



# Gov. Kelly, K-State President Myers confer degree upon Kansas farmer who sent N-95 mask to New York

Governor Laura Kelly joined Kansas State University president Richard Myers last week to confer a bachelor's degree upon Dennis Ruhnke of Troy.

Ruhnke recently garnered national attention when he sent a letter to New York governor Andrew Cuomo, in which he enclosed an N-95 mask to give to a nurse or doctor in New York.

Ruhnke wrote to Governor Cuomo: "I am a retired farmer hunkered down in northeast Kansas with my wife who has but one lung and occasional problems with her remaining lung. She also has diabetes. We are in our 70s now and frankly, I am afraid for her."

"Enclosed find a solitary N-95 mask left over from my farming days. It has never been used."

## A K-State first: Plant pathologist Barbara Valent named to National Academy of Sciences

Kansas State University plant pathologist Barbara Valent has earned membership in the prestigious National Academy of Sciences, becoming the first scientist at K-State to earn the honor for original research conducted while at the university.

The National Academy of Sciences, or NAS, is considered the country's leading authority on matters related to science and technology. As a member, Valent, a university distinguished professor, joins a group of scholars that is often sought out to provide independent, objective advice to national leaders on problems where scientific insights are critical.

"Professor Valent has made, and continues to make, significant and leading contributions to understanding virulent plant diseases that impact global food production and access," said Peter K. Dorhout, K-State vice president for research. "Her research enables the world to provide greater levels of food surety and food security to its people, and it's wonderful that NAS has recognized her scientific leadership."

The academy was established by an act of Congress and signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Today, the academy has 2,405 members in the U.S. and 501 more internationally. Academy members are nominated and then elected in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

"Being elected to the NAS is the ultimate recognition of scientific excellence, expertise and achievement in the U.S.,"



Dennis Ruhnke of Troy was thrust into the national spotlight recently when he sent an N-95 mask to New York, instructing Gov. Andrew Cuomo to give it to a nurse or doctor. Last week Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly and Kansas State University president Richard Myers presented Ruhnke with the bachelor's degree he was two credits away from earning when his father passed away in 1971 and he left school to take care of his mother and the family farm.



Barbara Valent, distinguished professor of plant pathology at Kansas State University, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Valent said. "Even as a graduate student, you realize that being a member of the NAS is one of the highest honors a scientist can receive. It's something that always stands out there as a goal."

Valent has worked on understanding blast disease, caused by a fungus known to scientists as *Magnaporthe oryzae*, for more than 40 years. In the last decade, her work has focused on wheat blast, a dangerous new disease in which the fungus is capable of taking out entire wheat fields. Valent has led a research team that is driving the world's most comprehensive studies on wheat blast to keep it out of the U.S.

"When I came to K-State in 2001, I began new research on how the blast fungus hijacks and feeds on live plant cells to grow and cause disease,"

Valent said. "We have learned how the fungus floods surrounding cells with small proteins, or effectors, that turn off the plant's defenses and how the fungus moves from cell to cell. Understanding details of the infection process is aimed at developing novel strategies for controlling disease on rice, wheat and other cereal crops."

According to the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico, wheat is grown on nearly 531 million acres worldwide, or an area equivalent to that of Greenland. Nearly \$50 billion is traded globally each year, and wheat-based food is eaten by an estimated 2.5 billion people in 89 countries. It surpasses maize and rice as a source of protein in low- and middle-income nations and is second only

to rice as a source of calories in the human diet.

Since its emergence in Brazil in 1985, wheat blast has spread to other parts of South America. In 2016 scientists found the disease across the ocean in Bangladesh, surprising farmers and researchers and causing additional concern about its ability to spread rapidly throughout the world. Farmers in Bangladesh burned entire fields to try to stem the spread of wheat blast but the disease still established there. Many of these farmers have now stopped growing wheat.

While Valent has been in the center of international work, her team has also helped to keep the fungus from infecting U.S. wheat fields. Working in K-State's Biosecurity Research Institute, a biosafety level-3 and biosafety level-3 agriculture facility, the researchers were the first to discover a resistance gene called 2NS for wheat blast disease.

More recently, Valent — with colleagues Sanzhen Liu and David Cook — completed work showing how microbial pathogens like wheat blast are constantly evolving to overcome control measures developed by scientists.

"We are working to better understand pathogen genomics and evolution because this fungus is notorious for being able to overcome resistance," Valent said. "We need

If you could, would you please give this mask to a nurse or doctor in your city. I have kept four masks for my immediate family. Please keep on doing what you do so well, which is to lead."

"Dennis' donation, at the height of our country's protective gear shortage, showed us the best in humanity when we needed it the most," Kelly said. "I would like to thank Dennis for the example he's set on how to serve — and how to be thoughtful and generous in an extraordinary way."

In 1971, Ruhnke was studying agriculture at Kansas State University when his father passed away. At that time, he was two credits away from earning his degree, but chose to leave school to

take care of his mother and the family farm.

"After speaking with President Myers, we both agreed that Dennis perfectly encapsulates K-State's democratic mandate to be of service to people," Governor Kelly said. "Which is why I am very honored that I was able to help present Dennis with his well-deserved bachelor's degree in agriculture."

"Along with his fantastic demonstration of kindness and generosity, Mr. Ruhnke's academic work at K-State in his chosen field of agriculture qualifies him to receive his degree," Myers said. "Kansas State University is proud to officially recognize Mr. Ruhnke as an alumnus and valued member of the Wildcat family."

and advises doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows in her lab.

"Being a member of the NAS is not just an honor but also an opportunity to impact scientific issues important for the well-being of the nation and the world," Valent said. "My expertise in fungal pathogens of important grain crops allows me to contribute to national and global food security issues including and beyond wheat blast."

She added: "As illustrated so clearly with the coronavirus pandemic, it is critical to prepare for potential pandemic threats to our food supply. It is a national security issue. Also, I have a passion for mycology, the study of fungi of all kinds. Fungi cause the most serious plant diseases, but there are also good ones with food, industrial and plant health-promoting uses. Mycologists are underrepresented among NAS members. My experience will allow me to contribute to all kinds of problems involving fungi."

One K-State faculty member, Jim Riviere, a university distinguished professor emeritus of anatomy and physiology, was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (now called the National Academy of Medicine) in 2003 while he was a faculty member at North Carolina State University. He joined K-State in 2012 and retired in 2017.

## Perdue comments on Economic Injury Disaster Loans availability to U.S. agricultural businesses impacted by COVID-19 pandemic

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue applauded the announcement that agricultural producers, for the first time, are now eligible for the Small Business Administration (SBA)'s Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and EIDL Advance programs.

