,281			1,246		
			Scott			1,549			3,024			1,149		
			Trego			1,734			3,383			1,285		
			Wallace			1,312			2,561			973		
			Wichita			1,462			2,853			1,084		
Average:			1,524			2,988			1,150					
Southwest			Clark			1,231			2,402			912		
			Finney			1,210			2,362			897		
			Ford			1,399			2,731			1,037		
			Grant			1,136			2,216			842		
			Gray			1,304			2,544			966		
			Hamilton			950			1,854			704		
			Haskell			1,174			2,291			870		
			Hodgeman			1,302			2,541			965		
			Kearny			1,111			2,169			824		
			Meade			1,108			2,162			821		
			Morton			1,108			2,163			822		
			Seward			1,099			2,145			815		
			Stanton			1,074			2,096			796		
			Stevens			1,108			2,163			822		
Average:			1,165			2,274			864					
South			Barber			1,627			3,175			1,733		
Central			Comanche			1,489			2,907			1,104		
			Edwards			1,726			3,369			1,280		
			Harper			2,062			4,024			1,529		
			Harvey			2,886			5,632			2,139		
			Kingman			2,143			4,183			1,589		
			Kiowa			1,685			3,289			1,249		
			Pawnee			1,687			3,293			1,251		
			Pratt			1,861			3,632			1,380		
			Reno			2,355			4,596			1,746		
			Sedgwick			5,833			—			4,324		
			Stafford			1,910			3,727			1,416		
			Sumner			2,586			5,048			1,917		
Average:			2,296			3,906			1,702					
Northeast			Atchison			4,407			—			3,267		
			Brown			3,890			—			2,884		
			Doniphan			4,123			—			3,056		
			Jackson			4,273			—			3,168		
			Jefferson			4,846			—			3,593		
			Leavenworth			6,136			—			4,549		
			Marshall			3,534			—			2,620		
			Miami			3,767			—			2,792		
			Pottawatomie			3,867			—			2,866		
			Riley			4,179			—			3,098		
			Wyandotte			—			—			—		
Average:			4,302			3,189								
East			Anderson			3,079			—			2,283		
Central			Chase			2,261			—			1,676		
			Coffey			2,960			—			2,194		
			Douglas			4,752			—			3,523		
			Franklin			3,245			—			2,406		

Kansas Byways receive three national awards

The National Scenic Byway Foundation recently announced the Inaugural 2020 Byway Organization Awards. Kansas had three winners that will receive recognition this fall at the Heartland Byways Conference in Leavenworth Oct. 27-29, 2020.

Native Stone Scenic Byway took top honors for the Scenic Viewshed Improvement Award. In 2007, a stone fence restoration workshop was developed to teach those who are interested in how ancestors built the existing historic stone fences 150 years ago. The bi-annual workshop project is ongoing, and 25 stone fences have been completed. The restored stone fences showcase the historic value in the preservation, education and use of the area's plentiful "natural" native stone. Visitors can easily view the restored fences along the corridor of the Native Stone Scenic Byway.

Land & Sky Scenic Byway was awarded hon-

orable mention for the Visitor Experience Award featuring the byway's communities and points of interest during the Big Kansas Road Trip in May 2019. Lastly, the Kansas Byways Program was given honorable mention for the Interpretation Award for building new kiosks, remodeling older kiosks and placing interpretive panels at scenic turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas throughout the 12 Kansas Byways.

"Traveling along the Kansas Byways is a great way to see our beautiful and unique landscapes, quaint towns, and historic attractions," Bridgette Jobe, director of Kansas Tourism said. "Our byways serve as natural, social, cultural and economic resources for visitors, the people of Kansas and the communities along the byways."

The Kansas Byways Program was formed to identify and designate scenic and historic road-



The Native Stone Scenic Byway was recognized nationally for its program to restore and preserve the legacy of stone fences.

ways for the enjoyment of Kansas travelers. The program is a cooperative effort among citizens, local groups, local governments and state agencies. For more information, visit KSByways.com.

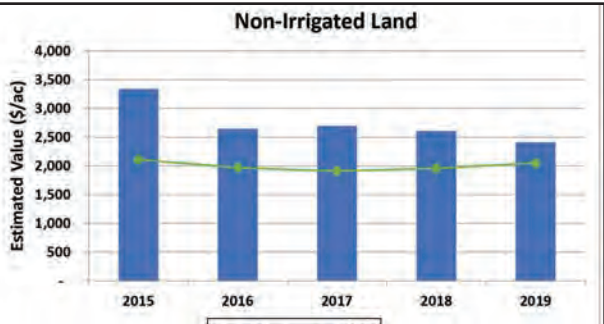


Figure 1. Average Kansas Land Value Estimates by K-State (2015 - 2019)

