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Berning family loves farming in Scott City

Editor's Note: This is the fourth installment of our 2023 Fall Harvest Series, sponsored by Santee Steel, Herra Machine Hydrostatics, Kopper Kutter and Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission.

By Lucas Shivers

With deep passion for their community where they raise crops and family in western Kansas, Jon and Terri Berning love Scott City.

"Scott City, and western Kansas in general, holds a place near and dear to our hearts," Jon said. "That's why we want to see the place thrive. It's got a ton of great people and community."

The Berning family farms 25,000 acres, mostly in Scott County.

"We've grown a lot in the last couple years," Berning said. "Farming is more challenging now than ever. It's hard to get ground and be steady with the agronomic aspects. Everything has its challenges with ups and downs."

Looking to fall crops, western Kansas raises a large percentage of sorghum, and Kansas consistently ranks as the top sorghum-producing state.

The U.S. is the world's largest grain sorghum producer used for mostly livestock. The "sorghum belt" extends from South Dakota through Kansas and down to Texas.

"We should be in the driver's seat with this crop," Berning said. "One of the biggest current problems is weed control in sorghum. We're trying all sorts of things to support yields and sustainability."

Harvest 2023

Jon shared that the milo for the fall harvest this cycle looks strong.

"We got pretty lucky



The Bernings farm 17,000 acres evenly split between corn and milo. Courtesy photos

early by snagging some rain early in the summer," Berning said. "It's looking a little dry now, but it's all pretty good with hopefully 100 bushels-plus. Being totally optimistic, if we could have gotten a little more in late August for rains, we'd be ideal – but no weatherman would predict it."

With his parents, Jon's family farms 17,000 acres of milo and corn evenly split.

"I grew up here with my dad who really went out on his own in 1990," Berning said. "So, it's all I've ever wanted to do. I came back from KSU in 1994 and have been doing it ever since."

Traditionally, custom harvest crews came through on contract to cut the crops for the family.

"We used to have everything custom-cut because we were pretty small and it didn't make any sense to do our own," Berning said. "But about seven years ago, I decided to get a combine for the future generations of my family who didn't have any experience. The young guys like my son and nephew wanted to get the experience with harvest routines."

The Bernings built a great team to support the scope of the operation.

"We've been fortunate to have plenty of help, and we want to keep growing to look for more," Berning said. "My dad is a smart man and has done really well to pass the farm on to my brother Nick and me."



Berning family members pictured from left in a recent wedding photo are: Hayden, Quinn, Jorden, Magin, Pearce, Keegan, Macy, Terri, Jon and Jaren.

Fun with Family

Jon's parents, Terry and Louise, both come from generations of farm families.

"I am the fifth-generation farmer," Jon said. "My mom's great-grandfather had one of the first irrigation systems in the west as a progressive for his day in Scott County. It's still that way today."

Married to a hometown girl, Terri and Jon raised their now-grown kids: Jorden, who has a wife and three kids; their daughter Macy and new husband Keegan live in Scott City; and youngest son Jaren who helps on the family farm.

"We don't want to take anything for granted," Berning said. "Our whole extended family is in the close area. For example this summer, I had eye surgery, and my family took control of the wheat harvest and ran the whole show."

Scott City Diehards

Born and raised as farm kids in Scott City, the Bernings are fully committed to their hometown.

"I did limited FFA and played football, basketball and baseball in high school," Jon said. "We won state football for three years. You can't ask for anything better. When I was a freshman and my older brother was a senior, we won it all!"

The team came close in Jon's sophomore year, and they won state again his junior and senior years.

"In my senior year, we went undefeated and earned another championship," Berning said. "People don't know how much it means. You put a championship in a team, and it can change a kid's life."

Scott City has a long history of sports and been fortunate to be good at a lot of athletics for a long time.

"Through COVID and currently, I'm on the school

board," Berning said. "It's something everyone should do as a civic duty. Everyone has an opinion, but not everyone wants to step up."

Service over Self

Jon also serves on the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission. The commission is committed to sorghum promotion, research and information designed to strengthen, expand and develop new foreign and domestic markets for sorghum.

"It's good to be on the leading and cutting edge with the board," Berning said. "It's amazing to get us all steered in the right direction. We have great leadership."

The Commission assists in the development of markets, consumer education and promotion of grain sorghum to enhance producer profitability.

"It's an awesome place with knowledgeable people," he said.

Senator Marshall hosts Ag Mental Health roundtable in Topeka

U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, M.D. recently hosted an Ag Mental Health roundtable to kick off his Ag Mental Health Awareness campaign at the Kansas Soybean Association in Topeka. This roundtable discussion addressed meeting the mental health needs for the agriculture community. Marshall was joined by health care leaders across the state, K-State Research and Extension professionals, Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Farmers Union, and more.

Currently, farmers are facing numerous obstacles and stresses that are outside of their control. The roundtable focused on breaking the stigma around mental health care and encouraging farmers and ranchers to utilize the resources available to them if they are experiencing increased stress, depression, or suicidal thoughts.

Highlights from the roundtable include:

"September is National Suicide Awareness Month. Farmers and ranchers have a 3.5 times higher chance of suicide than the average profession. The stressors in agriculture are very, very real. The pressure of being a fifth, sixth, seventh generation farmer or rancher – those stressors are very



Ag industry representatives gathered at the Kansas Soybean Association in Topeka last week for an Ag Mental Health roundtable to kick off Sen. Roger Marshall's Ag Mental Health Awareness campaign.

Courtesy photo

real. Our goal this month is to get the word out to our farmers and ranchers that they are not alone, that there are resources to help you," Marshall said.

"The ag industry, we take care of each other. So, giving our producers and giving farmers tools to help recognize when they need help or maybe when one of their friends or family needs help is important. It can be hard to talk about our physical or mental health, but it is critical for our rural communities. And there are

good resources out there that those in need may not know about so we are trying to raise that awareness," CEO of the Kansas Soybean Association Kaleb Little said.

"There are a number of resources available through Kansas State Research and Extension to assist producers and their families. That it is okay to reach out for help. You are not alone. Help is available," Dr. Peterson, associate director Extension programs, Kansas State Research and Extension said.

"The work being done by Senator Marshall and the rest of the representatives, especially during Suicide Prevention Month, to provide resources to our farmers and ranchers is greatly appreciated. It is important that we continue to have discussions

like those the Senator is putting together to raise awareness, and provide

critical resources to our farmers and ranchers that are struggling," Taylor

Marshall co-sponsors USDA investment in farmer and rancher mental health

U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, M.D. recently launched an Ag Mental Health Awareness campaign. September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Marshall is working with Agriculture organizations across the state to bring attention to the mental health resources available to farmers, ranchers, and other members of rural communities.

Senator Marshall endorsed and co-sponsored the Farmers First Act of 2023, bipartisan legislation that supports the administration of mental health services for farmers and ranchers in rural areas and expands access to critical mental health support and resources.

"At this time of volatility in the agriculture sector and the global economy, we must ensure that our farmers and ranchers are given all the support necessary to continue moving forward, including strong mental health infrastructure," Marshall said. "I am proud to work with our local leaders and help raise awareness of the resources across the state and decrease the stigma of taking care of prioritizing mental health."

The Farmers First Act of 2023 will reauthorize the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN), a program that connects farmers, ranchers, and other agriculture workers to stress assistance programs and resources. Through FRSAN, state departments of agriculture, state extension services, and nonprofits receive funding to establish helplines, provide suicide prevention training for farm advocates, and create support groups for farmers and farm workers. The Farmers First Act of 2023 would increase funding for the program, authorizing \$15 million per year for the program for the next five years, up from \$10 million.



Trade and Possibilities

By Greg Doering, Kansas Farm Bureau

Kansas farmers and ranchers set a new record for agricultural exports in 2022 by shipping nearly \$5.5 billion worth of food and farm-grown products to other countries. About half of that total came from our neighbors. Mexico and Canada, first and third, respectively, are crucial partners not only because of proximity but also a robust free-trade framework. Japan's desire for quality beef put it in the second spot to round out the top three.

That's a big impact for a small state, but this trade wasn't a one-sided deal either. As Kansas and the U.S. in general shipped corn and wheat to Mexico, we also imported tequila, tomatoes and avocados to make taco night more fun and tasty, too.

Trading with Canada and Japan is a similar give-and-take with beneficial results for everyone, especially those who enjoy seafood. I enjoy a good filet of fried catfish as much as anyone, but I'm willing to

bet bluefin tuna is superior for making sushi.