"America's farmers, ranchers, and producers need the same help that other American businesses need during this unprecedented time," said Perdue. "This significant new authority signed by President Trump will make a tremendous difference for America's agricultural community."

SBA's EIDL portal has been closed since April 15. However, the agency was able to reopen the portal, in a limited capacity, as a result of funding authorized by Congress through the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act. The legislation, which was signed into law recently by the President, provided additional critical funding for farmers and ranchers affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

In order to help facilitate this important change to EIDL Loan and EIDL Advance assistance eligibility, SBA is re-opening the Loan and Advance application portal to agricultural enterprises only. For agricultural producers that submitted an EIDL loan application through the streamlined application portal prior to the legislative change, SBA will move forward and process these applications without the need for re-applying. All other EIDL loan applications that were submitted prior to April 15 will be processed on a first-in, first-out basis.

For more information, please visit: [www.sba.gov/Disaster](http://www.sba.gov/Disaster).

## Harvest help, anyone?



There are no slackers on the farm, including this kitten who is ready to pitch in and help with harvest.

Photo by Tyson Strauss















# Staying Healthy While Working Remotely

By Cindy Williams, Meadowlark Extension District, Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Most of us are in month two, working from our remote location. As this continues, it is more important than ever to make sure we are using workplace habits that keep us healthy physically, mentally, and financially no matter where we are working. Here are some tips for maintaining physical health while working remotely.

Practicing healthy workplace habits is not that much different working remotely than it is working in a formal office environment. However, the dedicated office space and working environment are separate. This brings not only challenges but also opportunities for maintaining your physical health while working remotely. Here are some things to keep in mind and are useful as you examine your current workspace and routine.

\* Maintain good posture where you sit or stand to work. It is tempting to take the laptop to the couch or lounge chair while working remotely. While this might feel comfortable at the moment, it will not promote good posture for the long haul. It is essential to use a variety of settings for your workday. These include sitting, standing, and walking while practicing good posture in all settings.

\* If you have peripheral devices available to you, connect an external keyboard, mouse, headphones, and a monitor

to increase your comfort level and define your workspace.

\* Take regular breaks of 5 minutes every hour to look away from the screen and improve circulation. While at the office, this is accomplished when a co-worker stops by to share an idea or ask a question. In your current environment, it might be a pet wanting to play catch, a family member with a problem, or if working alone, a self-imposed break to look out the window.

\* Schedule lunch, breaks, stretching, walking, and processing time. While working remotely, you are not as bound by the clock and regular office hours. You are in charge and need to take control of break times and when to go home. This can be accomplished by setting a phone notice, wellness app, Outlook, or a sticky note on the monitor. For processing time of an idea, consider going on a waling meeting of one person or one of your new office mates that you share your home with.

\* Stock your kitchen with healthy snacks and lunch options One person recently shared that they pack these each day and put in the refrigerator just like they did when taking them to the office.

\* Stay consistent with your eating, sleeping, and exercise routines as appropriate. This routine is something that you can maintain control over in these uncertain times, and it is vital to maintaining physical health.



## Putting It Off

By Lou Ann Thomas

After the last few weeks of quarantine I can no longer use the phrase, “If I only I had time...” as an excuse for not doing things. I now know time has nothing to do with it. I’m not thoroughly cleaning the house, matching all of the lids to my storage containers, or finally getting around to accomplish the myriad of other activities I haven’t been doing because of a busy schedule. It has become apparent that instead I am a procrastinator.

I’ve been meaning to admit this for a while now and hadn’t gotten around to it, but I can no longer put it off – I put things off. And I am no novice when it comes to procrastination. I still have Christmas cards to send out – from three years ago, thank you notes to write for birthday presents I received last fall and there is a mountain of recycling in my laundry room that needs my attention.

It’s not that I intend to never write the thank you notes,

respond to emails or clean out my closets. Okay, I do kind of intend to never do that last one. My heirs should expect to earn whatever pittance I may leave them, and if that includes sorting through full closets and drawers, then so be it. But, in general, I don’t intend to never do whatever it

is I’m not doing. I’ll get around to it someday. However, it might take me so long that the recipient of the thank you no longer has any idea for what I am thanking them, or possibly even remember who I am.

However, I’m not alone in my penchant for procrastinating. There is a national organization for us. I just received their June 2017 newsletter. There is comfort in not being alone, isn’t there?

I think there is value in finding your niche, then working at being your best at it. Since I am an above average procrastinator I feel qualified to offer you this Golden Rule of Procrastination: Make sure you

have a good excuse for not doing what you are not doing. A good excuse opens the door of respectability for you. You rarely find favor or impress others by simply admitting you are a procrastinator.

Boredom also plays a big role in my procrastination. I often put off doing things because the task sounds boring, it is rumored to be boring, or it was boring the last time I did it. What sounds more interesting and fun to you? Reading a good book, calling a friend, or vacuuming?

And if you said, vacuuming, give me a call. I think we might be able to work something out.

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## Remember To M.A.S.K.

Everywhere I go, which is much, you see people sporting the latest in masks. Keep the following in mind for safe, effective homemade mask use. Remember to M.A.S.K. in order to save lives.

**M:** Multi-layered, tightly-woven 100% cotton. Save surgical or N95 masks for healthcare providers.

Use cotton thread counts of 180+.

**A:** Avoid your face. Remove it from behind. Never touch the front of the mask. Always remove it from behind your head.

**S:** Scrap it if it’s damaged, soiled, or doesn’t fit. Make sure it’s breathable and fits snug. Don’t use damp, wet, or dirty masks.

**K:** Keep it clean — use the mask and your hands. Wash your hands before you put it on, and after you take it off. Use a fresh mask each day.

Remember to M.A.S.K. and stay home, stay safe, and save lives.

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# USDA reports record enrollment in key farm safety-net programs

Producers signed a record 1.77 million contracts for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2019 crop year, which is more than 107 percent of the total contracts signed compared with a 5-year average. USDA also reminds producers that June 30 is the deadline to enroll in ARC and PLC for the 2020 crop year.

"Producers for several years have experienced low commodity prices, a volatile trade environment and catastrophic natural disasters," said Richard Fordyce, administrator of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

## Meat plant closures tighten supplies for retailers, increase prices for consumers

The reduction of meat processing capacity caused by U.S. plant closures and slowdowns has created a massive bottleneck in the nation's meat and livestock supply chain. Nearly two dozen plants that process beef and pork products closed in April due to the COVID-19 outbreak, while many others have had to slow their production as a result of the disease.