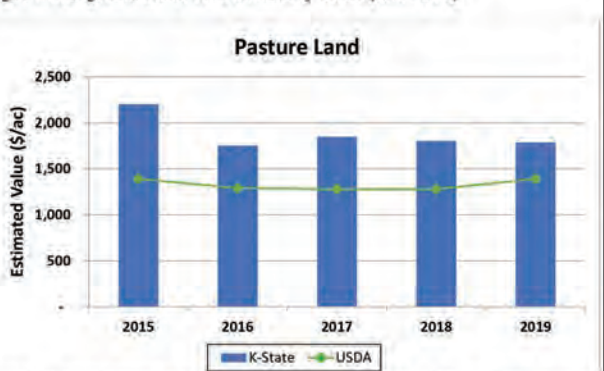


Figure 2. Average Kansas Land Value Estimates by USDA-NASS (2015 - 2019)

Land values analyzed

• Cont. from page 8

at a low for the period in 2016 and have been recovering each year since then.

The decrease in sales transactions for 2019 may be a result of fewer parcels offered for sale (a supply-side issue) or a decrease in willingness to buy land at current market prices (a demand-side issue). In either case, where the market goes in 2020 will be a function of both the supply and demand for land and the prof-

itability in the crop and livestock sectors. If commodity prices for the main crops grown in Kansas improve, land values are likely to follow. However, if commodity prices stay low, land values will be either flat or down slightly in 2020.

The author would like to thank Leah Tsoodle (Kansas State University) and Jim Shontz (Property Valuation Department) and others for their assistance with data collection and interpretation.

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To make up for the brain cells I killed watching *Tiger King*, I've been taking an online course on Patrick Henry from the University of Virginia through Coursera, "Patrick Henry: Forgotten Founder." Dr. John Ragosta, the professor, is the author of *Patrick Henry: Proclaiming a Revolution*. I am ordering it today.

Henry, the "Voice of the Revolution," has been my hero since I was a child. I grew up in Patrick County, Virginia, which was carved from Henry County. The man's influence was there from my earliest moments. "Give me liberty or give me death" rang in my ears when I was a child visiting Richmond, and I slipped behind the silk cord to sit in Patrick Henry's chair. It also rang in my ears when, as an adult with a baby in a stroller, I was locked in St. John's churchyard by the sextant who did not realize I was there. I was shouting at passersby to rescue me and my baby.

Dr. Ragosta puts Henry in the context of his time and his role in shaping our nation. It is truly profound. I often listen to the Jefferson Hour with Clay Jenkinson on NPR and always find it illuminating. I found Dr. Ragosta even more down to earth, as was Henry himself.

Dr. Ragosta has inspired me greatly. So much so, that I am thinking of teaching an online class on Fort Wallace. We are working on a format, but I will use Dr. Ragosta's template for speaking plainly and eloquently, taking very complex topics and making them understandable. At least, that is my goal. Stay tuned, and we will let you know when we are ready to launch.

We have already shared two videos on Facebook of a virtual tour featuring the Roman Nose exhibit and the Fort Wallace Adjutant's Office. The format for the class will be similar. We will film with the exhibits and share the stories they tell.

If you would be interested in such a class, please email me at the address below. I had also thought of doing a couple more – on the Civil War in Kansas and the Indian Wars in Kansas. Of course, Fort Wallace figures into both of those stories so perhaps it will be a launching pad for more to come.

Thank you, Dr. Ragosta, for the inspiration.

Deb Goodrich is the host of the Around Kansas TV Show and the Garvey Texas Foundation Historian in Residence at the Fort Wallace Museum. She is the chair of the Santa Fe Trail 200, the trail's bicentennial in 2021. Contact her at author.debgoodrich@gmail.com.

Rural grocery stores finding creative ways to stay open, serve communities

By Pat Melgares

In rural towns across Kansas, residents are often pressed – even during normal times – to find a reliable and safe source of food nearby.

The current outbreak of the novel coronavirus which causes the disease COVID-19 has made that challenge even greater in some parts of the state.

"Many small town grocery stores are adjusting their operations during this pandemic," said David Procter, director of the Center for Engagement

Marshall co-sponsors Finkenauer bill to expand market for American-made biofuels

Rep. Abby Finkenauer of Iowa recently announced the introduction of the Clean Fuels Deployment Act of 2020. The bipartisan legislation, co-sponsored by representatives Angie Craig (D-MN), Don Bacon (R-NE), and Roger Marshall (R-KS), would provide funding for installing and converting fuel pump infrastructure to deliver higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel.

The bill authorizes \$500 million over five years to help retailers offer higher ethanol blends, expand the geographic area selling ethanol blends, support biodiesel, bioheat, and sustainable aviation fuel markets, and accelerate the deployment of fueling infrastructure. Given recent uncertainties in the renewable fuels industry, it is more important than ever to fund infrastructure improvements and remove market barriers to accessing clean and renewable fuels.