These exchanges are a lot like life, and not every trade partner is a good or desirable one. But for farmers and ranchers, trade is vital for two reasons. First, American farms and ranches are the most efficient in the world, and they grow far more than the domestic market would ever come close to consuming. Second, overseas consumers also have different tastes than you and I do.

There's not a large market for things like tongue, intestines and organ meat in the U.S., where offal is more likely to be discarded than consumed. But for other regions, these items are often sought after as delicacies. Trade helps meet this demand, lowers the local price and increases the value of animals raised by U.S. farmers and ranchers.

Food isn't the only thing that benefits from trade, it's just a personal favorite. Cross-border transactions have the potential to create wealth by

leveraging comparative advantage and specialization across the globe. Different climates and soils paired with opposing seasons and tastes are just a few reasons why food trade is valuable to anyone who likes variety.

Agriculture is the reason the United States has the largest economy in the world, but it's not because we grow the most food. While farmers and ranchers occupy much of the vast area of the United States, they're just a small portion of the 330 million Americans. Less than 2 percent, in fact. And while we certainly enjoy the fruits of the labor, the other 98 percent of us are free to hone our skills and innovate to create things we couldn't have otherwise.

If you break down Kansas' ag exports by commodity, then the state's second most valuable export was meat and offal. Grains like corn and wheat were fourth, followed by oil seeds like soybeans in sixth place. First, third and fifth were aircraft and parts, industrial machinery and electric machinery, respectively.

So, the next time you fly on an airplane or pick up a power tool or just check your cell phone, give thanks to farmers and ranchers. They didn't invent airplanes, power tools, cell phones or any of the other 21st century technologies we enjoy, but their work made them possible.

"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.

KDA hosting Secure Food Supply webinar Sept. 26

The Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health, is hosting a webinar series focused on Secure Food Supply plans.

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, September 26, from 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Dr. Justin Smith, Kansas animal health commissioner, will be discussing the Stop Movement Order during a disease outbreak.

The webinar is free, but registration is required.

For more information, contact Kelly Oliver at kelly.oliver@ks.gov.



This is my birthday week. I suppose I should be more excited, but I am at the point in my life where my birthday is really just another day, especially when it is not a "big" birthday. This year will be especially uneventful since I will be at a meeting all day and my main objective is to make sure no one knows it is my birthday. I prefer for the day to go by somewhat unnoticed. Well, except for a cake and maybe a steak dinner.

This past trip around the sun has been a good one. Could it have gone better? I suppose it hasn't been the best year on the farm. Between dry weather, inflation, rising costs, sinking prices and a multitude of other potholes in the road to happiness, it has been a tough year in agriculture. But you know what? I am still here and sometimes survival is a win. I got to do what I love, and it looks like I get to do it again next year. We all know that next year will be better.

Last year on the eve of my birthday, I couldn't have imagined how the year would have gone. For starters I got to go to the other side of the world and see and experience things I would have never guessed I would get to do. A year ago, Africa was not even on my radar, that alone made for a memorable year. To think that I thought going to Puerto Rico would be the biggest trip of the year. Little did I know. I also feel the need to say that before Africa, Puerto Rico was my favorite travel experience to date. Will this next year top all of that?

More important than the travel, I felt the best I have in several years. I cannot say enough about the difference two new hips have made on the quality of my life. Each day they feel better and each day I am able to do more. If joint replacement is something you are putting off, don't: quality of life is important. Each passing day I find that I am doing things I haven't done in years and many times I don't even realize it.

I think the best part of the past year is that Jennifer and I got to watch our kids become successful and begin to take off on their adult lives. One child

finished school and found a permanent job and by this time next year both will be in the working world. I am not sure how that happened; as I tell new parents, don't blink because in a flash your kids will be grown. I must admit it is really satisfying to watch your children become productive adults.

Yes, this past year has been a good one. In some ways the year has flown past, at other times the calendar has rolled over slowly but I would not have changed anything if I could have. I am sure that all of the experiences, good and bad, come our way for a reason. I am not always sure what those reasons are, but I do know that everything that happened to me in the past year helped me get to the place I am at now.

I always tell people that celebrating a birthday is a good thing, it beats the alternative. I have no idea what this next year will bring and that is also good. Will it be as eventful as the past year? Probably, in its own way. I do know that no matter what comes my way it will help me to grow as a person and it will mold me for future birthdays, of which I am hopeful that there are many more to come. I have too many unfinished projects to quit now.

This will be a low-key kind of birthday, at least I hope so. I guess I must also confess that the weekend before both kids will hopefully be home, and I do get to go to a football game Saturday so it looks like the party will come early this year. I am okay with low key; all I want is to be able to take a few moments to reflect back on the year and to think about what might be coming in the next year.

However, if you are insistent about getting me something for my birthday, I do have one thing in mind. I would really like about a two-inch rain over the entire twenty-four hours. Nothing much, just a slow easy, gentle rain. It will be like my grade school days when Mom made treats for the entire class, I promise I will share with everyone. That isn't asking for too much, is it?



By Donna Sullivan

If there is one phrase I have written more than any other in the thirteen years I have been at *Grass & Grain*, it would be this one: Tell your story. Nearly every speaker, politician and industry leader I write about will almost always work that phrase into their comments. It's in the context of sharing your agriculture story with those outside of the ag industry in order to help them understand what you do and to help bridge the ever-widening gap between producers and consumers, as well as to dispel misunderstandings that have gained a foothold and threaten our industry.

Well, today I'm going to use the phrase again, only this time in a completely different context.

Tell your story.

The year you watched your crops succumb to drought and had to sell your cattle herd for lack of hay and water? There's a young producer today who needs to

hear how you coped.

Did you lose the farm that had been in your family for five generations? There's a neighbor today who hardly shows his face in public any more, he's so ashamed of things that cost him so dearly but were out of his control. He needs to know how you survived.

You watched your husband turn to alcohol or other substances to dull the pain or keep the relentless worry at bay, even for just a little while. What did you do to help the man you loved?

You've lived through hard seasons of life and came through the other side. There are those around you right now who need to hear how you did it.

The only way we are going to break the stigma of mental health issues is by admitting we all have them and it's okay to ask for help. Very few of us manage to walk through this life without finding ourselves lost in

the shadows from time to time. Sometimes we find our way back out to the sunlight on our own, and sometimes we need someone to take our hand and lead the way.

In agriculture, we are all pretty much one big family. Oh, we find things to bicker and squabble about, but at the end of the day we are neighbors engaged in a noble calling. A hard, back-breaking, sometimes soul-crushing calling.

So, don't wait for the local pastor to call on your neighbor who hasn't been to church in a while. Don't ignore that little voice in your head telling you to go check on someone you've noticed has seemed troubled and distant.

Don't wait until the phone rings and you hear that it's too late.

Tell your story.

Now.

Today.

Someone's life just may depend on it.

The Flint Hills Discovery Center opens new temporary exhibit

The Flint Hills Discovery Center (FHDC) opened its latest temporary exhibit, Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild on Saturday, September 23.

Discover the beauty and majesty of America's Great Plains in the work of award-winning photographer Michael Forsberg. Traveling 100,000 miles over four years, Forsberg crisscrossed the Plains from Canada to Mexico, capturing the wildlife,

habitats, and conservation challenges in the heart of the continent.

Originally a book project, Forsberg set out to capture what some outside observers call "flyover country" in an attempt to bring attention to and build appreciation for this often-overlooked region. Inspiring, informative, and timely – the exhibit is a love letter to this endangered ecosystem.

"Michael Forsberg's

stunning photographs reveal the hidden beauty, drama, and wonder of North America's sprawling grasslands," said Stephen Bridenstine, FHDC assistant director. "But more importantly, it celebrates those last wild places in the prairie, including here in the Flint Hills, so that every visitor to this exhibit better understands why we do our important work here at the Flint Hills Discovery Center."

Great Plains features:

- 60 full color photographs highlighting the Southern Plains, Northern Plains, and Tallgrass Prairie regions

- Insights and behind-the-scenes information from Michael Forsberg

- Maps and diagrams of the Great Plains

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A full list of sponsors and more information can be found on our website, www.flinthillsdiscovery.org/greatplains.

Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild is on exhibit through January 7, 2024.