According to a new report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange division, even if the reduction of processing capacity is temporary, it will likely have a lasting impact on meat processors, livestock producers, retail stores and consumers. Meat supplies for retail gro-

cery stores could shrink nearly 30% by Memorial Day, leading to retail pork and beef price increases as high as 20% relative to prices last year.

"Margins for cattle and hog farmers have fallen to multi-year lows," said Will Sawyer, lead animal protein economist with CoBank. "As meat plants have closed, farmers are left with few options for their livestock, requiring herds to be culled. Shrinkage in the U.S. livestock herd will likely make the food supply shortage more acute later in the year."

Pork and beef production is down approximately 35% compared to this time last year, making retail shortages and price inflation nearly assured,

"Farmers looking to mitigate these risks recognize that ARC and PLC provide the financial protections they need to weather substantial drops in crop prices or revenues."

Producers interested in enrolling for 2020 should contact their FSA county office. Producers must enroll by June 30 and make their one-time update to PLC payment yields by September 30.

FSA attributes the significant participation in the 2019 crop year ARC and PLC programs to increased producer interest in the programs under the 2018 Farm Bill and to an increase in eligible farms because of the

Sawyer added.

While pork processing is expected to pick up in the coming weeks, hog producers may still be forced to euthanize as many as 7 million pigs in the second quarter alone, worth nearly \$700 million at historical average prices. This would further diminish meat supplies this fall and add to the billions of dollars of losses from lower livestock prices.

Declining meat production in April will likely lead to reduced grocery store supplies in May and June. Grocery stores are likely already rationing their current meat sup-

plies. The supply chain and inventory from the meat plant to local grocery store meat cases is less than a few weeks.

"Significant contractions in meat supplies have often led to substantial inflation of retail beef and pork prices," said Sawyer. "In the past 20 years, retail pork prices experienced inflation of more than 10% just twice. And neither of those times did we see inflation climb to 20%, which may be coming in the months ahead."

President Trump's executive order to reopen closed meat plants could help stem the tide of addi-

selling and buying of farms and new opportunities for beginning farmers and military veterans with farms having 10 or fewer base acres. Enrollment for 2019 ended March 16. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download the program fact sheet or the 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc). To locate the nearest USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

tional plant closures and pave the way for closed plants to reopen. Meat processors have instituted several measures to ensure employee safety, reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep protein supplies moving. However, attracting enough workers to fill the thousands of vacant positions at meat plants across the U.S. may be challenging in the near-term.

For consumers, closed meat plants means less meat in the grocery store in the weeks ahead. Up to this point, U.S. consumers have been able to rely on grocery stores as many

restaurants across the country have closed in response to "stay-at-home" orders in many cities and states.

As communities reopen with only about one week of meat supply in cold storage, shortages and stockouts in the meat case could not come at a worse time. Food inflation and a weak U.S. economy is a combination that will leave many consumers in greater financial strain.

The full report, "Closed Meat Plants Today Mean Empty Meat Cases This Summer," is available on [cobank.com](http://cobank.com).

## Contingency plans can help in event of illness or other absence

Suppose a small business owner – grocer, farmer or other – gets sick or is called out of state to help with a family emergency. If a friend offers to step in and help with the day-to-day work, would they have the information they need to keep the business going?

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# Volunteers adopt incubating eggs to continue 4-H classroom project

Laura Browning never expected to find herself an adoptive parent to three incubators' worth of chicks — or tending to 19 newly hatched birds in brooders in her garage. But chicks hatch according to their own calendar, oblivious to social distancing and school closures.

As it happened, the state's COVID-19 response coincided with an annual spring rite across Missouri as 25,000 students, from pre-school through middle school, welcome incubators and clutches of chicken eggs into their classrooms.

The centerpiece of this effort is the Missouri 4-H Embryology in the Classroom project, which guides youth through about two weeks of a chicken's development — roughly seven days of incubation through hatching and initial growth — until chicks and incubators are returned to the 4-H county Extension offices that facilitate the egg and incubator donations.

This year, schools started closing just as suppliers were delivering eggs. But no one wanted to simply abandon the popular project that's been a staple of schools' spring curricula since at least the early 1980s.

"Embryology is such a fun hands-on introduction to the scientific thinking process: how to come up with hypotheses, to design and monitor experiments, to gather and record data," Browning said. "If the cuteness of the chicks can be a bridge to science, that's a win!"

So Browning, a University of Missouri assistant Extension professor and state 4-H specialist in natural resources, volunteered to help: The plan,

she said, was hatched "out of sheer crisis; well, out of necessity I guess is a better way to say it."

Each county worked to enlist classroom teachers and 4-H and Extension faculty, staff and volunteers across Missouri to take eggs home; hence, the three incubators in the front hallway of Browning's own Boone County home.

Browning then delivered embryology lessons at 5 p.m. daily via Missouri 4-H QuarantIME Facebook Live programming.

She also set up a live chick cam so rapt children — and families — could click in anytime to watch the eggs incubating and hatching. Viewers can now see the chicks' rapid growth at extension2.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-4-h/4-h-opportunities/quarantime/chick-watch.

Browning is quick to point out that these options supplement the many inventive embryology lessons and experiments local teachers are conducting directly with their own students. Jessie Furgins, an instructor with MU Extension in Jackson County, for instance, has been helping teachers in her area with Zoom lessons based on her own clutch of eggs.

"Thank you! This is a very memorable activity/lesson (for) my kindergarten students," wrote Laura Vogt, of Timothy Lutheran School in Blue Springs, in an email. "Many of my former students will pop in to ask, 'When do you get the chicks this year?' We learn so much, and the kids really do remember! Even with the coronavirus situation, we were able to share the experience with our students!"



'Candling' eggs allows students to watch the development of an embryo inside its shell.

Photos by Laura Browning



A group of week-old chicks check out their surroundings. When schools closed due to COVID-19, volunteers across Missouri were needed to bring home incubators and chicken eggs to continue the Missouri 4-H Embryology in the Classroom project.

# Preparing to raise chickens

**By Adaven Scronce, diversified agriculture and natural resource agent, Wildcat Extension District**

Spring is here and you may have heard the sound of chicks peeping the last time you were at the feed store. You may even be thinking about getting a few chicks yourself. Before going out and purchasing chicks there are a few questions you should first consider. Questions to consider before venturing into raising chickens include: Are there any town or city ordinances that restrict raising poultry where you live? Do you have the time to care for chickens and who will take care of the chickens when you go out of town? If you want your flock to be a source of income, is there a local market for eggs or chickens? If you will be raising chickens for meat, is there a local processor or are you able to process the chickens yourself?