"The time is now to further diversify

our fuel supply and move more biofuels into the market," Finkenauer said. "Biofuels offer a proven path to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonizing the transportation sector, driving economic growth and creating jobs. I'm grateful to have bipartisan support from representatives Bacon, Craig and Marshall. Cleaner fuels are good for our economy and our environment, and we're going to keep fighting for them."

In addition to supporting the distribution of higher ethanol and biodiesel blends at fueling stations, the program could also be used to enhance pipelines and terminals to blend and carry ethanol and biodiesel. Funding from the clean fuels grant program could be used to incentivize the deployment of ethanol and biodiesel fueling infrastructure and convert existing infrastructure to deliver ethanol blends greater than 10 percent and biodiesel blends greater than 20 percent.

and Community Development at Kansas State University, who has studied the importance of grocery stores to rural communities.

Procter spoke recently on the K-State podcast, The Extension Files, produced by K-State Research and Extension.

Procter notes that the grocery store in rural communities is often a barometer of the economy in small towns.

"As the grocery store goes, so goes the local economy," he said. "If you have small-town grocery stores that at this point in time are struggling, it has to have a ripple economic effect on other small businesses in that community."

Procter said many rural communities are going to almost "heroic" lengths to keep their stores open, many now offering delivery or curbside pickup services that they had not offered prior to the pandemic.

"And some grocery stores are spearheading food giveaways," Procter said. "There are these things called 'Blessing Boxes' where people provide food – not only the grocery store – and residents can provide extra food or products that people need, and others can

come and pick those up for free."

Some small grocery stores, he added, are now exploring online ordering, which has long been a challenge in rural communities because of the lower reliability of broadband service in those areas.

"One good thing that could come out of the other side of this is we have a grocery store infrastructure that is going to be more conducive to folks who maybe can't physically get to the store," Procter said. "That may include elderly people, or people with low income that don't have reliable transportation. I think there are going to be more options for people to access groceries in a variety of ways that maybe they didn't have before all of this happened."

It's an opportunity, perhaps, to close the digital divide, or disparity, that exists in access to the Internet between urban and rural areas across the country.

"I really hope so," Procter said. "This is the time when we are realizing across the country, but certainly in rural areas, where Internet service is spotty, and just how important it is to have this service available. I would certainly hope that some-

thing would come out of this that would improve broadband access.

"I also think that folks are increasingly recognizing the importance of having some kind of food access in their community. I would not be surprised once this situation has improved that there is an increased push among some rural communities to establish local access to groceries and healthy food."

Procter said the Center for Engagement and Community Development is available to help grocery store owners work toward improving infrastructure, including moving point-of-sale systems to an online process.

The Center is part of a Rural Grocery Initiative that includes the Kansas Health Foundation and Network Kansas to help grocery stores purchase point-of-sale systems. More information is available at www.ruralgrocery.org.

Other rural issues that Procter spoke about during the recent podcast include how the pandemic is affecting youth and public education; the interdependence of farm families during times of crisis; and how the COVID-19 pandemic is different from other natural disasters.

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Two Online Auctions for Ken & Norma King Estate — Auction #1 opened April 30 (bidding closes May 6); Auction #2 opens May 14 (bidding closes May 20) held online at hollingerauction.hibid.com/auctions/current. Selling will be household furniture, pots & pans, power & hand tools, fishing tackle & rods, lawn supplies, collectibles & antiques inc. furniture, decor, glassware, toys; Native American art & pottery & more. Auctioneers: Hollinger Online Auctions.

Online/Live Commercial Property Auction (online bidding opens May 1; bidding closes May 7) — Retail downtown row store located in Lyons with 3 floors held online at hollingerauction.hibid.com/auctions/current for BLC Properties, LLC. Auctioneers: Farms America Real Estate, Jim Hollinger, 620-257-8148.

May 9 (POSTPONED from April 4) — Tractors, farm machinery, pickups & truck, trailers, cattle & horse equipment, buildings & sheds to be moved, misc. arm items, tools &

more held at Bunker Hill for Don Chegwiddden Estate. Auctioneers: Wolters Auction & Realty.

(POSTPONED UNTIL FALL) — Tractors, combine, trucks & machinery, motorcycles, antiques, collectibles, tools & more held West of Clay Center for Clarence & Marjorie Urban Estate. Auctioneers: Thummel Real Estate & Auction, LLC.

May 12 — 2,280 acres m/l Osborne and Lincoln Counties sold in 10 individual tracts with no combination held at Lucas and with live internet and conference call bidding available for Robert & Lola Brant & Blue Hill Feeders, Inc. Auctioneers: Farmland Auction & Realty.

May 12 — (rescheduled from March) — 415 acres m/l quality farmland on Gypsum Creek in Saline and McPherson Counties held at Gypsum for Micah Moffitt & Michael D. Becker. Auctioneers: Horizon Farm & Ranch Realty, LLC.

May 14 (RESCHEDULED from April 14) — 160 acres m/l of Dickinson County farmland held at Chapman for Ingermanson Trust. Auctioneers: Horizon Farm & Ranch Realty, LLC., Ray Swearingen.

