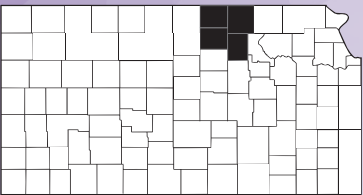


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River Valley District

K-STATE EXTENSION NEWS

rivervalley.ksu.edu

November 2026 Volume 21 #11

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KANSAS PROFILE – *NOW THAT’S RURAL*: MELODIE SEDIVY, SUNFLOWER MERCANTILE OF BARNES

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

“What a find!”

That might be the expression of an antique store customer who locates a special, hard-to-find item in an antique store. Today we’ll meet a family that not only provides antiques, but also helps provide community spirit for their rural Kansas community.

Melodie and Nik Sedivy are owners of Sunflower Mercantile in Barnes. Melodie grew up in Barnes and went to college at Cloud County. She met and married Nik who is from Blue Rapids. They moved to Barnes where he operated a construction company. They have two daughters, both married.

Melodie worked for 44 years at the nearby Georgia Pacific plant, with her career culminating in her role in charge of purchasing. She also had a longtime interest in antiques.

“My parents had a love for antiques,” Sedivy said. “In high school, I started a glass collection.”

Later in her career, a stone building in downtown Barnes came up for sale. The Sedivys bought it and used it as a warehouse at first. Then the antique store across the street closed.

In 2013, the Sedivys opened their own antique store in their historic downtown building. The business is titled Sunflower Mercantile of Barnes. “We have a heck of a lot of fun, collecting things and meeting people,” Sedivy said.

Her husband Nik is the volunteer president of the Barnes Community Development Corporation. He has also worked on restorations of several historic buildings in the community.

For years, the Barnes community conducted a threshing bee, but the demands on volunteer time became too great.

“We got together and said, ‘what can we do that would be less work but still fun?’” Sedivy said. The group decided to put together a festival around antiques with multiple vendors.

A local hair salon operator proposed a tongue-in-cheek festival name: The Barnes Antique and Junque Fest. The name caught on.

“That first year it poured down rain, but we had people show up from as far away as Kansas City,” Sedivy said. “That showed us there was interest.”

Now the Barnes Antique and Junque Fest is held every year on the third Saturday of August. The antique store is open and vendors line both sides of the main street.

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT “2026 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”			
DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
Oct. 15 to Dec. 7		Medicare Part D Enrollment	Call Local Office for an Appointment
Nov. 4	12-1 p.m.	K-State Garden Hour “Houseplant Propagation & Care”	On-Line Contact Brooke Ohlde, RVD Horticulture Agent, 785-632-5335 to register
Nov. 11		Veterans Day—All River Valley Offices Closed	
Nov. 17	6:00 p.m.	ARC vs PLC—Farm Bill Enrollment Options meeting	KSDS East Training Building 702 D St.—Washington, KS
Nov. 20	11:00 a.m.	WITs Workout—”Apple a Day”	Wakefield Library
Nov. 20	2:00 p.m.	WITs Workout—”The World Over”	Washington Public Library
Nov. 24	4-7 p.m.	Retirement Reception for Diane Kussman	Republic Co. 4-H Building NCK Fairgrounds - 901 O St. Belleville, KS
Nov. 26 & 27		Thanksgiving Holiday- All River Valley District Offices Closed	
Dec. 1	12-2 p.m.	Lambing & Kidding 101 Meeting	Clay County Fairgrounds 213 S 12th St.—Clay Center, KS
Dec. 2	12-1 p.m.	K-State Garden Hour “Spiff, Sharpen Stow - Winterizing Garden Tools”	On-Line Contact Brooke Ohlde, RVD Horticulture Agent, 785-632-5335 to register

KANSAS PROFILE – (continued from Page 1)

In 2026, Barnes also celebrated its 150th anniversary, so even more was added to the event. Historic memorabilia were posted at the firehouse, a quilt show took place at a church, food trucks and booths were on site, and games and inflatables were available for kids. Saturday night included a street dance and beer garden.

On Friday evening, a special parade was held featuring many vehicles, vintage and more. Cars, trucks, tractors and even a manure spreader were included.

The event is sponsored by the Barnes Community Development Corporation. It's supported by the local Union State Bank and other businesses. "We've had wonderful support from that bank," Sedivy said.