After considering the previous questions, next you will need to decide what breed of chickens you are going to raise. Different breeds of chickens have been selectively bred for specific purposes and traits. Meat breeds have been bred to have increased meat yield and improved feed conversion rates. However, they usually do not lay enough eggs to justify keeping as laying hens. Similarly, breeds that have been selectively bred to be layers, have been bred for increased egg production, smaller frame size, and will not grow as fast as breeds that have been developed for meat production. If you are interested in raising chickens for egg and meat production there are dual purpose breeds that can be raised for both egg and meat production.

Once you have decided what type of chickens you want to raise, the next step is making sure you have adequate housing for the chickens. Having a coop that will provide protection from heat, cold, inclement weather, and predators is very important. A dry, draft-free coop with ventilation is necessary to help ensure the health of the chickens. In the summer, ventilation

provides a way to keep the interior temperature at a comfortable level. Ventilation in the winter is also necessary, to provide fresh air to the house, and reduce moisture accumulation. If you plan on having just a few chickens and only need a small coop, windows or vents on one or two sides of the coop will usually provide plenty of ventilation. To determine how big of a coop you will need, first decide how many chickens you will have. Laying hens will need one and a half to two square feet per bird inside the coop and broilers (chickens raised for meat production) will need one square foot per chicken. If you do not plan on letting the chickens free range in the yard, a pen or run will also need to be built.

When you bring your chicks home, they may need an extra source of heat, depending on their age and the outside temperature. For the first week, the young chicks should be kept at about 90 to 95° F. The temperature may be lowered 5° F each week until a temperature of 70° F is reached. After,

additional heat source may be necessary only if the outside temperature is extremely cold. A heat lamp can provide additional heat if need. The chicks' behavior is the best indicator of appropriate temperature. Chicks scattered out giving a contented sound are comfortable. Huddled, peeping chicks need additional heat, while those panting with their mouths open need cooler temperatures. It is also important ensure

chicks have access to feed and fresh water when they are brought home.

Doing your homework, selecting the right breed of chicken for your goals, and having a coop ready for the chicks before you bring them home will help you have a successful start to raising chickens.

For more information, please contact Adaven Scronce, Diversified Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, [adaven@ksu.edu](mailto:adaven@ksu.edu) or (620) 331-2690.

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"I'm seeing sparks of curiosity in the online

comments from all over," Browning said. "People are finding it and saying, 'My gosh, I've never even thought or known about this before!' That's really good."



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## Virtual tractor safety class offered by Central Kansas Extension District

This summer thousands of Kansas teenagers will begin their first job working for a farmer or rancher. For those that are ages 14 or 15, they must complete a tractor safety course in order to be legally employed.

To help prepare some of those youth for the

upcoming work season, the Central Kansas Extension District (CKD) will be hosting a virtual tractor safety class using Zoom, a web conferencing technology that will allow students to participate in the session from their home or other remote location – they just

need a reliable internet or cellular connection.

This course will meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Labor's Hazardous Occupations Order for Agriculture (HOOA). The HOOA regulations state that youth 14 and 15 years of age, who wish to work as a

hired employee for someone other than a parent or legal guardian, and operate a farm tractor that is 20 horsepower or greater, must successfully pass a tractor safety training program. This year the local curriculum will combine at-home study with an interactive distance presentation.

The CKD virtual course will be held on Tuesday, May 26 at 8:30 a.m. The cost of the program is \$25. Those wanting to enroll should visit [www.centrankansas.ksu.edu](http://www.centrankansas.ksu.edu) and complete the "Tractor Safety Registration Form". Enrollment

is due by Wednesday, May 13.

The class will be limited to 25 participants. Prospective students can check availability and ask questions prior to registering by calling (785) 309-5850 or emailing [crensink@ksu.edu](mailto:crensink@ksu.edu).

## Crisis creates opportunity for agriculture

**An Op-Ed by Solutions for the Land**  
In good company with many industries, U.S. agriculture is facing one of its biggest crises since the Great Depression of 90 years ago. The new coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has brought with it a seemingly endless series of jolts and unintended shifts to our food chain, endangering the reliability of supply from the American farm sector.

The meat sector has been brutally hit. Producers began culling herds when restaurants started to close in late March. The beef and pork markets have been further disrupted by the closure of more than a dozen processing plants across North America - most owned by some of the world's largest meat producers like Smithfield Foods Inc, Cargill Inc, JBS USA and Tyson Foods Inc. - due to significant COVID-19 outbreaks among workers.

About half of all beef and pork products are sold to restaurants, which have been mostly closed for weeks due to shutdown orders prompted by the pandemic. Beef processing capacity is down by more than 10 percent and pork by as much as 25 percent, industry leaders say.

Another prominent example of the pandemic's harsh and volatile impact on the nation's farmers and others in the food supply chain are the disruptions occurring in the dairy industry. Producers have been dumping millions of gallons of milk over the past month. With the sudden drop in the wholesale, food-service market resulting from the closure of schools and restaurants,

dairy processing plants have yet to catch up with the packaging and logistical changes that must come with a massive shift in demand for dairy products at grocery stores and other retail outlets.

The fresh fruit and vegetable sector is also reeling from losses attributable to the pandemic. Florida produce growers were reporting losses of more than \$520 million thus far this season, while the nation's potato growers say their \$4-billion industry has been devastated, given that 60 percent of their market is in a food service industry that has been virtually shut down for a month. USDA announced April 17 a \$2.7-billion financial support package targeting the fruit and vegetable sector. That support is divided, with \$2.1 billion allocated for direct payments to growers and \$100 million per month set aside in each of the next six months for purchasing produce.

At the global level, the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition is rising. As documented in the fourth annual Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC 2020), in the 55 countries covered by the survey, 135 million people were classified as being in the "crisis or worse" category; 183 million were classified as "experiencing stressed conditions"; 75 million children were stunted and another 17 million were suffering from wasting. These tragic conditions, fueled by conflict, climate shocks and poor economic activity, will likely deepen as the full impact of the global pandemic is realized. In response, UN Secretary General António Guterres has issued an urgent call to action to address the co-joined food security, public health and environmental challenges the world is facing.

As challenging as these current conditions are, they do create opportunities to underscore the critical role agriculture plays in not only ensuring a healthy food supply, but also in making the world a better place to live.

In the coming weeks and months, SFL will be proactively advocating for strategic pathways that enable all forms and scales of agriculture to:

Reduce hunger and improve nutrition by supporting the production of fruits, vegetables, animal proteins and food-grade grains for human consumption.

Create jobs and generate economic growth by diver-

sifying and sustainably intensifying production and processing of food, feed, fiber, and renewable energy.