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Editor & Publisher — Donna Sullivan
gandgeditor@agpress.com

— Advertising Staff —
Briana McKay
briana@agpress.com

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KDOT to host fall meetings for local citizen input

By State Representative Lisa M. Moser, Kansas House District 106

The Kansas Department of Transportation has announced the dates for its regional "2023 Local Consult" meetings held throughout the state. These gatherings are designed for open discussion between KDOT officials and the public to determine project prioritization across Kansas and are an important step in gathering public input for the IKE program - the state's current 10-year transportation improvement program. They are the best opportunity all Kansans have to provide input on regional priorities for future projects.

Calvin Reed, P.E., Secretary of Transportation Director, Kansas Turnpike Authority, invites you to participate in the "2023 Local Consult" process. You'll have an opportunity to share your region's transportation priorities, hear about investments being made in transportation in your area, and

learn about various grant funding programs available through KDOT.

Please try to attend one of the following meetings below, or take part in the virtual meeting on Tuesday, October 24th and let KDOT know how you feel about the transportation system in Kansas. A special note to Washington and Marshall county residents: This is your opportunity to voice your concerns regarding the Hwy. 36/Hwy. 99 junction or to thank KDOT for the rumble strips south of Haver. I have heard more from constituents regarding these two areas than any other highway issues in District 106-Marshall, Washington, Republic, and Jewell counties.

Again, here is your opportunity to make your voice heard. I will be attending the October 3rd meeting in Manhattan. Hope to see you there. -Lisa M. Moser

Northeast, District 1
Tuesday, October 3
9 a.m. - Noon Four

Points by Sheraton, Manhattan

Southwest, District 6
Wednesday, October 4
9 a.m. - Noon Clarion Inn, Garden City

South Central, District 5
Thursday, October 5
1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Meridian Center, Newton

Northwest, District 3
Tuesday, October 10
9 a.m. - Noon Hilton Garden Inn, Hays

North Central, District 2
Wednesday, October 11
9 a.m. - Noon Hilton Garden Inn, Salina

Southeast, District 4
Thursday, October 12
9 a.m. - Noon Bowls Fine Arts Center, Iola

KC Metro Tuesday, October 17
1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Hyatt Place Kansas City, Lenexa

Wichita Metro Wednesday, October 18
9 a.m. - Noon Hughes Metro Complex, Wichita

Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, October 24
5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

To receive registration information for the virtual meeting, please email: engagement@ksdotike.org

More information about the "2023 Local Consult" process is available online at: ike.ksdot.gov/local-consult-process.



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- Wednesday - Risk Management Workshop (Starting at 10:00 a.m., by StoneX)
- K-State Vet Med (Starting at 2:00 p.m., Dr. Matt Miesner)

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--- **FFA Giveaway** ---
\$150 per day will be drawn to be given to an FFA chapter in attendance. Sponsored by Rockin' S Ranch Supply.

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GRASS & GRAIN **Our Daily Bread**
 ***** By G&G Area Cooks *****
Rose Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Wins This Week's Grass & Grain Recipe Contest
 Winner Rose Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma:
PUMPKIN PIE CUPCAKES

1 can pumpkin
 1/2 cup white sugar
 1/4 cup brown sugar
 2 eggs
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 5-ounce can evaporated milk
 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
 2/3 cup flour

Set oven to 350 degrees. Line cupcake pans with paper liners. Combine all ingredients. Fill liners 1/2 full. Bake 20 minutes. Let cool.
 NOTE: You can frost with cream cheese frosting or dollop with Cool Whip.

Kellee George, Shawnee: COCONUT BARS
 1/2 cup butter
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
 2 cups coconut
 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
 1 cup chocolate chips
 1/2 cup chopped almonds

Set oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a saucepan; remove from heat and stir in sugar and graham cracker crumbs. Spread into a 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake 10 minutes or until slightly firm. Stir coconut and sweetened condensed milk together and spread over crust. Return to oven and bake 12 minutes. Set aside and let cool 10 minutes. In the microwave melt chocolate chips; stir in almonds and spread over cooled layers. Let all layers cool before cutting.

Kimberly Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma: CREAM CHIP BEEF GRAVY
 1 jar dried beef
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 tablespoons flour
 1 cup milk
 3/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

In a pan cook beef in butter over low heat for 3 minutes. Stir in flour, cooking for 2 minutes. Slowly stir in milk and Worcestershire sauce. Cook stirring over low heat until thick and hot. Serve over potatoes or toast.

Millie Conger, Tecumseh: RASPBERRY DIP
 2 cups sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
 1 cup mayonnaise
 1 cup chopped pecans
 1 cup chopped green onions
 2 cups raspberry preserves

Mix all together. Let set about an hour to blend. Serve with crackers, veggies, etc.

Annette Reilly, Abilene:
 "How about something different from corn harvest this year? A dear friend suggested it; and why not? I gathered about three dozen cobs while awaiting a load of corn to haul in. Tried it after harvest. Interesting flavor and something my 'sweet-toothed' hubby called the best jelly I've ever made. Doesn't make much each batch but quite the conversation starter. Hope you enjoy the change!"

CORN COB JELLY
 1 dozen red corn cobs (no corn remaining on the cob)
 2 quarts of water
 1 package Sure-Jell powdered pectin
 3 cups sugar
 A few drops food coloring, if needed/desired

Wash cobs thoroughly. Add 2 quarts of water to cobs and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and boil 35 minutes. Strain juice, measure out 3 cups. In a large pot add pectin to the 3 cups of juice and bring to a rolling boil. Add sugar and return to rolling boil and boil 1 minute. Turn off heat. Skim and pour into sterilized jars and seal. Process in boiling water bath for 5-7 minutes (see altitude chart for your area). Remove from canner and place on doubled towel and cool. Makes (4) 1/2-pint jars.

Jackie Doud, Topeka: APPLE DIP
 8 ounces cream cheese
 1 jar caramel ice cream sauce
 1 cup chopped peanuts

Place cream cheese on plate. Pour caramel sauce over cream cheese. Top with peanuts. Use apples or crackers to dip.

Following two recipes are being reprinted from the September 12 issue, due to poor printing which caused the recipes to be difficult to read.

Grace Demars, Glasco: PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE
 2 tablespoons butter
 1/3 cup brown sugar
 20-ounce can pineapple slices, drained
 9 maraschino cherries
 1 1/3 cups flour
 2/3 cup sugar
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 2/3 cup milk
 1/4 cup butter, softened
 1 egg
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Melt the 2 tablespoons butter in a 9-by-9-inch round cake pan. Stir in brown sugar and 1 tablespoon water. Arrange pineapple and cherries in the pan. Set aside. In a medium bowl, stir together flour, sugar and baking powder. Add milk, the 1/4 cup butter, egg and vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed until combined. Beat on medium speed for 1 minute. Spoon batter over fruit in the prepared pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted near corners comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Loosen cake from pan; invert onto a plate. Serve warm.

Janet Jehle, Baldwin City: QUICK & EASY PEACH COBBLER
Filling:
 4 cups peeled & sliced peaches
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 tablespoon baking mix
 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Combine all filling ingredients and spoon into a 1-quart casserole dish.

Topping:
 2/3 cup baking mix
 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
 2 tablespoons milk (optional)
 1/4 cup butter

In the same bowl you used above, mix baking mix and brown sugar. Cut in butter until mixture is the size of small peas. If desired, stir in milk until moistened. Spoon topping over peaches. Bake at 400 degrees for 30 minutes or until topping is slightly brown.

NOTE: Nectarines or apples may also be used.



Love Letter To Autumn
 By Lou Ann Thomas

Dear Autumn,
 You are my favorite season. I tell everyone that and often write about my love of all things you. Well, most things. I've never been a pumpkin spice kind of gal. I prefer hot chocolate but hold no malice toward those who wish to spice their pumpkins.

Your cooler days are so very welcome this year. The summer often felt unbearably hot and dry. But a recent morning when I stepped outside with Boone, I detected a chill gently brush along my arms and face, and a slightly musky smell that can only mean one thing – you are close by.

That means it's time for fall festivals celebrating the abundant harvests, brilliant colors, and significant changes of you. Harvest truck traffic has picked up, lofting trails of dust behind them in their sojourns to and from elevators. This time of year always allows me to feel closer to my father, who labored long days in these fields, especially during fall harvests. I remember my mother and I taking lunch to him in the field. Mom would pack a sandwich for me too in case Dad had time for some lunch company. There were days he would only stop long enough to grab the sandwich, chips and a couple of my mother's special homemade chocolate chip cookies all eaten at the steering wheel of an old open combine. But sometimes he would stop, crawl down from the loud, chaff spewing machine and sit beside me leaning against one of the large tires as we ate our sandwiches. Thanks, Autumn, for bringing back such sweet memories.