Across the street from Sunflower Mercantile is a former opera house that is being converted to a lodge.

Barnes puts on another event during the holidays. On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the community holds a lighted horse parade with only horses and horse-drawn vehicles allowed. There is also an Always Christmas shop in Barnes, with Christmas-themed products available year-round.

"We're not right next to a city. There has to be a reason for people to come here," Sedivy said. "For the antique store, we work at having unique items that are competitively priced. Our events draw people from all over."

She adds: "We want to remember our roots and bring people to Barnes."

It's great to find this community spirit in a rural community such as Barnes, population 165 people. Now, that's rural.

For more information, go to www.barnesks.net or look for Sunflower Mercantile of Barnes on Facebook.

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT OFFICES

WILL BE CLOSED



NOVEMBER 11th for VETERANS DAY

and

NOVEMBER 26th & 27th for

THANKSGIVING



K-STATE GARDEN HOUR

As the gardening season winds down and winter approaches, there is still plenty to learn about caring for plants and preparing for next year's growing season. The K-State Garden Hour webinar series, hosted by K-State Extension horticulture staff from across Kansas, offers practical, research-based gardening information for gardeners of all experience levels.

Held on the first Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m., these free online webinars feature approximately 45 minutes of instruction followed by time for questions and answers. We have two topics left for 2026. More information below:

November 4: Houseplant Propagation and Care

As temperatures drop, it's time to bring plants indoors and adjust their care for the winter months. The November session will feature Megin Jacques, Marshall County Extension Agent, who will discuss methods for propagating houseplants and best practices for keeping indoor plants healthy through winter.

Participants can learn how to take cuttings, manage and expand their houseplant collections, and provide the care plants need as indoor growing conditions change. It's a great opportunity to build confidence in houseplant care and discover ways to grow new plants from existing favorites.

December 2: Spiff, Sharpen, and Stow — Wintering Garden Tools

Before settling in for winter, don't forget about your garden tools and equipment! Lane Wiens, Shawnee County Horticulture Agent, will lead the December webinar, sharing practical advice for cleaning, sharpening, and sanitizing garden tools before storing them for the season.

The presentation will also cover winterizing lawn mowers and preparing patio planters for the next growing season. A little maintenance now can help protect your equipment, extend its useful life, and make it easier to get started when spring arrives.

Both webinars are free and open to anyone interested in gardening. Registration is available through the K-State Garden Hour website, and one-time registration provides access to the featured presentations throughout the 2026 series. Can't attend a session live? Recordings are posted online after the events, so you can catch up at your convenience.

Make time for some midday gardening education this winter. Join K-State Extension for expert advice, practical ideas, and inspiration to keep your green thumb growing year-round!

For more information on how to register for the K-State Garden Hour, contact Brooke Ohlde at brooke6@ksu.edu or 785-632-5335.

WINTER WATERING FOR TREES

When the garden goes dormant and temperatures drop, watering may be the last thing on a gardener's mind. However, trees and shrubs still need adequate moisture to survive winter, particularly in Kansas, where dry winds, fluctuating temperatures, and limited precipitation can leave soils dry.

Start Before the Ground Freezes

Fall is an important time to prepare trees and shrubs for winter. If rainfall has been limited, provide a thorough watering before the ground freezes. Moist soil helps plants enter winter with adequate water reserves and reduces the risk of winter damage. Pay particular attention to trees and shrubs planted within the past two to three years. Their root systems may still be developing, making them less capable of accessing moisture deep in the soil. Established trees can also benefit from supplemental watering during extended dry periods. Water slowly around the root zone, extending beyond the trunk toward the outer canopy where many of the absorbing roots are located. Avoid frequent, shallow watering, which does not adequately moisten the soil where roots need it. A good method is to leave your hose barely running for 30-45 minutes. This slow infiltration allows for better soil saturation and water uptake.

Check Soil Moisture

Winter watering may be necessary when conditions are unusually dry, especially during stretches of mild weather when the soil is not frozen.

Rather than watering on a strict schedule, check soil moisture first. If the soil is dry several inches below the surface and temperatures allow water to soak into the ground, a slow, thorough watering may be beneficial. Water during the warmest part of the day to allow moisture to soak in before temperatures drop overnight.