Augment ecosystem services to improve the environment, enhance the resilience of agricultural and forested landscapes and improve the farmer's bottom line under a changing and uncertain

To achieve these outcomes, transformational change will be required. The policies of the past are already failing to meet the unprecedented needs and challenges of today - let alone tomorrow. To sustainably intensify production, enhance resilience to climate and other shocks, and move the world towards achieving global sustainable development goals, we need to innovate.

Just a few examples of such innovations include: implementing landscape scale solutions and multi-stakeholder partnerships; harmonizing policy frameworks and reducing or eliminating overlapping and contradictory regulations; rewarding farmers, ranchers and foresters for the ecosystem services they produce; energizing and better coordinating research; transforming and modernizing information networks; and committing to mechanisms and policies that benefit all scales of production and provide profitable agricultural livelihoods.

SfL genuinely appreciates the difficult job those in our nation's agriculture sector are taking on, especially while burdened with our current food chain difficulties. Even in the midst of today's mayhem, they continue to provide essential water quality benefits and carbon sequestration services along with the food we eat. It is with that broad sense of appreciation that SfL pursues its goal: By 2030, America's farms, ranches and forests will be at the forefront of resolving food system, energy, environmental and climate challenges, and achieving global sustainable development goals.

## Marshall requests update on packer investigation

U.S. Rep. Roger Marshall, M.D. joined former House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Frank Lucas (R-OK) and a bipartisan group of their House colleagues in sending a letter to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue asking him to provide the findings of the USDA's beef pricing investigation as soon as possible.

The investigation, which was opened in August 2019 following the plant fire in Holcomb, was extended in March to include the cause of divergence between the price of live beef and boxed beef during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I hear from livestock owners every day who are concerned about the future of their operation and the viability of the industry," said Marshall.

"We applauded Secretary Perdue's announcement in March that the USDA was expanding its ongoing investigation in the cattle market's reaction to the 2019 plant fire in Holcomb to encompass the more recent COVID-19 market-related concerns. But our livestock owners have waited and suffered long enough. I will continue to encourage USDA to share the findings once the investigation is complete so that livestock owners and Congress have an opportunity to better understand the situation and how we can address it. The volatility Kansas livestock owners have endured during the pandemic has been difficult to manage and the added uncertainty going forward will only continue to diminish prices and optimism among producers."

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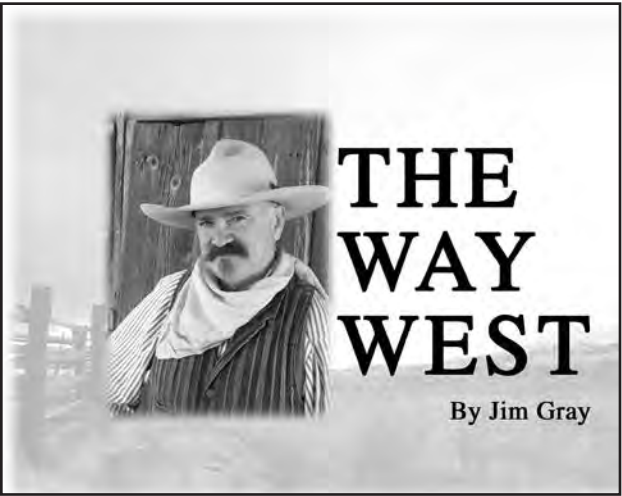
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## His Last Tramp

Frontier Kansas was plagued with all kinds of scoundrels out to rob, steal, and cheat their way through life. Gamblers, horse thieves, and confidence men seemed to be around every corner. Men of limited means known as tramps could be added to the list. The tramp was looked upon as a great nuisance, “a nomadic son of poverty” who shunned work to make his living by theft and begging for

handouts.

The May 9, 1878, *Nebraska Advertiser* advised readers to make tramps work at the woodpile before feeding them. “Make them earn it.” The *Advertiser* continued, “If they will not do that, they are not very hungry. A rigid determination on the part of the people not to feed those who will not work will cure the tramping business sooner than anything else.”

The economic panic of

1873 was the first and the longest global depression in the era of industrial capitalism. The effects of the panic further concentrated capital in the hands of the very wealthy, extending the depression well into 1879. Men thrown out of work traveled the country, often “riding the rails” on the railroads crossing America. The country was experiencing a cultural shift. Growing industrialization witnessed a migration from the farms to the cities as young men traded the independence of farm life for wages. A decade earlier the long, punishing march of troops to battle was called a “tramp.” When the panic left tens of thousands of men without jobs they struck out across the county on their own “tramp.” Homeless and out of work men with no visible means of support assaulted America’s cities and towns like a “great army of tramps” with little hope for the future.

In the culture of the tramp the beginnings of union organization could vaguely be distinguished.

Many of the men whose original intent to find work gave in to unemployment, often refusing paying jobs as some sort of badge of honor. There seemed to be a semblance of organization understood only by the initiated. Travelers left chalk marks at points along their route for the guidance of those that followed. At crossroads a chalked arrow was left on large rocks or tree trunks to point the way to a rendezvous camp. Different signs made in different colors of chalk formed a rudimentary form of communication. The men often traveled in groups, but upon reaching a town or city the tramps would separate, going through and begging one at a time.

The older men seemed to be able to elicit a degree of compassion with a pitiful story generally “gotten up without regard to truth.” The young fellows usually had a difficult time getting food of any description. When asked why they didn’t find work they always expressed a readiness to work but professed

a trade in which employment was not offered in that locality.

At Omaha, Nebraska, tramps were overwhelming the city. During a rash of thefts and robberies a Committee of Safety made up of one hundred fifty men was organized in early May, 1878. To protect the community from the vagabond beggars besieging the city the committee searched the city thoroughly, capturing all suspected tramps. According to reports, “The committee will continue to act nightly until the tramp nuisance is abated.”

The action in Omaha had far-reaching implications. At Beverly Station, Missouri, a short distance east of Leavenworth, Kansas, an otherwise empty railcar was diverted to a lonely siding. The car was full of tramps believed to have been driven from Omaha by the Committee of Safety. According to the May 16, 1878, *Leavenworth Times*, “These passengers, seeing their coach thus set aside, and not caring to camp out at a place where

railroad iron and cross-ties were the only articles of diet, made a rush for the train just as it was gliding out from the depot.”

Most tramps were quite adept at boarding a moving railcar and all made it in safety except one. While climbing up, his foot slipped, he lost his grip, and fell under the car, his body lying across the track. “...the cruel iron wheel of the heavy car passing over him across the middle of his body, rending and tearing the flesh, and cutting him clean in twain.”