And thanks for the dazzling colors that you splash all over the hills, fields and draws. Some might consider you a little "showy," but your panache makes this the perfect time for a leisurely drive along a country road. Maybe I appreciate you more because I know how many of your delights, like the turning leaves, are fleeting and on the other side of the colors and textures of fall are the cold, gray winds of winter.

But for now, I am looking forward to pulling on my long pants and a sweatshirt and sitting around a bonfire with twigs speared through marshmallows and a friend offering the nearly burnt sugar confection a landing spot of a graham cracker and chocolate bar. It is during your rein here, Autumn, that our meals shift from the cold foods of summer to warm soups, chilis and dishes that incorporate the bounty of your season – gourds, squash and root vegetables all ready for roasting.

Likely a result of our dry and hot summer it won't be long until the leaves step into their full glory. I try not to mourn the loss of leaves, preferring to see it as nature's reminder that there is value in letting go of what no longer serves us, of what has run its course, given its greatest gifts and is now ready to be released. The trees don't mourn this loss either. They know it is one gift of your unfolding, Autumn. They know it is part of the process of life and accept that being stripped to bare aloneness is ultimately preparation for new growth.

So, welcome, Autumn. It's good to see, feel, smell, remember, celebrate and learn from you.

Check out Lou Ann's blog at: <https://louannthomas.blog>

Can Frozen Tomatoes Be Canned?

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research & Extension news service
MANHATTAN – Tomatoes can be preserved and packaged in many different ways and frozen tomatoes are no exception, but can they be canned?

Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said...it depends.

"It is not recommended to can tomatoes that froze on the vine," Blakeslee said. "This is because the acid content changes too much when they freeze on the vine, making them unsafe for canning."

However, tomatoes harvested before the fall freeze and then frozen can be canned because they do not change acidity. Blakeslee said however, that the texture will change after canning and become very soft.

"The best choice for canning previously frozen tomatoes is to make a well-cooked product, such as a stewed or crushed tomato product, or made into tomato juice or sauce," Blakeslee said.

Canning frozen tomatoes by whole or quarters is not recommended.

"They will pack into the jars differently, absorb moisture differently, and the heat transfers through the jars differently," Blakeslee said. Because of these changes, under-processing and spoilage may occur.

Blakeslee reminds gardeners that tomato canning recipes are based on fresh – not frozen – tomatoes.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of K-State's Rapid Response Center for Food Science, publishes a monthly newsletter called You Asked It! that provides numerous tips on food safety.

More information is also available from local Extension offices in Kansas.

*Links used in this story: Rapid Response Center, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>
 You Asked It! newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter>
 K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>*

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Kansas Profile – Now That’s Rural: Morgan Holloman, Antique Emporium

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

“Resurgence: An increase or revival...”

That definition might apply to the community of Alma, where a group of small business owners who happen to be women are leading a revitalization of businesses in that community.



were removed and more of the wood floors and native stone walls displayed. Now attractive display cases line the floor.

In addition, the Hollomans opened the basement and converted the second floor to seven apartments.

Antique Emporium of Alma has more than 4,000 square feet of vendor space. Offerings include a large coin collection, substantial library and a multitude of small and large collectibles and antiques. One part of the building is for Mill Creek Mercantile, which offers locally made products.

The business has attracted customers from California to the Carolinas. “We draw a surprising amount of visitors off (Interstate 70),” Holloman said.

The antique store is one of several women-owned businesses that have recently grown in downtown Alma:

* Wrenn Pacheco runs a boutique beef shop known as Pacheco Beef.

* Mel’s Coffee recently opened in another recently renovated downtown building.

* Heather Beggs renovated a main street building and opened a yoga studio and Airbnb.

* Karen Wright operates multiple main street businesses, such as a dance studio, liquor store and convenience store.

These are in addition to existing businesses operated by women, such as Jeanette Rohleder at the Alma

Bakery and Sweet Shop, Gwen Hendricks at Hendricks Hardware, and Lori Daniel at the Signal-Enterprise newspaper.

Then there is the Volland Store at nearby Volland and the new renovation at the Wabaunsee County Historical Society and Museum. There seems to be a synergy of these businesses working together.

“We’ve found a way to refer people to each other’s businesses,” Holloman said. “It’s a great town.”

“Maybe Covid gave Alma the opportunity to show that people didn’t have to travel so far away to enjoy a rural lifestyle,” Holloman reflected. “We want people to come to Alma to experience what we have here: fresh air, beautiful green pastures and native stone.”

“There seems to be a resurgence in our downtown.” That is our to find in a rural community such as Alma, population 802 people. Now, that’s rural.

For more information about the antique emporium, go to www.almaantiquestore.com. For more information about the community, go to www.cityofalma-kansas.com.

Resurgence. It means an increase or revival, and that’s what Alma is experiencing today. We commend Morgan Holloman and the other women and business owners who are making a difference by helping downtown Alma experience a resurgence.

And there’s more. Not every downtown Alma business is operated by young women. In fact, one business is run by a woman who is 97 years old. We’ll learn about that next week.

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 Kelsey Pagel

Grace And Patience

Harvest is in full swing. The rain has been SO sporadic. We live five miles from my in-laws and they got about an inch of rain at their house but there none at ours. We were harvesting at a field and a quarter-mile east it poured, yet it did nothing at the field. We need some good rain for pond fillers. I prefer a warm rain to relying on snow for moisture.

As I type this out in the notes section in my phone, I’m waiting on a cow to have a calf. It’s that magic time right before dark, the sun is setting, the cows are gathering their babies for the night and I can hear equipment running all around me in the distance.

I can’t remember if I told you about Tilly or not, but Tilly was a twin in the first week of calving and the mom only wanted one. Tuff is the second twin from a different mom. Tuff is appropriately named because he’s had a tough go of things since birth. We’re working on getting him better, but it could go either way.

Tilly was adopted by a cow that lost a backwards calf. The cow immediately took her but Tilly had been a bottle baby just long enough to not know what the heck that big thing licking her was. So they got to stay in the pen for longer than necessary so she could figure out she had a bovine mom and not a human one any more. I turned her out this morning and she was nursing happily in the pasture this evening when I checked.

Every other week when I write these I preach grace and patience. We need to give grace and patience

to others, but I’m finding out how hard it is to extend those qualities to ourselves. If this summer has taught me anything, it truly is that you have NO idea what someone else is going through. Everybody has their battles, some are fighting hard, some have just been through them and some are waiting for them to come. Just because things seem okay on the outside doesn’t mean everything is okay. Some share their struggles, some don’t. My point is, and I’m telling myself this, we need to give ourselves grace and patience and not compare to others. Just because someone else has been through something similar, they are not experiencing your life so you cannot assume that the situation will be the same for you.

I think I’ve seen that September is national suicide prevention month. Farmers deal with high levels of stress for years and years and years. That affects your brain. It’s hard to ask for help and it’s hard when the help isn’t what you need. Please keep fighting. Keep trying. The world will get better. It’s hard to imagine right now, but it will get better. There is help. You have to advocate for yourself until you get it and that’s really, really hard.

I write from my heart. I don’t share everything, but I do want to be real that my life is not roses and rainbows. Or maybe it is; I’ve just been deal-

ing with all the thorns and the stormy days this summer comes. I believe my rainbow is coming. Until then, I’m trying, mostly failing, but will continue to try, giving myself grace and patience to get through the hard things with the tools that I need to get through them. I’m hoping you will as well.

Post Script:

Went home to feed Tuff while giving cow time to calve. Went back, completely dark out now. She, of course, was not where I last saw her. Finally found her walking herself to the pen. I kid you not, she had herself in the chute before I could shut the gates. Normally this is all really bad sign. Got my sleeves on, reached in, two front feet and a head. Started pulling on one of the feet and it very aggressively pulled back in. Always makes you so happy when they do that and know they’re alive. I’m not sure why she didn’t have him on her own, but we got him out and she started loving on him so a success story!

Kelsey Pagel is a Kansas farmer. She grew up on a cow/calf and row crop operation and married into another. Kelsey and her Forever (Matt) farm and ranch with his family where they are living their dream and loving most of the moments. She can be found on IG & FB @teampagel.

You may email Kelsey your comments at kelseypagel13@gmail.com

“On one date, I told him, ‘I sure hope you want to live here, because I just poured that concrete pad over there,’” Holloman said.