May 19 (RESCHEDULED from April 16) — 560 acres m/l of quality farmland in Saline and Ottawa Counties in 5 tracts held at Salina for Ingermanson Farms, Ingermanson Trusts. Auctioneers: Hori-

zon Farm & Ranch Realty, LLC., Ray Swearingen.

May 20 — Absolute land auction consisting of 602 acres m/l (in 5 tracts) of Pratt County land held with internet, phone & live bidding at Pratt and online www.hammauction.com for Donald Grier Estate. Auctioneers: Hamm Auction & Real Estate, John Hamm.

May 21 — 50 acres m/l of Dickinson County tillable acreage & timber; possible building site located close to Abilene held at Abilene for Leonard Daniels Estate. Auctioneers: Horizon Farm & Ranch Realty, LLC, Ray Swearingen.

May 23 — (RESCHEDULED from April 4) — Collectibles & household held at Frankfort for Donna & Nilwon (Nick) Kraushaar Estate. Auctioneers: Olmsted & Sandstrom.

June 4 — 160 acres m/l & 320 acres m/l of Mitchell County farmland and grassland held at Beloit. Auctioneers: Gene Francis & Associates, Gene Francis & Lori Rogge.

August 8 & 15 — Household, antiques and miscellaneous at Herington for Irene Finley Estate. Auctioneers: Kretz Auction Service.

August 22 (rescheduled from June 6) — Farm machinery, trailers, 1976 Lincoln, antiques, farm supplies, tools, iron & miscellaneous held at Talmage for Twila (Mrs. Rosie) Holt. Auctioneers: Kretz Auction Service.

4-H pledge provides road map for Kansas youth

The same ideals that have made 4-H one of the country's leading organizations for youth leadership and development are now serving its members well during the global pandemic, says one of the organization's leaders in Kansas.

Beth Hinshaw, the 4-H youth development specialist in the southeast region, said that the 4-H Pledge — a staple of the organization since 1927 — really is a guide for everyday living.

"I think that the 4-H pledge is something that we can live everyday to guide us," Hinshaw said. "and right now it's especially good."

Broken down into parts, Hinshaw talked recently about how the pledge relates to current challenges:

"I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking..."

Hinshaw notes that 'clearer thinking' can relate to planning, organizing and solving problems.

"It's about using knowledge throughout your whole life," she said. "When we think about pledging our head to clearer thinking, that means we're going to work hard at making good decisions."

Hinshaw said continuous and online education is one example of how youth are adapting to new challenges. And, she adds, being home is an opportunity to learn more fully about projects they are involved in.

"In 4-H, we have great volunteers, but some of our youth's work and practice has to happen on their own," Hinshaw said. "We know this time is a great opportunity for learning, as well."

"...my HEART to greater loyalty..."

"This is really about our strong personal values, including a positive self-concept and our concern for others," Hinshaw said.

Numerous Kansas 4-H projects include showing compassion for others in the community; that commitment has continued during the current pandemic.

"We've seen some really wonderful examples of young people making masks for different organizations in their communities, writing letters to people in nursing homes or neighbors they're not getting to see, and more," Hinshaw said. "You can really brighten someone's day with a letter or a phone call. We know that we have kids doing artwork that they're sending to their local nursing homes. Sometimes you just have no idea the impact that something simple like that can really have."

"...my HANDS to larger service..."

In-person community service and volunteer opportunities may be limited now, but Hinshaw said it's a good time to plan for future activities.

"Our community ser-

vice project, called 48 Hours of 4-H, is something we do every year at the end of National 4-H Week in October," said Hinshaw, noting that the annual event is scheduled for Oct. 10-11 around Kansas.

"Now is a great time for Kansas 4-H'ers to be having conversations with others in their club, project group or family about how we can serve our community, and what kinds of things need to be done."

"...and my HEALTH to better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world."

Beyond health, Hinshaw said this part of the pledge relates to "character, ethics, stress management and disease prevention."

"Everybody is at home right now, so it's important to think about how can we eat well and how can we get our exercise," she said. "But also on that mental health side, how can we be connecting with people managing stress and doing those things that are going to promote our good mental health?"

To learn more about leadership opportunities for youth, visit the Kansas 4-H website.

American Farmland Trust releases first-ever national report on non-operator landowners

Recently American Farmland Trust, the organization behind the national movement No Farms No Food® and the Women for the Land initiative, released "Understanding and Activating Non-Operator Landowners: Non-Operator Landowner Survey," clearing up misconceptions and identifying opportunities to advance conservation on agricultural lands owned by those who do not farm it. The survey focused on individually or partnership owned lands, not institutions or trusts.