Before the train could be brought to a halt, every car had passed over him, “mangling him beyond all recognition.” The editor felt but a “twinge of sorrow” at the untimely death of a man who had made “His Last Tramp” 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](mailto:kansascowboy@kans.com).

# ASA, USB, soy states offer #SoyHelp to overcome farm stress

The American Soybean Association (ASA) COVID-19 Task Force conducted a survey in April regarding the effects of COVID-19 on soy growers, their operations, employees, and families. Stress reported by the 86 farmer respondents from across the soy-producing states was high. ASA, state soybean affiliates, and the United Soybean Board (USB) want to help.

This May, during Mental Health Month, ASA is launching a proactive communications campaign to combat #FarmStress and offer #SoyHelp. Help comes in many forms and from many sources, and ASA has researched a range of options that will be shared both nationally and by state soybean affiliates:

National mental health resources, including suicide hotlines and crisis centers

Agriculture-specific resources for farmers and farm families, both national and state

COVID-19-specific resources for stress and other concerns, both national and state

“Stress levels have crept up out there in farm communities for some time now,” said Kevin Scott, soybean farmer from South Dakota and chair of the ASA C-19 Task Force. “As farmers, we are all faced with varying levels of anxiety resulting from a host of concerns - the coronavirus pandemic, weather issues, China trade problems, and other farm stressors. But, knowing there are issues compounding out there and knowing how to

# Livestock Marketing Association to focus on pricing investigations

**By Larry Schnell for Livestock Marketing Association**

To say times are tough in cattle country would be an understatement. Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) member livestock auction owners and their producer customers are speaking up with significant concerns about volatility, the futures market, and especially, livestock producers not getting their fair share of the beef dollar. While COVID-19 and the Holcomb pack-

ing plant fire last August are bringing these issues further to the forefront, they are illustrations of long-standing concerns regarding pricing and competition.

Livestock auction markets are an integral part of the process of price discovery, but our value is totally dependent on the success and profitability of the cow-calf producer, and the cattle feeder.

LMA supports the ongoing efforts by livestock organizations and individu-

als to bring about a pricing mechanism that would better serve the cattle feeder, and thereby the cattle producer. Our businesses are rooted in achieving competitive prices for cattle producers, and we want to see this occur throughout the beef supply chain.

To help bring that about, LMA is focusing on the investigations of the differential between the wholesale price of beef and the price that cattle feeders are receiving for their cattle. Beyond en-

couraging these investigations, LMA is conducting independent research and having additional discussions to pinpoint specific areas of concern for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Justice, and hopefully, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This includes looking at futures market issues in addition to issues with fed cattle pricing.

The cattle industry needs answers regarding what is behind the dramat-

ic spread between live cattle and boxed beef prices, and these investigations are critical in answering these questions. Our goal is long-term solutions that will address problems within finished cattle marketing, and a pricing mechanism that results in profitability for all segments of the industry.

These are uncertain times, and this is a difficult task. But with every challenge also comes opportunity. Consumer attention is on the fundamentals of

life – and ready access to high-quality protein is one of them. Congresspeople are hearing from their cattle country constituents, and they want to help.

At LMA, we are dedicated to working with our legislative and industry allies for the betterment of the livestock industry and our consumer customers. If we focus on this, and we are successful, we’ll be setting up cattle producers to enjoy the good times and weather the tough ones for generations to come.

# Corn emerging in one-week window has little impact on yield, says MU research

Research by University of Missouri Extension agronomists shows that there is little yield difference in unevenly emerged corn.

MU Extension agronomist Bill Wiebold researched corn emergence’s effect on yield in 2010 and 2011.

Wiebold tagged individual plants from emergence through harvest. He compared the weight and height of early-emerging, mid-emerging and late-emerging plants.

He then hand-harvested and shelled corn ears, weighed kernels and calculated yield. He found little yield difference if plants emerged within a week of each other.

Wiebold’s research dispels concerns that yields decrease when smaller, later-emerging plants compete for nutrients and

sunlight with larger, earlier-emerging plants.

Uneven soil moisture and uneven temperatures in the seed zone are the primary reasons for uneven emergence. Other reasons include soil crusting, shallow seed depth, poor soil contact, cool weather and too few growing degree days to develop strong root systems.

Emergence times may vary between parts of a field, from one row to the next, or even from one plant to the next.

Uneven corn is certainly undesirable, but most uneven stands do not warrant replanting, says MU Extension specialist Greg Luce.

Luce cites research from Wisconsin and Illinois Extension agronomists showing a 6-9% yield loss in unevenly emerged plots having a week and

a half delay. When they compared the yield loss due to later replant, their data showed less than a 5% yield recoup gained from replanting. Luce adds that the final population is most critical.

To help farmers estimate dollar gain or loss from replanting, Wiebold and MU Extension agron-

omist Ray Massey created the MU Replant Decision Aid. The spreadsheet can be downloaded along with the MU Extension guide “Corn and Soybean Replant Decisions” at [extension2.missouri.edu/g4091](http://extension2.missouri.edu/g4091).

Luce says the right planting depth improves chances for a good stand with even emergence and

better yield potential. New research from USDA Agricultural Research Service soil scientist Newell Kitchen and MU master’s student Stirling Stewart shows planting depth corresponds to the window for emergence.

“Too shallow planting leads to far more problems than planting too deep,”

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We are all trying to re-group and reorganize the year's schedule. We are still working with the unknown, and making the best of it (The truth is, this is always the human condition. Some circumstances just make us more aware of it). We plan and then deal with what comes.

Plans are full speed ahead for autumn and 2021. The Fort Wallace Museum has moved its annual rodeo from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend. Then, the following week-end, we are holding our "Harvesting the Plains" encampment with buffalo hunters and their camps, Native camps, military and pioneer camps – all those folks who harvested the bounty of the plains. Since this will be outside, social distancing, if still required, should not be that difficult. It sure wasn't for them.

The Fort Wallace Museum events theme for 2021 will be "Taking the Smoky Hill Trail to Santa Fe" and we will highlight the connections between the two historic trails with an emphasis on the story of Sheridan, our own "Hell on Wheels."

The Santa Fe Trail Association is encouraging communities along the Trail to incorporate the Trail's story into their annual events. We do not want to steal audience from the small towns who work so hard to make those events happen, and we want to reach those audiences. We are asking you to help us take this history to the entire country. A 200-year-anniversary only comes around, well, every 200 years, so this gives us a very unique opportunity.

The symposium will be held in La Junta, Colorado (Used To Be Kansas), September 23-26. With the proximity to Bent's Old Fort, there will be tours and lots of expertise on hand. Visit [santafetrail.org](http://santafetrail.org) for more information.

Let me know your plans so that we can share them with our friends Around Kansas.