They did indeed marry and moved to Alma, where Holloman had built a new metal building on that pad. Morgan and Tyler lived in an apartment in that building before buying a house in Alma.

From that building, Tyler looked down the street and could see the classic stone building storefronts that have earned Alma the title, City of Native Stone. One caught his eye.

“That’s the coolest stone building I’ve ever seen,” he said.

Eventually Morgan and Tyler bought that very building and the antique business within it, the Antique Emporium of Alma. Shortly after they purchased the building, Covid hit and everything shut down.

“We used that time to remodel the building,” Holloman said. The drop ceiling and old carpet

Clay County Homemaker Extension Unit Fall Fling To Be Held October 9

K-State Research & Extension River Valley District

The Clay County Homemaker Extension Unit Fall Fling is scheduled for Monday, October 9 at the Clay Center 4-H Conference Center at the Clay County Fairgrounds. All interested men and women in the area are encouraged to attend. Registration for door prizes will begin at 10:30 a.m. and coffee and tea will be served. Everyone is asked to bring a salad for the noon luncheon. Refrigeration is available upon arrival at the meeting, and tableware and beverages will be provided.

The morning program will start at 11:00 a.m. and feature LewAnn Schneider, a Federal Veterinarian. She is back from last year to present another great program, called Sneak Peek at a Unique Veterinarian.

The afternoon program will start around 1:00 p.m. and feature Andrea DeJesus from A & H Farms out of Manhattan. Voted as one of the Top 10 Must-See Places for Farm and Ranch Experiences in Kansas, she will talk about their family-

oriented farm and the many things they grow and sell in their store and at farmers’ markets year-round. She will also talk about the many activities and events they have added to make the farm a year-round destination spot. There will be

A & H items for sale at this program.

The Clay County Homemaker Extension Unit Members and K-State Research and Extension River Valley District are sponsoring this program for all interested men and women.

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NCGA to EPA: Science shows that ethanol is important to lowering emissions

The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) recently sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency addressing recent concerns raised by the agency's scientific advisory board about the environmental benefits of ethanol.

In a letter sent to EPA Administrator Michael Regan recently, NCGA CEO Neil Caskey noted that the research shows unequivocally that ethanol is important to addressing climate change.

"There are no shortage of studies on the environmental benefits of corn ethanol," Caskey said. "The Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, for example, has conducted extensive research on the matter and concluded that corn ethanol has reduced

GHG emissions in the U.S. by 544 million metric tons from 2005-2019 and that the feedstock's carbon intensity is 44 percent lower than that of petroleum gasoline."

The letter was sent after EPA's scientific advisory board submitted draft commentary on the Volume Requirements for 2023 and Beyond under the Renewable Fuel Standard Program. In the commentary, the advisory board questions ethanol's ability to significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions and raises concerns that the production of ethanol increases land use.

The letter noted that corn growers are doing more with less land.

"American farmers planted an estimated 94.1 million acres of corn in 2023, which falls short of the more

than 100 million acres corn farmers planted a century ago," Caskey noted. "In the past decade, U.S. corn production has been over six times the production of the 1930s with fewer corn acres."

Caskey also highlighted ethanol's importance in advancing the Biden administration's climate agenda.

"It is important to note that any decision that hampers the use of these environmentally friendly products would complicate President Biden's ambitious climate goals, which will almost certainly require the use of biofuels, such as corn ethanol, to be successful," he said.

Caskey will provide verbal remarks before the SAB later.

PCCA celebrates 70th year of serving grower-owners

Recently, at its 70th Annual Meeting, Lubbock-based Plains Cotton Cooperative Association announced further fiscal year-end distributions to its grower-owners, totaling \$8.68 million. Since the cooperative's founding in 1953, it has served as a value-added service to cotton growers. Currently, PCCA has approximately 12,000 active grower-owners, with members in 49 out of 50 states. Moreover,

it has handled 114 million marketing and pool bales since its inception. The business has also achieved \$18 billion in total sales since the seasonal pools' inception in 1988.

PCCA's president and CEO, Kevin Brinkley, commented on PCCA's 70 years of business and shared his eagerness for the next 70. He stated, "This significant milestone is an opportunity to reflect on the

cooperative's rich history and the challenges faced in the past fiscal year while embracing a forward-looking strategy for the future."

In his annual report, Brinkley acknowledged the difficulties PCCA encountered during the fiscal year 2023, with a record drought leading to an overall abandonment rate of 75% of its acres. The cooperative recorded a net margin loss of \$1.3 mil-

lion, partly attributed to a \$2.3 million book expense resulting from de-risking the defined benefit plan. Excluding this expense, PCCA would have reported a small profit of approximately \$1.0 million.

Despite these challenges, Brinkley emphasized that PCCA remains in strong financial condition, thanks to the foresight of its grower-owners. The cooperative's mission to provide value-added

marketing programs and services, ensuring fair prices for cotton growers, remains unwavering.

In other business, directors for the following PCCA districts were re-elected by the membership: Steve Moore, District 8; Billy Eggemeyer, District 9; Frank DeStefano, District 10; and Marvin Beyer, District 11.

Founded in 1953, PCCA is a Lubbock-based marketing cooperative owned

by farmers in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico, dedicated to supplying sustainably grown, high-quality cotton fiber around the world. In addition to cotton marketing, PCCA also owns cotton warehouse facilities in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, and develops and offers software programs and networks to local co-op gins that help add value to their grower-owners' cotton.

September signals the start of Kansas wheat planting

By Julia Debes

As the calendar flips over to September and more seasonal fall temperatures are in the forecast, it is time to start planting wheat. As planting kicks off, producers and researchers alike are cautiously optimistic about next year's harvest potential.

Winter wheat planting in Kansas was at four percent complete for the week ending September 10, 2023, according to the official statistics provided by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service in its weekly crop progress report. That pace is near three percent for last year and the five-year average – a welcome return to a more normal-feeling pace for producers.

"We were behind all year last," said Brian Linin, Kansas Wheat Commissioner who farms near Goodland. "Planting season was way behind, and then everything came up. Harvest was really late, so we were starting harvest around the time we would have normally finished. So, we feel like we've been behind the eight-ball here all spring and summer."

Linin started planting wheat last week in northwest Kansas. His ground received just a few hundredths to a short quarter inch of rain recently, but he reported even where the ground is dry on top, there is moisture further down. Moisture – received or expected – impacts where and when producers will start to plant wheat, with some waiting for that September shower and others willing to "dust it in" if there's the potential for rain in the forecast.

Having that moisture available to get the wheat stand established is critical to the success of next year's harvest, according to Brian Olson, head of K-State's Western Kansas Research-Extension Centers.

"Hopefully, there's enough there to get it up and get it going," Olson said. "The last few years that has been a big problem – getting that establishing rain in the fall. And now we've got it in some areas, so farmers will hopefully capitalize on it."

In addition to timing with moisture, producers also need to control volunteer wheat and weeds to prevent yield loss and disease, which will be especially important this year after failed fields and late summer rains that brought on substantial weed issues and late flushes of volunteer wheat.

"That canopy was open, and then the rains came on, and now we've had some weed issues out there – and that is a challenge," Olson said. "We do have to stay on top of those weeds because they're just robbing the moisture."

Olson pointed to research being conducted by K-State at Tribune, Garden City and Hays on the benefits and tradeoffs of occasional tillage, about one pass every three or four years to try and control problematic weeds.

Linin noted his operation has had to make many adjustments during the last three years of drought, explaining they mixed up their management practices to include light tillage, chemical applications, and other practices to address different concerns in different fields. He also has been growing organic wheat, meaning he must think even more creatively about addressing those concerns. In turn, however, those solutions bring management ideas back to the conventional side of his farm.

"In some respects, I'd like to have our ground a little cleaner than it is – there are some of those annual weeds up out there, just real spotty, and I don't like the way that looks," Linin said. "We've got fields of all different stages, but we're ready to go."

Managing wheat fields for weeds and disease benefits not only next year's yields, but also the other crops in the rotation.

"Wheat is a foundation for farmers to plant their summer crops into," Olson said. "I'm a firm believer that wheat is the basis, and when we get good wheat residue out there, we have a good chance of raising the summer crop that next year."

That rings true for Linin's operation in northwest Kansas, who also noted wheat's value in an overall crop rotation.

"There's a lot of time between now and when we make a crop, but wheat is one of our most profitable crops," Linin said. "It's profitable not just in terms of dollars and cents, but also in terms of providing a good seedbed for whatever we're going to do next year."