Around 40% of farmland in the U.S. is rented, in some U.S. counties that number is nearing 80%, and over a third of this land is owned by women. To date, we don't know that much about how these rented lands are integrated into farmer conservation strategies; however, we know that rented land is less likely to be managed with conservation goals in mind. Farmers have been reluctant or had difficulty communicating with landowners either because of distance, or because they are held back by their perception — proved unfounded by this survey — that landowners only care about rental payments, not long-term stewardship of the land. What's more, farm leases are typically verbal and only run for one year, making certain kinds of conservation investments risky.

Landowners, on the other hand, are often not aware of available conservation programs and are unsure about broaching the topic with their farmers, particularly if they lack on-farm knowledge and experience, which we found is more common when the landowner is a woman.

"AFT's survey revealed a clear communications gap between renters and landowners. Unfortunately, this communications gap is more about misconception and lack of knowledge than reluctance to implement conservation," said Dr. Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, AFT Women for the Land director.

She continued, "We learned that we have an opportunity to better communicate with landowners and farmers via separate programming as well as by bringing them together to achieve mutually agreed upon conservation goals for the land, which can be facilitated by written leases that have longer terms and are supported by available government funds and collaborative investment for the long-term good of the land."

The survey results provide some of the most comprehensive information we have on women and men NOLs across a diverse geography of landownership in the United States and will help AFT and others identify areas for future work and reinforce the importance of current work: furthering regenerative

farming practices, farmland preservation and improved conservation outcomes on the landscape.

Our report challenged two commonly held ideas about NOLs; that they only care about the financial bottom line and that they don't really care about the land. Our study simply doesn't find this to be true. They do care about conservation, even if they don't know as much about it or are not as connected to resources that would enable them to get more support to facilitate conservation. They also deeply care about stewarding the land for future generations and are thinking about farmland preservation.

We found a few other surprising things from this work, including:

The gender of NOLs matters but perhaps not in the ways we thought. It's not that women care more for the land. In fact, as many men NOLs indicated a strong desire to steward and protect the land.

Many respondents do not have a succession plan for the land, leaving uncertainty about what will happen to the land in the future.

NOLs are supportive of their renters taking conservation-oriented action on the land and are willing to support them via several formal mechanisms (e.g., lease changes, cost-share, etc.).

The report's call to action includes five key actions to guide future outreach and engagement with NOLs:

Cultivate greater awareness among NOLs regarding government conservation programs.

Amplify NOLs' willingness to support their operators with conservation practices on the land, but there are nuances.

Reach out to female, and male, NOLs to improve outcomes on rented land.

Engage NOLs to cultivate greater opportunities to strengthen their ties to farming, the land and community.

Emphasize the need for succession planning

among aging NOLs.

The full report was produced in late 2019 by fact sheets providing state-specific outcomes and strategies for all 11 states we surveyed. These fact sheets can be found in the NOL resource bank. Other resources can be found on the Farmland Information Center for NOLs and farmers who rent land.

"Understanding and Activating Non-Operator Landowners" will guide several critical AFT programs — AFT's Women for the Land initiative that works with women non-operating landowners and farmers via women-centered learning circles to increase knowledge on conservation, climate resilience, and farmland succession planning; AFT's Great Lakes Protection Fund, a pilot program to engage women landowners, operators, and agricultural retailers to achieve measurable conservation outcomes in the Great Lakes region to reduce run off and improve soil health; and AFT's leadership in working with landowners to develop succession plans through our Farmland Legacy program, work designed to address the great transition of land coming in the next 15 years as 371 million acres of American farmland will change hands as senior farmers retire.

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Auction held: The Ballroom
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TRACT 1: 160 acres +/- of dryland cultivation, grass and pond.
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NE1/4 of Section 6, Township 9, Range 6 West, Mitchell County, KS.
LOCATION: Approximately 11 miles south and west of Asherville or at the southwest corner of the intersection of S Rd. and 350th Rd.

TRACT 2: 320 acres +/- of dryland cultivation, grass, watershed lake and creek.
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: West Half of Section 8, Township 9, Range 6 West, Mitchell County, KS.
LOCATION: Approximately 12 miles south and west of Asherville or at the southeast corner of the intersection of T Rd. and 350th Rd.



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10 Individual Tracts With No Combination
OSBORNE COUNTY, LAND

Tr. 1 Legal: S/2 SE/4 & SE/4 of SW/4 of 25-9-12 & W/2 SW/4, NE/4 SW/4 & SW/4 NW/4 all in 30-9-11. **Tr. 1 F.S.A. Info:** 279.12 A. Grass. **Tr. 2 Legal:** NW/4 & N/2 of SW/4 36-9-12. **Tr. 2 F.S.A. Info:** 237.27 A. Grass. **Tr. 3 Legal:** E/2 NW/4, 6-10-11 & W/2 W/2, & SE/4 SW/4 & SW/4 E/4 all in 31-9-11, NE/4 36-9-12. **Tr. 3 F.S.A. Info:** 142.77 A. Cult., 322.11 A. Fenced Grass, 9.88 A WW. **Tr. 4 Legal:** SE/4 31-10-11. **Tr. 4 F.S.A. Info:** 125.27 A. Cult., 30.86 A. Unfenced Grass & WW. **Tr. 5 Legal:** E/2 NE/4 & SE/4 of 8-10-11. **Tr. 5 F.S.A. Info:** 215.24 A. Cult., 19.02 A WW & Pond. **Tr. 6 Legal:** NE/4 25-10-11. **Tr. 6 F.S.A. Info:** 154.33 A. Cult 4.25 A. WW. **Tr. 7 Legal:** SE/4 24-10-11. **Tr. 7 F.S.A. Info:** 127.99 A. Cult., 29.70 A. Unfenced Grass.