*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 chairs the Santa Fe Trail 200 in 2021. Contact her at [author.debgoodrich@gmail.com](mailto:author.debgoodrich@gmail.com).*

# K-State plans "Troubleshooting Uncertain Times in the Beef Industry" webinar

Registration is now open for a webinar that will assist Kansas beef cattle producers as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19.

"This webinar is being conducted to help beef producers assess their current nutrition and management strategies in light of the challenges to the beef market created by COVID-19," says Dr. Dale Blasi, K-State beef cattle Extension specialist. "The availability of distillers grains as a consequence of COVID is in short supply and as a result, many of the attributes that this co-product provides in protein supply, moisture attributes to the ration and etc. have created challenges for producers as they identify alternative feed ingredients to use in its place."

The program will feature brief updates on the current

## How atrazine regulations have influenced the environment

To combat weeds, farmers use a variety of tools and methods. By understanding the strengths and downfall of each tool, a farmer can make the best decisions for his or her operation to keep pesky weeds out of the field.

One tool farmers can turn to for weed control is applying herbicides. New research is helping us understand a specific herbicide even better: atrazine.

Atrazine is one of the most common herbicides used in the United States. It can be used to manage weeds in crops like corn, sorghum, sugarcane and turf. The chemical kills weeds by preventing photosynthesis in the plant.

A benefit of herbicides, like those with atrazine, is that they reduce the need for tillage. In addition to its effects on soil health,

tillage can increase erosion of precious soil. Reducing tillage conserves our soil by preventing erosion and maintaining healthy soil structure.

A downfall of atrazine, though, is that it can sometimes make its way into streams and rivers.

After the chemical is applied to a field, atrazine breaks down in the soil and turns into another compound, called deethylatrazine (DEA). This is a good thing, since DEA is less toxic to aquatic organisms than atrazine.

In recent years, atrazine use has been decreasing. However, despite the decrease in atrazine use, concentrations of the secondary compound, DEA, have been increasing.

Karen Ryberg and her team thought there must be more to this puzzle than just atrazine use.

Ryberg, who works at the United States Geological Survey, wanted to determine the factors, other than usage, that influence trends in herbicide concentrations in streams.

The most common conversion of atrazine to DEA is through the activity of soil microbes – like fungi and bacteria. Therefore, atrazine breaks down quicker when it has more contact with soil micro-organisms.

"Based on previous studies, we predicted factors affecting the atrazine concentrations in streams," says Ryberg. "These included corn acres in the watershed, weather, climate and management practices."

"In our study, we used existing data from 2002 to 2012 spanning many areas of the country," explains Ryberg. Then models were used to analyze the data and test the team's predictions of what caused the atrazine and DEA trends in the streams.

In the 1990s, new regulations addressed surface water contamination concerns. These regulations

market situation from K-State Agricultural Economist Dr. Glynn Tonsor and a discussion on alternative protein sources led by Extension specialists Dr. Jaymelyn Farney and Dr. Justin Waggoner. Blasi will address nutrition and management considerations that may be implemented by producers growing cattle in these challenging times.

Hosted by the K-State Animal Sciences and Industry Department and K-State Research and Extension, the webinar will be conducted via Zoom on Thursday, May 14, at noon.

Register prior to the event online at <https://tinyurl.com/KSUBeef-UncertainTimes> or at [www.KSUBeef.org](http://www.KSUBeef.org). For questions about the event or to register, please contact Lois Schreiner, [lschrein@ksu.edu](mailto:lschrein@ksu.edu), 785-532-1267.

lowered application rates of atrazine for crops, and even prohibited its use near water wells. The goal was to reduce the overall concentration of atrazine in water.

"Concentration and use trends show that past atrazine regulations, especially in the Midwest, were successful," says Ryberg. "More of the atrazine broke down into DEA before reaching streams."

Despite an increase in the amount of corn acres grown between 2002 and 2012, the study showed atrazine use decreased in most areas of the United States.

Ryberg's study also discovered that atrazine turns into DEA faster in dry areas without tile drainage. Tile drains can be installed underground in farm fields to help move water and prevent flooding. Tile drains are like stormwater drains for farm fields.

Because tile drains help water from the field move faster through underground pipes, the water has less time to come in contact with soil. Therefore, soil micro-organisms have less time to break

down atrazine to DEA before water carries it out of the field toward nearby streams.

This finding means there may be more challenges with atrazine levels in the future. As farmers anticipate climate change and wetter field conditions, more tile drains may be needed in order to grow crops in adequate soil conditions.

Moving forward, Ryberg would like to build on this research for monitoring pesticides. "Ongoing monitoring is important to understand the degradation and transport processes of pesticides," explains Ryberg.

Farmers will continue to adapt to changing conditions, including weed communities. Pesticide usage will change, and it is an ongoing challenge to monitor for new pesticides or mixtures of pesticides in the environment.

Read more about this research in the *Journal of Environmental Quality*. This project was funded by the USGS National Water Quality Program's National Water-Quality Assessment Project.

## USDA plan will help farmers and food banks

The USDA April 24 laid out its plan to award contracts to the private sector to purchase meat, dairy and produce for distribution to the nation's food banks and other nonprofits addressing hunger. The USDA is authorized to spend \$3 billion on hunger relief during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and Feeding America, the country's largest hunger relief organization, sent a letter to the USDA requesting a nimble approach to quickly and effectively get food from America's farms to the nation's food banks.

American Farm Bureau president Zippy Duvall said the following:

"We applaud the USDA for empowering the private sector to help solve the challenges associated with harvesting, packaging and transporting millions of pounds of food from farms to food banks and other nonprofits working to ensure no one goes hungry.

"Every day that passes, fresh produce is being plowed under and milk is being disposed of while long lines form at many food banks. USDA is demonstrating a willingness to try a new approach to find solutions to these challenges. We stand ready to help in any way we can."

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# Grass & Grain Area Auctions and Sales

Due to the uncertainty of recent events, if you still plan to attend any of the following auctions, please contact the auction company to confirm that the auction has not been postponed and will be conducted.

Always great online Equipment auctions — [www.purplewave.com](http://www.purplewave.com).

Online Auction for Ken & Norma King Estate — opens May 14 (bidding closes May 20) held online at [hollingerauction.hibid.com/auctions/current](http://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 On-line Auctions.

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 Ingemannson Trust. Auctioneers: Horizon Farm & Ranch Realty, LLC., Ray Swearingen.

May 16 — Tractors & farm machinery including Ford 601 Workmaster, Iseki TS 1610 diesel, 2015 Vicon Extra 124 disc mower & more; misc. farm supplies & items, shop tools & misc., horse related items, lawn & garden, guns, antiques, household & collectibles

held at Haven for Estate of Jonas R. Bontrager, by Irene Bontrager. Auctioneers: Morris Yoder Auctions.