Protect Roots with Mulch

Mulch is one of the simplest ways to protect trees and shrubs through winter. A layer of organic mulch helps moderate soil temperature, conserve moisture, and reduce rapid freezing and thawing around roots. Apply approximately 2 to 4 inches of wood chips, shredded bark, or another suitable organic mulch over the root zone. Keep mulch several inches away from the trunk, creating a doughnut shape rather than piling it against the bark. Mulch piled against trunks can retain excessive moisture and encourage pest and disease problems.

For newly planted trees especially, proper mulching can help reduce environmental stress during their first few winters.

Don't Forget Evergreens

Evergreen trees and shrubs, including arborvitae, junipers, and pines, can be particularly susceptible to winter moisture loss. Their foliage continues to lose water even when growth has slowed, and frozen soil may prevent roots from replacing that moisture. If evergreens develop brown needles or foliage after winter, the damage may be related to lack of water in winter, although other environmental stresses and plant diseases can produce similar symptoms. To help prevent moisture-related injury, water evergreens thoroughly during dry periods in fall and provide supplemental winter watering when conditions permit. Avoid excessive fertilizer late in the growing season, as it can encourage tender growth that may not harden properly before winter, and evergreen tips cannot come back from it once they have freeze damage.

Make Winter Watering Part of Your Routine

Before putting away the garden hose for the season, check the forecast and assess your landscape. Newly planted trees, evergreens, and plants growing in exposed or windy locations deserve special attention. Keep in mind that winter watering needs vary with soil type, plant species, age, drainage, and weather conditions. Sandy soils may dry more quickly than clay soils, while plants in poorly drained areas may need little or no supplemental water. By monitoring soil moisture, watering when conditions are appropriate, and maintaining a healthy layer of mulch, Kansas gardeners can help trees and shrubs withstand winter stress. Healthy plants begin with good care throughout the year. A little attention during the dormant season can help your landscape emerge stronger and better prepared for spring growth.

For additional guidance on tree and shrub care, contact Brooke Ohlde at brooke6@ksu.edu or 785-632-5335.

**SOCIAL SECURITY COST-OF-LIVING
ADJUSTMENT (COLA)**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has announced a 3.6% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2027 for individuals receiving Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

COLA notices will be mailed throughout December, informing beneficiaries of their new 2027 benefit amounts. Your notice may arrive before or after family members or friends. The SSA asks beneficiaries to wait until January before contacting the agency if they have not yet received their COLA notification letter.

For most Social Security beneficiaries, the increase will first appear in payments received in January 2027. Individuals receiving SSI will see the increase beginning with payments issued on December 31, 2026.

**APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE TO SHOP FOR
MEDICARE PART D AND ADVANTAGE PLANS**

Medicare beneficiaries in Kansas have 12 Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans available for 2027. Monthly plan premiums range from \$5.30 to \$264.50. While the standard Part D deductible can be as high as \$700, some plans offer lower deductibles. Additionally, the annual out-of-pocket limit for covered prescription drugs will be capped at \$2,400 in 2027.

Medicare Advantage Plans remain available throughout Kansas, but availability varies by zip code. Because premiums, deductibles, provider networks, covered medications, and out-of-pocket costs can change from year to year, Medicare beneficiaries are encouraged to review their current coverage and compare available options during the Open Enrollment Period.

The Medicare Open Enrollment Period began October 15 and continues through December 7. This is your opportunity to enroll in a new Part D Prescription Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Plan for 2027.

A limited number of Medicare counseling appointments remain available through the River Valley Extension District. Scheduling an appointment now can help reduce stress and ensure you have coverage that best meets your needs.

To schedule an appointment, please contact:

- Belleville Office 785-527-5084
- Clay Center Office 785-632-5335
- Concordia Office 785-243-8185
- Washington Office 785-325-2121

For those who prefer not to make an appointment, the River Valley Extension District will offer three "Take Action Tuesdays" for walk-in Medicare assistance. On November 3, 10, and 17, Medicare beneficiaries can receive one-on-one assistance without an appointment for their Part D Prescription Drug Plan only from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Concordia location at 910 W. 11th Street, Lower Level, Concordia, KS 66901.

Don't wait until the last minute. Take time now to review your Medicare coverage and make sure your plan still meets your healthcare and prescription drug needs for 2027.