Overall, as Linin and fellow Kansas wheat producers fire up their tractors to plant wheat, he is excited and optimistic about the upcoming growing season.

"I just hope everybody has good conditions and gets a good stand and a good start to this year's crop," Linin said. "Wheat is a good crop for us, and it really fits our rotation in our program well – and I wish the best of luck to everybody else."

For the latest in K-State's planting recommendations during the current year's conditions, visit eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/. Producers can also access the latest resources for variety selection and performance data information from K-State at ks wheat.com/wheatrx.

Pork producers take on D.C. for fall fly-in

More than 100 pork producers from around the country attended the National Pork Producers Council's (NPPC) Spring Legislative Action Conference (LAC) on September 13-14 in Washington, D.C. This biannual fly-in featured engaging speakers, a media briefing and NPPC's

widely popular congressional "Baconfest" reception in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress.

NPPC President Scott Hays kicked off LAC by sharing the importance of having producers travel to meet with their members of Congress: "Having you here in Washington, speaking up for our industry, is critical to having lawmakers understand that decisions they make in Washington affect how we can continue to provide safe, nutritious food to Ameri-

can families and consumers worldwide."

During the two-day event, speakers included NPPC Board officers, Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS) and NPPC policy experts who focused on four key issue areas:

- 2023 Farm Bill priorities
- Finding a legislative solution to California Proposition 12
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New cover crop survey data challenges assumptions on role of incentive payments

A new national survey report has found that the vast majority of farmers who use cover crops don't need incentive payments to continue with the practice because of how much they appreciate its value to their land and business.

According to the National Cover Crop Survey, incentives play a key role in getting some farmers started on cover crops — 49% of the cover crop users participating in the survey reported receiving some sort of payment for cover crops in 2022, and 77.8% of cover crop non-users said incentive payments would be helpful. However, 90.3% of the farmers who were receiving cover crop in-

centives reported that they would definitely or probably continue planting cover crops after the payments ended, while only 3.3% said they definitely or probably would drop cover crops at the end of the incentive program.

In all, just 15.6% of cover crop users said receiving incentive payments was one of their goals for cover cropping.

These findings were among many conclusions drawn in a report, issued jointly by SARE, the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), based on insights from nearly 800 farmers in 49 states.

“Cover crop incentive payments are an important factor in encouraging and helping farmers to transition into cover cropping, but once they see the soil health improvements and other cover crop benefits, most stick with cover crop planting long after the incentives end,” says Dr. Rob Myers of SARE, lead researcher on the 2022-2023 National Cover Crop Survey Report. “Insights like these make the National Cover Crop Survey such a valuable tool in understanding the impacts of cover crops, the motivations of users and non-users, and needs for additional information and incentives.”

NAWG hosts second Farm Bill Fly-in

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) completed the second part of its 2023 summer Farm Bill fly-ins. The first round of Hill visits happened earlier this summer in July.

During the Hill visits, wheat growers from across the country reinforced NAWG's core priorities and underscored the need for Congress to work together to ensure farmers can continue to provide safe and affordable food for all Americans. Between both summer fly-ins, wheat growers met with over 110

offices. Growers from 14 states met with their delegations, staff from the four corners of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, and leadership offices in efforts to continue to educate lawmakers and advocate for an effective farm safety net. Additionally, during the July visits, our growers met with Senate Agriculture Committee chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman and House Agriculture Committee chairman Thompson, along with other members of Congress to discuss priorities

in the Farm Bill.

In these meetings, NAWG continued to underscore the need to get a Farm Bill done, which works for wheat growers and rural America. These conversations included:

- Protecting crop insurance that serves as the cornerstone of the farm safety net.
- Working to strengthen and enhance Title I and crop insurance to protect farmers better.
- Supporting financial and technical assistance through voluntary conservation cost-share

programs for producers in all climates and wheat-producing regions.

- Encouraging additional investment in agricultural trade promotions and U.S. commodities as part of the Farm Bill's trade title.

- Supporting wheat research programs authorized under the Farm Bill and robust funding as part of the annual appropriations process.

- And how wheat growers can continue to help educate members of Congress and be a resource as Farm Bill dis-

cussions continue.

“I want to thank all of the members of Congress, their staff, and wheat growers who took the time over the summer to meet in D.C. and talk about the Farm Bill,” said NAWG President and Oregon wheat farmer Brent Cheyne. “It is so important for wheat growers to tell their story and share their needs and concerns with lawmakers to help formulate policies and programs that benefit wheat growers and the ag industry.”

During the meetings, lawmakers and their staff

expressed optimism about being able to proceed with a Farm Bill later this year. However, Congress must first pass a fiscal year 2024 appropriations package before federal funding runs out at the end of the month. While we are encouraged with the optimism to work towards finishing the Farm Bill in a timely manner, a common concern was the availability of new resources to make additional investments that could further improve the farm safety net.

Russian wheat exports remain biggest risk to U.S. wheat elevators

A modest rebound in U.S. wheat production and supplies is improving the outlook for profitability among grain elevators that store wheat. Futures market carries have improved for all three major classes of wheat and the buy basis is widening following a bigger harvest. The larger harvest follows two years of poor production and a historic run of inverted futures markets that sapped profitability for storing wheat.

According to a new report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange, the major risk to elevators in the year ahead is a sharp rally in wheat prices. Wheat stocks among major exporters are historically tight, and any disruption to the flow of Russian exports through the Black Sea could trigger a sharp price run-up.

“The flood of cheap Russian wheat into the global market may have created a false sense of security in the world wheat market,” said Tanner Ehmke, grains and oilseeds economist for CoBank. “The greatest margin risk to storing wheat is the shrinking world wheat crop outside of Russia and China, which leaves the market vulnerable to supply shocks and extreme volatility in wheat prices.”

The cost of storing grains, including wheat, remains historically high due to the sharp rise in interest rates. As a result, elevators will still struggle to pencil in profit on the wider carries, particularly for the hard wheats. Elevators struggling to make margin on carries will be looking for opportunities to benefit from rising basis on company-owned grain through the marketing year.

U.S. Wheat Harvest

The rebound in the U.S. wheat harvest was largely driven by a substantial increase in soft red winter wheat yields in the Midwest, where farmers produced the biggest crop in nine years. This year's soft red winter wheat harvest rose 31% year-over-year, based on USDA's latest estimates.

With ample supply, elevators will benefit from exceptionally wide carries in the futures market and the variable storage rate that adds about three cents per bushel to the futures spread. Soft red winter wheat is a low-protein wheat typically used for snack food products like crackers and pastries.

In the Central and Southern Plains, production of hard red winter wheat lost significant yield under ongoing drought. Overall production rose 10% year-over-year, accord-

ing to USDA estimates, with gains attributable to expanded acreage. The abundance of protein in the hard red winter wheat crop in recent years has resulted in protein premiums falling. Hard red winter wheat is typically used for bread, buns and rolls.

The hard red spring harvest in the Northern Plains is expected to fall 7% year-over-year despite expanded acreage, according to USDA; late planting followed by persistent drought limited yields. The smaller harvest is compounded by a drop in Canadian hard red spring wheat production that is expected to hold prices at a significant premium in the year ahead. Hard red spring wheat is a high-protein wheat used for products like bagels and pizza crust.

Blending this year's wheat crop will be a tightrope for elevators, millers and bakers that are challenged to find low- to medium- protein hard wheat in a market saturated with high protein. With the hard wheats trading at a sizable premium, millers and bakers will be motivated to blend more soft red wheat with hard wheat. However, blending will be limited due to stark differences in mixing and baking performance.

World Wheat Supplies

The flood of cheap Russian wheat into the global market, combined with a strong U.S. dollar continue to be major headwinds for U.S. wheat exports. Russia's currency has fallen sharply, down 30% year-to-date, putting Russian exports on sale and pushing down world wheat prices. Russia is currently harvesting a near-record wheat crop with substantial carryover inventories from last year's record-sized harvest.

In China, wet weather during harvest damaged a substantial portion of the Chinese wheat crop, which likely result in China increasing wheat imports.

Excluding Russia and China, the world's wheat stocks-to-use ratio is nearly the tightest on record. Drought has substantially reduced wheat supply in Argentina, Canada and Australia. Ukraine's wheat harvest faces numerous obstacles to being delivered to the world market due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Weak performance with the North African wheat crop will also translate into greater demand for imports, as will India's ban on white rice exports. The ban is shifting food demand from rice to wheat in major importing regions like Southeast Asia and Africa.