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 Ingemannson Farms, Ingemannson Trusts. Auctioneers: Horizon 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](http://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 — Tractors and skid steer, trailers, vehicle, ATV, hay & misc. equipment, miscellaneous held at Lecompton for Randy & Nancy Cree. Auctioneers: Moore Auction Service, Inc., Jamie Moore.

May 23 (RESCHEDULED from April 4) — Farm machinery including tractors, combines, 3 pt. equipment & much more; trucks (2 Freightliner FL70s), trailer, grain cart, ATV, livestock equipment, shop power & hand tools, guns, antiques & collectibles & much more. Large auction held near Minneapolis for Gerald Newell Estate. (See March 24 Grass & Grain for complete ad.) Auctioneers: Bacon Auction Co., Royce Bacon.

May 30 (RESCHEDULED from April 11) — Guns & related items, automobiles & trailers, antiques & collectibles including a Great Western wood burning stove,

Hiawatha child's wagon & more; Jazzy power chair scooter Elite, household furniture & appliances, shop power equipment & tools, livestock equipment & misc., Lonestar aluminum 14' V-haul Model 780 game fisher boat. Large auction held near Bennington for Bill Whitman. (See March 31 Grass & Grain for complete ad.) Auctioneers: Bacon Auction Co., Royce Bacon.

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.

June 6 — Consignment auction including farm equipment, construction, semi-trailer, horse trailers, guns, welders, tools, zero turn mowers, skid loader attachments, new electric motors, El Dorado batteries, household & more held at Salina from sellers including Great Plains Mfg., Landpride, G.P. Trucking, ElDorado, Dr. Jenkins Estate, Circle W Cattle Co. Auctioneers: Wilson Realty & Auction Service, Lonnie Wilson.

June 20 — Spring Consignment auction held at Holton. Auctioneers: Harris Auction Service, Dan & Larry Harris.

June 20 — (RESCHEDULED from May 23) — Collectibles & household held at Frankfort for Donna & Nilwon (Nick) Kraushaar Estate. Auctioneers: Olmsted & Sandstrom.

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.

## Kansas ranchers connect virtually with consumers during Beef Month

Although the coronavirus has upended many long-held traditions, Beef Month and the many contributions of those in the beef community will not be overlooked. If anything, the pandemic has put a spotlight on the vital role those in food production play in the stability of the nation.

“As the past few months have shown, the Kansas beef industry is essential to the food supply not only here in Kansas, but across the nation and the world,” said Kansas Agriculture Secretary Mike Beam. “We appreciate everyone who is a part of the Kansas beef industry and thank them for their daily commitment to producing the high-quality beef that is part of the heritage of this great state.”

To celebrate Beef Month during May, the Kansas Beef Council will be providing consumers with grilling recipes, nutrition facts and virtual tours. To accomplish the latter, producers across the state donned Go-Pro video cameras and opened their operations and homes to give consumers a behind-the-scenes look at a day in the life of a Kansas rancher.

“Grocery shoppers are often disconnected from the intricacies of the food supply chain, so explaining disruptions can be difficult,” said Brandi Buzzard Frobose, a rancher in Anderson County who participated in the project. “Just like how our work on the ranch never stops, we must also never stop reaching out to consumers to give them accurate information about what we do to raise beef. Because if we don't, who will?”

According to KBC chairman Dan Harris, the videos, and Beef Month in general, are a testimony to the hard work that never stops for Kansas beef producers. He commends his fellow cattlemen and cattlemen for their resiliency in trying times, and their uncanny ability to triumph in the face of adversity. The videos will be posted throughout the month of May on the KBC Facebook page, YouTube and Instagram accounts.

## NRCS announces Monarch Butterfly Habitat Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding application cutoff for May 29

Troy J. Munsch, acting state conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced funding to help landowners improve, restore, manage, and conserve habitat for Monarch butterflies on agricultural and tribal lands. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has joined NRCS in a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to offer financial assistance to help agricultural producers increase milkweed and monarch nesting plants on agricultural land to improve habitat needs for Monarch butterflies.

“This is a great opportunity for us to work together,” said Munsch. “Monarch butterflies are an important element in the pollination of crops and other types of plants.”

NRCS is providing funding through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP). There will be a fiscal year 2020 CStP application evaluation period for this RCPP project. The application evaluation period will be for ap-

plications received by May 29, 2020.

Targeted areas where CStP funds will be available for agricultural producers interested in implementing conservation practices include all counties in Kansas. Funding will go toward conservation improvement practices such as milkweed plantings, pollinator plantings, brush management, prescribed grazing, as well as others.

For more information contact Sharonté E. Williams by phone at (785) 823-

4569 or email [sharonte.williams@usda.gov](mailto:sharonte.williams@usda.gov).

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Program staff will continue to work with producers by phone, and using online tools. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with NRCS are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

## USDA announces \$100 million for American biofuels infrastructure

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture intends to make available up to \$100 million in competitive grants for activities designed to expand the availability and sale of renewable fuels.

“America's energy independence is critical to our economic security, and President Trump fully recognizes the importance of our ethanol and biofuels industries and the positive impacts they deliver to consumers and farmers with an affordable, abundant, and clean burning fuel,” Perdue said. “American ethanol and biofuel producers have been affected by decreased energy demands due to the coronavirus, and these grants to expand their availability will help increase their use during our economic resurgence.”

The Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP) consist of up to \$100 million in funding for competitive grants or sales incentives to eligible entities for activities designed to expand the sales and use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels. Funds will be made directly available to assist transportation fueling and biodiesel distribution facilities with converting to higher ethanol and biodiesel blends by sharing the costs related to and/or offering sales incentives for the installation of fuel pumps, related equipment, and infrastructure.

Additional Information: USDA is making the grants available under the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP). The program is intended to increase significantly the sale and use of higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel by expanding the infrastructure for renewable fuels derived from U.S. agricultural products.

Grants for up to 50 percent of total eligible project costs, but not more than \$5 million, are available to vehicle fueling facilities, including, but not limited to, local fueling stations/locations, convenience stores,

hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, fuel terminal operations, midstream partners and/or distribution facilities.

USDA plans to make available approximately \$86 million for implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol, and approximately \$14 million for implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel. Higher biofuel blends are fuels containing ethanol greater than 10 percent by volume and/or fuels containing biodiesel blends greater than five percent by volume.

For application information and other program details, see the public inspection notice in the Federal Register, or visit the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program web page.

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