**UNITED HEALTHCARE ADVANTAGE
PLAN LEAVING CONCORDIA**

Residents of Cloud County who are currently enrolled in a UnitedHealthcare (UHC) Medicare Advantage Plan should be aware that all UHC Medicare Advantage Plans in the county will end effective December 31, 2026. If you are affected by this change, the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, which runs through December 7, provides an opportunity to review your options and select new coverage for 2027.

Affected beneficiaries may choose to return to Original Medicare or enroll in a different Medicare Advantage Plan available in their area. Understanding the advantages and costs associated with each option is an important part of making an informed decision.

If you decide to return to Original Medicare, a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy can help cover many of the out-of-pocket expenses that Original Medicare does not pay. Because UHC is leaving the area, affected members may qualify for a Guaranteed Issue Right, allowing them to purchase certain Medicare Supplement policies without medical underwriting or health-related eligibility questions.

Be sure to keep the letter you received notifying you that your UHC plan is ending. This letter serves as your "golden ticket" and may be required as proof of loss of coverage when applying for a Medicare Supplement under your Guaranteed Issue protections.

Now is the time to learn about your options from an unbiased source. To schedule a Medicare counseling appointment, contact Monica Thayer, Extension Agent and SHICK Counselor, at 785-243-8185.

**DIANE KUSSMAN IS RETIRING AFTER
17 YEARS WITH THE
RIVER VALLEY EXTENSION DISTRICT!**

Please join us as we celebrate Diane's impact on 4-H in Republic County and the River Valley District

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

Republic County 4-H Building

901 O Street - NCK Fairgrounds

Belleville, KS

4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

*This will be a come-and-go reception
with light refreshments.*



**GRAZING CROP RESIDUE THIS FALL:
MAKING THE MOST OF AVAILABLE FORAGE**

Grazing crop residue can be an economical way for cattle producers to extend the grazing season, reduce winter feed costs and make use of available resources following harvest. In Kansas, corn residue can provide valuable forage during the fall and early winter. However, proper management is essential to protect cattle health and productivity.

Corn residue consists of stalks, leaves, husks and dropped grain. Cattle typically select the most nutritious portions first, including grain and husks, before consuming lower-quality plant material. As these preferred portions become limited, forage quality declines, and supplementation may be necessary to meet nutritional requirements.

Manage grazing carefully. Temporary fencing or strip grazing can help control cattle access and improve residue utilization. Adjust stocking rates and grazing duration based on available forage, cattle nutritional needs and weather conditions. Provide clean water and appropriate mineral supplementation.

Understand the risks. One of the primary concerns is grain overload, which occurs when cattle consume too much corn or other high-starch grain in a short period. This can cause rumen acidosis, digestive upset and, in severe cases, death. Gradually introducing cattle to fields with substantial amounts of dropped grain and monitoring them closely can help reduce this risk.

Nitrate poisoning is another concern in fields containing drought-stressed or heavily fertilized forage plants, including certain weeds and volunteer crops. Sorghum and related plants may also pose a prussic acid risk under specific conditions, particularly following frost or plant stress. These risks depend on the plant species and conditions, so suspicious forage should be evaluated and tested when appropriate. Producers should also follow all pesticide and herbicide grazing restrictions.

Monitor cattle throughout grazing. Check body condition, health and forage availability regularly. Thin cows, growing calves and pregnant cattle may require additional supplementation.

Before turnout, inspect the field for excessive dropped grain, questionable plants and chemical restrictions. Develop a grazing and supplementation plan and consult your veterinarian or local Extension office if potential hazards are identified. With careful planning and monitoring, crop residue grazing can reduce feed costs while supporting a healthy, productive beef herd. If you have questions, please contact livestock production agent Kaitlyn Nelson in the Washington office at 785-325-2121 or khildebrand@ksu.edu.

Did you know Extension offers the following services:

- Feed Analysis Testing
- Nitrate Testing
- Seed Germination Testing
- Soil Testing
- Water Testing
- Pressure Canner Gauge Testing (*free*)

Call your local Extension Office for more information and pricing!

WITs WORKOUT

Many factors contribute to brain health throughout life. Two of these factors include intellectual challenge and social connectedness. WITs Workout provides a purposeful opportunity to engage intellectually and socially. The WITs Workout was created by Illinois Extension and consists of 24 different themed programs. Join Jordan Schuette, Adult Development and Aging Agent, for one of the following WITs Workouts in the district.

Attend the program, "Apple a Day", at the Wakefield Library on Friday, November 20, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. This program focuses on diet and how it relates to brain health with the theme being related to apples in some way.