LINCOLN COUNTY, LAND

Tr. 8 Legal: NW/4 & W/2 NE/4 29-10-10. **Tr. 8 F.S.A. Info:** 174.57 A. Cult., 58.36 A. Fenced Grass, 5.83 A. WW. **Tr. 9 Legal:** SW/4 29-10-10. **Tr. 9 F.S.A. Info:** 150.29 A. Cult. 9.93 A. WW. **Tr. 10 Legal:** E/2 NW/4 & W/2 NE/4 32-10-10. **Tr. 10 F.S.A. Info:** 149.28 A. Cult., 10.53 A. WW.

MINERALS: All Sellers Interest to be Conveyed to Purchaser.

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For a complete brochure, contact:
FARMLAND AUCTION & REALTY CO., INC.
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 Web: www.farmlandauction.com

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BAXTER BLACK

ON THE EDGE OF COMMON SENSE

The Cowboy Ball

In the midst of COVID-19, one of the deepest psychoses is loneliness. “Social distance,” sliding take-out tacos under the door, being served pizza across the counter like a

Frisbee, having to carry a measuring tape and whip it out like Marshal Dillon to confirm six feet every time some masked stranger comes your way... all to prevent civil discourse

10, 12 & 14 Bale Hay Trailers



- Cradles can be lifted w/one hand • Cradles are removable
- Safety locks for cradles in both the up & down positions, located at the front of trailer
- 1-Year Mfg. Warranty on axles & tires • 2-Year Warranty on trailer
- Heavy duty tubular construction
- 10-bale trailer has 7,000 lb. tandem axle with brakes & 10 ply tires
- 12-bale trailer has 10,000 lb. tandem dual axle w/brake & 10 ply tires
- 14-bale trailer has 12,000 lb. tandem dual axle w/brake & 14 ply tires
- Comes with a spare tire
- Now have options of hydraulic dump & 14 ply tires

DENNING

MACHINE SHOP, INC.

Toll-Free: 866-293-5450

THE WORKHORSE OF WESTERN KANSAS



and staying friends. IT IS DEPRESSING. Those of you historians familiar with the pioneers who came west know they often found themselves in the lonely isolation that some of us are feeling today. Yet we RISE TO THE OCCASION, BRAVE AND INSPIRED TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT.

Blue lonesome is dang hard to handle

Especially out where the road ends

So any excuse for a party

Is welcome, and bound to make friends.

Once, a pilgrim seekin' some solace

Staked a claim a long way from town.

He'd come from the itch of the city

And in six months he'd settled down.

He built himself a small cabin

He sat on the porch one fine day

When he saw a rider approaching.

He saw him from miles away.

The rider said he was up country

And rarely came this way at all

But he thought he'd be a good neighbor

By throwin' a cowboy ball!

The pilgrim inspected this stranger

Who never got down from his horse.

He looked like he needed a dentist,

His manner was rugged and coarse.

But lonesome can pray on a body

And the stranger sounded sincere

“We can dance all night if we want to,

Play music and toast the Frontier!

We'll eat and we'll drink and be merry,

I've whiskey enough for us all...

So whattya say, are ya willin'

To come to a cowboy ball?”

The pilgrim was mullin' it over,

“Ya say they'll be whiskey and dance?

And maybe a kiss in the moonlight?”

The stranger said, “Yeah, there's a chance.”

“So what should I wear?” asked the pilgrim,

“It sounds like a pretty good do.”

The stranger said, “Heck, it don't matter,

‘Cause, Pilgrim, it's just me and you!”

www.baxterblack.com

Kansas Corn thanks Rep. Marshall for leadership on biofuels infrastructure bill

While the entire fuel industry, including ethanol producers are experiencing a sharp downturn due to the coronavirus outbreak, Kansas First District Rep. Roger Marshall is looking to the future to build additional biofuel infrastructure by cosponsoring the Clean Fuels Deployment Act. The legislation would to incentivize the installation of fueling infrastructure for ethanol blends greater than 10 percent and biodiesel blends greater than 20 percent.