Program offers the essentials of regenerative ranch management

Noble Research Institute announced the expansion of Essentials of Regenerative Ranching, a new educational program designed to help ranchers enhance and restore the land, making it more resilient and reaching livestock grazing goals through regenerative management. Essentials of Regenerative Ranching provides producers with practical tools, hands-on experience and guidance to make data-driven decisions to decrease costs and improve profit.

The Essentials of Regenerative Ranching course has been expanded to three new locations in Texas and Oklahoma. Registration is open now at www.noble.org/essentials. Seating is limited, so early registration is recommended.

Texas A&M College Station, Texas
October 17-18
O.D. Butler, Jr. Animal Science Complex
Noble Research Institute
Ardmore, Oklahoma
October 31-November 1
Pavilion Center
Texas A&M

Kingsville, Texas
November 7-8
Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Center

“Program participants gain working knowledge and experience of monitoring and improving the health of their soil, grazing livestock more strategically and making informed financial decisions,” said Hugh Aljoe, Noble Research Institute's director of ranches, outreach and partnerships. “We use a mix of classroom and field work to send producers home with the tools they need to begin making changes on their ranch.”

Farmers and ranchers navigate uncertainty from weather, fluctuating market prices and escalating costs of inputs. Many producers are seeking new tools that offer greater control and reduce their operational uncertainty. Through this course, ranchers and farmers will calculate their financial situations, determine initial stocking rates, carrying capacity and grazing goals.

“The course is well-suited for ranchers of all experience levels and all types

and sizes of operations,” Aljoe added. “No matter your situation, this program will transform the way you think about your ranch.”

The Essentials of Regenerative Ranching program allows producers to overcome obstacles, become more informed problem-solvers and increase the productivity of their grazing lands. By participating in this program, ranchers join a community of like-minded producers who are shaping the future of ranching and leaving a lasting impact on their land and families. “If I had known what I learned in this course when I started my regenerative journey, I could have avoided some key mistakes,” said Tana McCarter, a rancher, and Essentials attendee. “I left with the tools I needed to monitor my soil health and financial progress. I'll now have the right data to make informed decisions on how to meet my regenerative goals.”

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The Maine Thing (Part 2)

Growing up in Kansas I had no idea how the open prairie would impress upon me after spending my earliest years in the forested lands of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. I didn't realize, until driving up through New England, how much I depended on the open sky and long vistas provided by the Kansas prairie for my sense of direction.

I actually get claustrophobic in the heavy forest now, and it sets me on edge, uncomfortable, irritable even, and as we

cleared the tree line driving up the stony top of Mt. Desert on Acadia Island, Maine, I felt a sudden relief, almost as if I had been unable to breathe. As we surveyed the bay area, the plethora of islands off the coastline and looking back across the island onto the mainland, it really did feel good to see the horizon off in the distance. The interior of the island wasn't as bad, with its natural lakes and marsh flats.

Having since contemplated this, I have expe-

rienced a similar feeling, although not so oppressive, within deep mountain valleys, or even some places in the Ozarks. I guess I just need to feel the sun more than two hours per day!

To my surprise, as a "landlubber" from landlocked Kansas, I felt the most comfortable on the afternoon cruise we took out of Bar Harbor on a four-masted, 151-foot schooner dubbed the Margaret Todd. One of the highlights of that trip for me, we departed the pier under diesel power until we cleared small Porcupine Islands into the area known as Frenchman's Bay. Once clear of the islands the passengers became the crew!

"Hoist the main sails!" came the order, and what I had expected to be a simple task attended to quickly became an increasingly arduous job! As the sails began to rise

past the halfway mark the lower, wider portion of the canvas became heavier and heavier. As we had teams of at least four people on each sail, working in pairs, the second pair would relieve, and so the teams rotated in rhythm to the "Heave, Ho!" until the yard arm was at its place atop of each mast. As all four mainsails were set I heard, "Up with the Jib!" and the triangular sail at the bow was raised quickly. The humming diesel was cut, the booms went out and we were under way by full wind power.

It was an overcast day, and the maritime wind was chilly, but the view was fantastic as Mt. Desert disappeared into the low-hanging clouds and we sailed past the nearby smaller islands. The sea air, oxygen rich, filled my lungs and nearly created a euphoric experience from the increased respiration due to the work of hoisting

those sails; and the same kind of feeling one gets from running along the beach that actually makes you want to run faster! The "whoosh" of the wake from the bow of our vessel ebbed and flowed with the swells created by the wind as we glided along, in otherwise silence.

I wondered if I had been raised on the coastline somewhere, would I have become a fisherman, a lobsterman, or crabber, or if I would have been happy doing something totally different. No, I decided. I would've been a sea captain by now!

After the cruise I picked up a wool Breton sailor's cap in a gift shop, but for now my crushable Stetson wide-brim hat shielded my face and balding crown. I had taken my windbreaker along "just in case." Now that the most physically demanding portion of the cruise was attended to,

the extra layer was comforting. My wife had even donned her baklava. As I stood at the rail soaking in the experience of the smell of the sea, the sharpening wind in my face spattered with the occasional spray launched off the ship's bow as she cut through the waves, and contemplating my fantasy career, my Kansas native farm girl came up to my side and took my arm, leaning into me. We stood there in silence, just smiled at each other and watched the world go by for the next few miles. I forgot about cows.

It was almost sad when we turned starboard and headed back into the harbor. But not too sad because there would be lobster for supper!

Kirk Sours is a ranch manager and columnist in northeast Kansas. Email him at: sours.kirk@yahoo.com.

Enhancing local food systems in Kansas

By Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health agent, River Valley Extension District

You might recall reading last fall about the \$750,000 grant awarded to Kansas State University

to spur local food systems. This article explains how you can stay up to date on, or get involved in, these endeavors.

What Is the Food System?

The food system is ev-

erything that is part of ensuring people have the food they need to survive and thrive – from production to processing, distribution, consumption, and food waste management – if it involves food in some way, it is part of the food system. A functioning local food system integrates the five sectors to serve the values of enhancing the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a particular place and its inhabitants.

Kansas Local and

Many communities, counties, and regions in Kansas have already started conversations around

supporting and developing their local and regional food systems. Some communities have formed councils or groups to discuss local food and farm opportunities. Other communities have completed food system assessments or plans.

Below is a link to a report that shares goals, needs, challenges, and opportunities for the food system specific to North Central Kansas: <https://www.ncrpe.org/nckfood-council/>

Kansas Local Food Community Roundtables
If you are interested in improving local food re-

sources in your community, please join us!

The Kansas Local Foods program is planning ten-plus roundtable sessions around Kansas to share experiences and provide feedback on your community's goals and needs. So, if you are involved with local grocery stores, restaurants, food distribution, school food service, etc., please join the conversation.

The River Valley District will be hosting one of these roundtables in Clay Center on November 6th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be provided. RSVP by calling the Clay

County Extension Office at 785-632-5335.

Another Way to Get Involved: Quarterly Virtual Town Halls

Quarterly local food town halls are held virtually on Zoom and are open to anyone across the state of Kansas who is interested in learning more about local food projects, organizations, and opportunities across the state. The town halls are held at 11 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. The town halls are also recorded and archived. Our next town hall will be October 18, 2023. Register (and/or watch the archived videos) here: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/kansas-localfoods/get-involved/town-halls.html>

Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent at 785-243-8185 or Wade Reh, Director and Community Vitality Agent at 785-632-5335.