Attend the program, "The World Over", which focuses on stress management with the theme focusing on world travel. It will be held on Friday, November 20, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Washington Public Library.

These programs are free to attend. If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for this program, contact the River Valley Washington Office at 785- 325-2121.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR THANKSGIVING
FOOD SAFETY STEPS**

This article is from FoodSafety.gov. If you have more questions, please contact Kaitlin Moore, the Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent for the River Valley Extension District at 785-243-8185 and my email is kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

Thanksgiving Day will be here soon – the pressure is on! Cooking this special meal does not have to be intimidating. With a few food safety reminders, you can ensure that you will be able to enjoy your Thanksgiving meal while remaining grateful and healthy.

(Continued on Page 4)

**DON'T FORGET YOUR THANKSGIVING
FOOD SAFETY STEPS *(continued)***

Keep it Clean—Handwashing is the first step to protect you and everyone around your Thanksgiving table. It's also the best way to keep uninvited guests like bacteria out of your kitchen. In several observational studies, USDA found that consumers repeatedly failed to properly wash their hands, specifically not scrubbing their hands with soap for the required 20 seconds to remove germs. There are five simple steps to properly wash your hands:

- 1) Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- 2) Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- 3) Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- 4) Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- 5) Dry your hands using a clean towel.

Make sure food preparation surfaces and utensils are clean and sanitized before you start cooking—To clean your surfaces, you will need soap and hot water, and a paper or dish towel. Use these to remove any dirt and debris you can see.

Then, you should sanitize the surfaces to kill any remaining bacteria. Many different sanitizers can be used. An easy homemade sanitizing solution can be made by mixing one tablespoon liquid chlorine bleach with one gallon of water, or you can use a commercial sanitizer or sanitizing wipe. Allow to air dry and follow the label instructions on commercial sanitizers to determine whether you need to rinse food preparation areas after use.

Campylobacter and Salmonella, bacteria found in poultry products, can survive on countertops and other kitchen surfaces from 4 to up to 32 hours, so make sure you repeat this step after handling raw turkey.

Meal Prep—Keep raw meat and poultry separate from produce and cooked foods. Prepare foods that will not be cooked, such as vegetables and salads, before handling and preparing raw meat and poultry.

Consider not washing or rinsing raw turkey. USDA research found that one in four people who wash or rinse poultry cross-contaminate other food items being prepared with germs from the poultry.

Washing, rinsing or brining meat and poultry in salt water, vinegar or lemon juice does not destroy bacteria. If there is anything on your raw poultry that you want to remove, pat the area with a damp paper towel and immediately wash your hands.

The only way to kill bacteria is to cook meat and poultry to a safe internal temperature by using a food thermometer. You can't see, smell or feel bacteria on meat and poultry, so you should always use a food thermometer.

Your turkey is safe to eat when the temperature reads 165°F (74°C) in three places: 1) The thickest part of the breast. 2) The innermost part of the thigh. 3) The innermost part of the wing.

If you must rinse the turkey and clean out the cavity, first take the time to remove dishes, dish drainers, dish towels, sponges and other objects from around the sink area. Then cover the area around your sink with paper towels. Place the roasting pan next to the sink, ready to receive the turkey. Clean the sink with hot soapy water, rinse well, and fill it with a few inches of cold water. Even if the cavity is partially frozen, use cold water to rinse the cavity. Cold water is still warmer than the frozen cavity. Run the water gently to prevent splashing. Make sure the water is coming out the other end of the cavity. If it isn't, the neck or giblets may still be in there. And that's it! No need to scrub or rinse the rest of the turkey. Hold the turkey up to let it drain into the sink and gently place the turkey in the roasting pan. Remove the paper towels, clean the sink and the area around the sink with hot soapy water, and proceed with your preparations.

Enjoy—When cooked food is out at room temperature, it only has two hours before it becomes unsafe. So make sure you put out just enough food for your guests and place the rest in your fridge.

Serve small portions of a large dish. You can keep the remainder of the dish warm in the oven or cold in the fridge.

If the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (32°C) (like a hot car or summer picnic), refrigerate it within 1 hour.

If you decide to reheat your dishes, be sure they reach 165°F (74°C) as measured with a food thermometer. Reheat sauces, soups and gravies by bringing them to a rolling boil.