“Kansas corn producers appreciate Congressman Marshall's continued leadership on ensuring consumers have access to higher ethanol blends,” said KCGA president Brent Rogers, Hoxie. “Data from Kansas proves that when consumers have access to higher blends at their fuel retailers, they will respond with increased purchases of these lower cost, cleaner-burning blends. We look forward to working with Dr. Marshall to advance this vital piece of legislation.”

According to the National Corn Growers Association,

the bill authorizes \$600 million over six years to help retailers offer higher ethanol blends, expand the geographic area selling ethanol blends, support biodiesel fuel markets, and accelerate the deployment of fueling infrastructure. The legislation will work alongside the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) to accelerate the availability and growth of biofuels. A vital market for corn farmers, ethanol producers have idled nearly half of their production capacity due to the fallout from COVID-19. Spurring new demand for higher ethanol blends will be an important part of an economic recovery for the ethanol industry and farmers, and this infrastructure deployment will help support that growth.

The Kansas Corn Commission continues to work with retailers across the state offering assistance for pumps and promotion of higher ethanol blends and this bill would complement those efforts. The Kansas Corn Growers Association advocates for corn ethanol on the state and national legislative and regulatory levels.

Farmers & Ranchers AUCTIONS EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY

Selling Cattle every Monday
Hog Sales on 2nd & 4th Monday of the month only!

RECEIPTS FOR THE WEEK 5,210 CATTLE & 127 HOGS.

STEERS					
300-400	\$160.00 - \$172.50	41 mix	Canton	607@152.00	
400-500	\$164.00 - \$179.00	15 mix	Marion	619@151.50	
500-600	\$155.00 - \$168.00	5 blk	Ottawa	591@151.00	
600-700	\$145.00 - \$157.50	13 blk	Tampa	653@150.50	
700-800	\$129.00 - \$136.50	4 blk	Moundridge	608@150.00	
800-900	\$115.00 - \$121.75	4 blk	Clafin	621@148.50	
900-1000	\$101.50-\$113.50	5 mix	Miltonvale	650@145.50	
		12 blk	Marion	643@145.00	
		13 blk	Manhattan	665@144.50	
		10 blk	Miltonvale	690@140.00	
		17 mix	Longford	680@138.50	
		11 blk	Hays	689@138.00	
		14 mix	Wilson	705@136.75	
		10 blk	Moundridge	694@136.50	
		9 blk	Ottawa	702@136.00	
		48 blk	Kanopolis	695@136.00	
		32 mix	Geneseo	747@135.50	
		21 blk	Lincoln	728@135.50	
		5 blk	Clay Center	733@134.00	
		35 blk	Chase	755@132.50	
		28 blk	Ellsworth	770@132.00	
		5 blk	Chapman	763@132.00	
		8 blk	Tampa	766@129.00	
		48 blk	Chase	820@121.75	
		34 mix	Ellsworth	845@120.25	
		8 blk	Ottawa	809@120.00	
		69 blk	Lincoln	843@120.00	
		20 mix	Longford	829@119.00	
		33 mix	Wilson	844@117.25	
		67 mix	Wakefield	818@116.50	
		58 blk	Hope	839@116.00	
		11 mix	Geneseo	842@115.50	
		61 mix	Hope	839@115.50	
		72 blk	Lincoln	936@113.50	
		55 mix	Wilson	925@111.50	
		64 mix	Hope	932@110.85	
		119 mix	Abilene	920@109.50	
		52 blk	Lincoln	1066@101.50	

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020:					
STEERS					
25 mix	Abilene	425@179.00	28 blk	Ellsworth	770@132.00
20 mix	Ellsworth	425@178.00	5 blk	Chapman	763@132.00
16 blk	Tescott	464@175.00	8 blk	Tampa	766@129.00
55 mix	Abilene	497@173.00	48 blk	Chase	820@121.75
1 blk	Lincoln	390@172.50	34 mix	Ellsworth	845@120.25
9 mix	Minneapolis	406@170.00	8 blk	Ottawa	809@120.00
24 mix	Ellsworth	498@169.50	69 blk	Lincoln	843@120.00
17 blk	Marion	427@169.00	20 mix	Longford	829@119.00
17 mix	Abilene	457@169.00	33 mix	Wilson	844@117.25
13 blk	Marion	504@168.50	67 mix	Wakefield	818@116.50
12 mix	Minneapolis	470@167.00	58 blk	Hope	839@116.00
3 bwf	Clafin	440@166.00	11 mix	Geneseo	842@115.50
9 blk	Chapman	534@165.50	61 mix	Hope	839@115.50
3 blk	Clafin	490@165.00	72 blk	Lincoln	936@113.50
2 blk	Durham	495@164.00	55 mix	Wilson	925@111.50
5 mix	Beloit	515@163.00	64 mix	Hope	932@110.85
11 mix	Lehigh	509@163.00	119 mix	Abilene	920@109.50
6 blk	Wilson	512@161.00	52 blk	Lincoln	1066@101.50
36 mix	Abilene	581@160.00			
5 mix	Tescott	513@159.00	HEIFERS		
8 blk	Lincoln	603@157.50	7 blk	Tescott	309@167.00
14 blk	Chapman	610@157.50	7 blk	Marion	405@150.00
14 blk	Marion	565@157.50	8 blk	Marion	449@150.00
5 blk	Clafin	557@154.50	16 mix	Ellsworth	438@150.00
11 blk	Tescott	596@153.50	5 mix	Lehigh	416@146.00
14 blk	Ellsworth	610@153.50	4 blk	Clafin	421@146.00
14 blk	Durham	564@153.00	15 mix	Delphos	452@146.00
14 mix	Kanopolis	594@152.50	12 mix	Tampa	465@145.00