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NOTE: Another auction for Warren Heinen Estate, again many new tools, there will be 4 or more trailers. LUNCH by Formoso Church Ladies. Check our website for pictures at www.thummelauction.com
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LOCATION: 12520 School Creek Road, SAINT GEORGE, KANSAS 66535
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My older daughter is ever diligent in her quest for me to improve myself. To that end, she shared an article from Inc. the other day, the title of which is much longer than the headlines we were allowed to write back in the

day: “Emotionally Intelligent People Use a Brilliant Three-Word Phrase to Overcome Adversity and Move On.” There is also an even longer subtitle, but you get the point. The author is Justin Bariso who is really good looking, but

I digress. Spoiler alert: The three-word phrase is, drumroll please, “Use the difficulty.” It really is an excellent article and cites actor Michael Caine’s experience on stage when a chair blocked a door he was supposed to open. Frustrated at the situation he was admonished by his fellow actor, “Use the difficulty!!!” I especially loved one line in the article that said, “Constraints become guardrails.” Wow. What a powerful understanding! As a talented person totally lacking focus, this was the line that spoke to me. I need those con-

straints, those guardrails, to keep me on the road. And the beautiful thing is they will guide you to a destination you could not imagine. My friend, Jayne Pearce, was fortunate enough to attend the Walnut Valley Festival at Winfield and become fully immersed in the ocean of music. I lived this one vicariously through her, and I had just finished reading the above referenced article when she called to report on the festival and described this experience: “While enjoying Les Gustafson-Zook and his wife Gwen under the large pecan tree at Stage 3, the concert was interrupted

by the jarring roar of a generator just behind us in the campground. I inwardly griped about the sound fighting the delicate tones of Les’ autoharp playing, but without missing a beat, Gwen said something like ‘Well, we will just use this pitch we have been given...’ She and Les launched into an old Mountain hymn in a modal key, using the generator as the perfect drone backdrop, much like one used in a bagpipe. The interruption instead became a cue for the next blessing of song. What an amazing experience and what a great example of using the difficulty! It was not the song they had planned to do, but rather than become frustrated with the situation, the performers worked with it and the result was creative and beautiful. The constraints had guided them on a different path. The older daughter gets some brownie points for sharing this article. The one about what to do about wrinkles, eh, not so much. Deb Goodrich is a producer on the film Sod and Stubble and is the host of Around Kansas. She is the Garvey Texas Foundation Historian in Residence at the Fort Wallace Museum and chairs the Santa Fe Trail 200. Contact her at author.debgoodrich@gmail.com.

Commodity commission candidates face November 30 filing deadline

Grain growers in western Kansas who plan to campaign for a seat on one of the state’s five grain commodity commissions — corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, wheat or sunflowers — should be gathering petition signatures now to meet the November 30, 2023 filing deadline. The 2024 election will cover districts I, II and III — or the western third of Kansas.

- District I includes Cheyenne, Decatur, Graham, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman and Thomas counties.
- District II includes Gove, Greeley, Lane, Logan, Ness, Scott, Trego, Wallace and Wichita counties.
- District III includes Clark, Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman,

Kearny, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton and Stevens counties.

To be eligible to run for any of the five commodity commissions, the candidate must have been actively engaged in growing that commodity (corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, wheat or sunflowers) within the preceding five years and may only represent the district of their primary residence.

Candidates must gather 20 signatures from eligible growers to be included on the 2024 ballot. No more than five signatures from any one county can be used to qualify a candidate. Eligible growers are Kansas residents who will reach age 18 before the election and who have grown corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers or wheat for the last

three years.

Candidates may choose to complete their petition online, by paper, or a combination of both. The online portal is available at: www.agriculture.ks.gov/kgcvoter. Once the candidate has created an account and petition, the candidate will then have a unique URL to share with signors who can then enter their contact information and sign the petition.

Paper candidate registration packets are also available from the Kansas Department of Agriculture or directly from the grain commodity commissions. More information is

available:

- Kansas Department of Agriculture: 785-564-6726 or agriculture.ks.gov/kgcvoter
- Kansas Corn Commission: 785-410-5009 or com/kgcc/
- Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission: 785-477-9474 or org/commission/
- Kansas Soybean Commission: 785-271-1040 or org/about-the-commission/
- Kansas Sunflower Commission: 785-452-1519 or peircefarms@gmail.com
- Kansas Wheat Commission: 785-539-0255 or com/about/kansas-wheat-commission

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 Auction located at 220 E. Smith, HESSTON, KANSAS
FURNITURE, HOUSEHOLD, SHOP & GARAGE ITEMS
 Oak china hutch; bench; end tables; lamps; chest-of-drawers; card table & chairs; organ stool; bed; Singer sewing machine; chairs; file cabinet; 2 plastic tables; Lane Cedar chest; sewing cabinet; dresser; Kirby sweeper & attachments; rowing machine; Lifestyle treadmill; books; Little House on the Prairie set of books; picnic table; lawn chairs; Sun EZ-35X recumbent trike; Cub Cadet 544 zero turn 18 hp 42" cut riding mower; Craftsman 6.5 hp SP law behind mower; wheelbarrow; shovels; rakes; compost; flower pots; Craftsman 7.5" table saw; Craftsman drill press; 6 Dremels & bits; Delta band saw; Ryobi miter saw; Craftsman router & table; wood clamps; roller stand; shop vac; elec. tools; vise grips; fert. spreader; hedge trimmer; fire pit; Weber grill; bench grinder; Fimco 4 gal. sprayer, new; elec. pole saw; palm sanders; ladders; sm. air compressor; cordless tools; Blaster 18" snow blower; B&D line trimmer; Wagner paint sprayer; ex. bike; Acorn stair lift; bedding; coolers; sm. appliances; jars; crock; ice cream freezer; bread machine; Tupperware; 2 trailer loads of antiques & collectibles; & more.
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 Auction at 1314 24th Street or across street South of Food Mart in BELLEVILLE, KANSAS.
MECHANIC & CARPENTER TOOLS
 Craftsman 20gal. elec. air compressor; Chicago 110v 90amp wire welder; welding helmets; 9 chain saws; 9 gas weed eaters; gas post hole digger; 1500lb. 12V winch; 2 alum. trailer ramps; rotor tiller, riding & push lawn mower; Tailgater 63cc gas generator; bench vise, grinders & drill press; 4" & 6" angle grinders; air grinder & cutter; cordless & elec. drills & bits; crescent wrenches; sets wrenches; socket sets; top & bottom metal tool boxes; shop vac; hyd. & 2 ton floor jacks; propane heater; 50lb propane bottle; extension cords; 30ft. tripod antenna; elec. chain saw sharpener; car ramps; tires; rims; **Carpenter tools:** Craftsman 2hp. variable spd. 38"x15" w/20" bowl wood turning lathe w/tools; 2 Craftsman air nail guns; Craftsman miter jointer; elect. Wax master 900; Delta & Sears miter saws; shop bench & seat; 2 routers w/bits; Delta scroll saw; Dremel drills; 24ft. alum. extension ladder; 2 B&D work benches; Ryobi
HOUSEHOLD, ANTIQUES & HUNTING
 Traeger BBQ grill; Kenmore refrigerator; upright freezer; wood hutch; table & chairs; couches; elec. recliner chair; book shelves; 5 chester drawers; twin bed; kitchen ware; 2 sets speakers; elec. heaters & fireplace; (3) 8ft. folding tables; fans; 3 Meade telescopes; **Antiques:** Lyle banjo in case; kitchen wood clock; mantle clock; cuckoo clock; windup clock; pictures; paintings; beer steins, piggy banks; pop bottles; cow bell; 7 glass kerosene lamps; 2 metal bed frames; 2 tea sets; **Toys:** 7 NASCAR 1/64 scale semi trucks; Tonka motor grader, dump truck, & bucket loader, JD tractor; **Hunting:** 2 Spartan go cam trail cameras; 2 deer ladder stands; metal dog pen; cona bear & regular traps; 15 fishing poles; 5 tackle boxes.
TERMS: Cash or Check. Not responsible for accidents.
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www.nckcn.com/novakbrosgieberauction/
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VOL VII **BURLAP AND Barbed Wire** **MONDAY, October 9 - 1pm**
 Selling **70 Simmental, SimAngus™ & Angus Females**
 at Hofmann Simmental Farms Clay Center, Kansas
 Fall pairs | Opens | Spring bred
 All reds are non-dilute
Your source for sound, functional, profitable females that know how to work for a living!

Lot 1 - Purebred Simmental IR Imperial x Xpectation - Jefferson bull calf at side • full sib embryos sell	Lot 45 - 3/4 SM 1/4 AR CDI North Dakota x LCC Cheyenne Bred to Jefferson for a February calf	Lot 2 - 3/8 SM 5/8 AN S A V Rainfall x Hook's Bozeman Hook's Encore heifer calf at side
Lot 4 - 1/2 SM 1/2 AN WS Proclamation x KCF Bennett Absolute Blazeface TJ Sone Cold heifer at side	Lot 39 - 1/2 SM 1/2 AR KJL/CLZB Complete x CDI Ace Bred to KBHR Charger, due mid February	Lot 60 - 3/4 SM 1/4 AN (red carrier) TJ Stone Cold x WS Red Moon
Lot 65 - 3/4 SM 1/4 AR HSF Cardinal x HXC Conquest	Lot 52 - 5/8 SM 3/8 AN TJ Stone Cold x KBHR High Road	Lot 56 - Purebred Angus Sydden Enhance x Hoover Dam

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