HOLIDAY FOOD HOTLINES:

Hotline	Phone number	Focus area	Hours
USDA Meat & Poultry	Call 1-888-MPHotline	Food Safety	M-F 9A-5P CT
Butterball Turkey Talk Line	Call 1-800-BUTTERBALL Text 844-877-3456	Turkey	Nov & Dec only M-F 8A-6P CT
King Arthur Baker's Hotline	Call 855-371-BAKE	Baking	M-F 8A-6P CT Sat/Sun 8A-4P CT
Fleishmann's Yeast	Call 1-800-777-4959	Yeast/ Dough/ Baking	M-F 9A-4P CT

**STAY CONNECTED OVER THE
HOLIDAYS**

We are getting ready to jump in to the holiday season in the River Valley Extension District. This time of the year is often filled with gatherings of friends and family.

No matter how you choose to celebrate the holidays, it is important to reach out to those friends and family whom you may not see. Specifically, to those family members or friends who may be homebound, in nursing homes, or in assisted living facilities.

What are some ways you can reach out to family and friends during this holiday season who you may not be able to gather with in person? One way to reach out could be to send them a seasonal or holiday card. You can send a card(s) you have purchased, or you can create your own card(s) to send. Along with a card you could draw a picture, color a picture, or send an updated family photo. Lastly, you can send a letter to your family or friends.

A second way to reach out to friends and family during this time is through technology. You can make time to call your friends and family and check-in. You may want to utilize technology with video abilities such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or another form to connect with family and friends. This form of technology could also be a great way to host or share a meal with your family and friends during this holiday season.

It is important to stay connected and reach out to your friends and family during the holiday season. Remember a few ways to reach out to friends and family are to send a card, letter, call, or chat utilizing technology with video capabilities. If you have any questions feel free to contact me, by phone at 785-325-2121 or by email at jschuette@ksu.edu.

**CHOOSING THE RIGHT WINTER
FEEDING STRATEGY**

Winter-feeding is one of the largest costs for cow-calf producers in Kansas. How this period is managed can make a big difference in both herd health and an operation's bottom line. From extended grazing systems to feeding stored forages, each method has its strengths and challenges. The right strategy depends on the operation, available resources and winter conditions. Regardless of the system chosen, taking the time to [test feed](#), [balance rations](#) and score [body condition](#) regularly will help make the most of your winter-feeding program.

Extended grazing systems allow cows to graze stockpiled grasses, swaths, and crop residues in the field rather than feeding daily. When looking at this option producers can see reduced costs in feeding, fuel, and equipment as well as manure being deposited directly onto land improving the soil fertility. However, not all regions are suited due to snow depth, timing or precipitation. This management practice also requires planning for fencing, water access, and forage allocation.

Feeding stored forages include forages harvested and stored in summer to provide a consistent winter feed source. With feeding stored forages it can provide consistent feed quality if properly harvested and stored. This winter feed strategy also allows for flexible ration balancing to meet nutritional needs. The downfall is forage can be expensive to produce and store. Producers can also experience spoilage losses if storage isn't ideal.

There are alternative feeds uses of byproducts like screenings, distillers gains or other products local to you to supplement rations. A lot of timers these alternative feeds can lower feeds costs when used strategically. It can also allow for flexibility in ration formulation. However, nutritional content can vary making feed testing essential. There is also risk of anti-nutritional factors or mycotoxins. Sometimes availability and transportation can be inconsistent making it hard to obtain the product.

Silage-based systems are feeding ensiled forages (corn, haylage, sorghum) as the main fiber source in winter ration. This feeding system is a good option for high-producing or under conditioned cows. Silage is a high energy, palatable feed that allows for a consistent ration when properly ensiled. Just like the other feeding strategies this one has its downfalls like requiring infrastructure and storage facilities and a higher upfront cost than extended grazing. Another factor to watch for with silage-based systems is the spoilage losses that can happen if not managed well. Each feeding strategy has its own positives and negatives, but producers need to make their decisions based on what fits their operation the best. If you have any questions feel free to contact livestock production agent Kaitlyn Nelson in the Washington office at 785-325-2121 or by email khildebrand@ksu.edu.

For Sale Items at your local Extension Office:

- Farm & Family Household Account Books (\$5.00)
- Neutroleum Alpha—Odor Remover (\$8.00/bottle)
- Radon Test Kits (\$9.00)