UPCOMING SALES:

SPECIAL COW SALES: SALE STARTS at 11 AM: Tuesday, May 5

WEANED/VACC. SALE: SALE STARTS at 11 AM

IN STOCK TODAY:

- Heavy Duty Round Bale Feeders
- 6'8" x 24' GOOSENECK STOCK TRAILER METAL TOP
- 6'8" x 24' GOOSENECK STOCK TRAILER
- 42' ROUND BALE DUMP TRAILERS
- HEAVY DUTY FEED BUNKS (Silage & Grain)
- HEAVY DUTY 5000# GRAIN TOTE

Livestock Commission Co., Inc. Salina, KANSAS

SALE BARN PHONE: 785-825-0211

MONDAY — CATTLE • HOG SALE 2nd & 4th MONDAY
Hogs sell at 10:30 a.m. *on the 2nd & 4th Monday of the month.*
Cattle at 12:00 Noon. Selling calves and yearlings first, followed by Packer cows and bulls.

THURSDAY — CATTLE ONLY

Selling starts at 10:00 a.m. Consign your cattle as early as possible so we can get them highly advertised.

AUCTIONEERS: KYLE ELWOOD, BRANDON HAMEL & GARREN WALROD

For a complete list of cattle for all sales check out our website www.fandrive.com

CATTLE USA.com

LIVE CATTLE AUCTIONS

FARMERS & RANCHERS HAS SWITCHED BACK to Cattle USA.com for our online auctions.

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2020:					
HOGS					
2 fats	Assaria	283@42.00			
10 fats	Lincolnvill	288@41.50			
34 fats	Andale	297@39.50			
11 fats	Esbon	255@31.00			
2 sows	Abilene	610@31.00			
CALVES					
1 blk	Salina	290@475.00			
2 mix	Salina	243@450.00			
1 bwf	Beverly	235@410.00			
1 blk	Salina	220@410.00			
1 blk	Salina	240@400.00			
1 blk	Mankato	170@375.00			
1 red	Salina	170@375.00			
1 blk	McPherson	175@360.00			
1 blk	Enterprise	145@325.00			
BULLS					
1 grey	Newton	1990@106.50			
1 blk	Beloit	2005@96.50			
1 blk	Beloit	1965@95.50			
1 blk	Abilene	1935@93.50			
1 blk	Falun	1900@91.00			
1 blk	Lindsborg	2225@87.00			
1 red	Tampa	2145@86.50			
COWS					
1 blk	Abilene	1380@65.50			
1 red	Lehigh	1215@65.00			
5 blk	Clay Center	1341@64.00			
1 blk	Barnard	1500@63.50			
1 blk	Falun	1680@63.50			
1 blk	Lindsborg	1965@62.50			
1 blk	Gypsum	1525@62.00			
1 blk	Lindsborg	1655@61.50			
2 char	Culver	1405@61.50			
1 red	Canton	1300@60.50			

THE SPRING SPECTACULAR HORSE SALE FOR MAY 16TH HAS BEEN CANCELLED!!!

EARLY CONSIGNMENTS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020

- 25 Black/BWF S&H, 2 round vacc, 60 days weaned 350-500
- 38 Red Angus S&H, home raised, weaned 35 days 400-600
- 70 Black Steers, home raised, long time weaned(October), vacc 700-800
- 15 Black S&H, home raised, long time weaned, vacc 400-600
- 37 Black Steers, home raised, long time weaned, 2 round vacc, Fancy 500-600
- 85 Black Heifers, long time weaned, home raised, open, no implants 600-700
- 6 S&H 500

For Information or estimates, contact:

Mike Samples, Sale Mgr., Cell Phone 785-826-7884

Kyle Elwood, Asst. Sale Mgr., Cell Phone 785-493-2901

Jim Crowther
785-254-7385
Roxbury, KS

Lisa Long
620-553-2351
Ellsworth, KS

Cody Schafer
620-381-1050
Durham, KS

Kenny Briscoe
785-658-7386
Lincoln, KS

Kevin Henke
H: 785-729-3473, C: 785-565-3525
Agenda, KS

Austin Rathbun
785-531-0042
Ellsworth, KS

Check our listings each week on our website at www.fandrive.com

