Howdy, River Valley District! My name is Marissa Hurst and I am so thrilled to be joining the Extension Professionals in Republic, Washington, Clay, and Cloud counties as the newest 4-H Youth Development Agent!

I was raised on a small livestock operation in Burrton, Kansas with my lovely family. I was quite the busy showman back in the day showing cattle, sheep, swine, and goats at my local county fair. I loved my static exhibits in 4-H as well. I was involved in the Shopping in Style, Clothing Construction, Leadership, Reading, and Foods and Nutrition projects!

Some things that I enjoy to do in my free time include traveling (I am currently trying to visit all 50 States!), hanging out with my family, going to concerts, discovering new music, reading a good book, escape rooms, country two-stepping/swing dancing, and going to K-State Football games!

I graduated from Kansas State University in December of 2021 with a degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Agricultural Economics. I know what you’re thinking—those two areas of study have nothing to do with each other and you would be right! The truth of the matter is, I always knew that I wanted to be a 4-H Agent and these two areas encompassed most of my interests that I pursued in my 4-H program growing up while developing the skillset to work with youth.

Since graduation, I have been employed as the 21 Central District 4-H Youth Development Agent. I have enjoyed working with the families and implementing new ideas and programs in the district, but I am excited for this change of pace and the challenges that will push me out of my comfort zone with this new opportunity in the River Valley Extension District!

I was a third generation 4-H member and a Cloverbud by the time my oldest sibling could enroll in 4-H, meaning I have quite literally been around 4-H my entire life. This program holds a special place in my heart and I truly believe that all youth have a home in 4-H! I am excited to help the youth in these counties grow in their interests and provide chances to discover new interests, skills, and leadership opportunities!

I look forward to bringing new ideas to the district, working with the staff, getting to know the communities, and getting to meet and connect with 4-H families! If you would like to contact me, you can find me in the Concordia Office, call me at 785-243-8185, or email me at mlhurst@ksu.edu (there is a hidden “l” in my email between the “m” and the “h”- as you can tell, a few emails haven’t made it to me because of this!) I look forward to connecting with all of you!
WHO SHOULD KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

- Teachers.
- School Staff.
- Coaches.
- Camp Counselors.
- Youth Group Leaders.
- Parents.
- Adults who Work with Youth.

WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use disorder challenges among children and adolescents ages 12-18.

- 10.2% of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime.
  Source: Youth Mental Health First Aid

- 1 IN 5 teens and young adults lives with a mental health condition.
  Source: National Alliance for Mental Illness*

- 50% of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by the mid-20s.
  Source: Archives of General Psychiatry**

REGISTER TODAY!

In-person training with
Monica Thayer with the Republic County Mental Health Coalition & River Valley Extension District.

Date and Time:
Friday, June 21st, 2024 9am - 4:30pm
Participants are responsible for own lunch.

Location:
Republic County Hospital Education Room
2420 G St, Belleville, KS

Where to Register:
Call the RVED-Belleville Office at 785-527-5084. Must have email address. Limited to 25 participants.

Registration cost is covered by the Republic County Mental Health Coalition.

The course will teach you how to apply the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE):

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm.
- Listen nonjudgmentally.
- Give reassurance and information.
- Encourage appropriate professional help.
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies.
SUNFLOWER SUMMER

The Sunflower Summer App offers Kansas families a “get out of the house” free card you can carry in your pocket, including free admission to visit museums, zoos, historical attractions, nature centers, and more around Kansas.

The Sunflower Summer Program, hosted by Kansas Tourism, is a benefit for Kansas families with school-aged children to encourage them to explore Kansas. The program is designed to give affordable access to tourism attractions across the state and support the Kansas tourism economy.

To be eligible, you must be a Kansas resident and a student (whether public, private, or home-schooled) between pre-K and 12th grade. The Sunflower Summer App allows you one free admission ticket per student for each attraction. Up to two adults may accompany a group of students and access a free ticket voucher as well.

Eligible Kansas families must download the Sunflower Summer App on either an Apple or Android device and create an account with eligible youth and parents/guardians to claim tickets/admission at participating venues. Any parent or legal guardian, including a grandparent, is eligible to create an account for their children. Ticket transfers are possible to another adult who has the app downloaded, such as from a parent/guardian to a grandparent.

The 2024 Sunflower Summer season is Saturday, May 25th through Sunday, August 11th with over 200 Kansas attractions on the app this year! Tickets are redeemed at participating venues upon arrival. Each user can only use tickets once per venue during the 2024 season. Once you have used the Sunflower Summer app for a specific attraction, the app will "stamp" the ticket and it will no longer be valid to be re-used. The venues are broken down into four categories:

- Amusement and Water Parks
- Arts and Sports
- Museums and History
- Nature and Animals

Keep in mind that Kansas Toll Roads will become cashless as of July 1st so if your Sunflower Summer plans include a toll road, consider getting a K-TAG for lower tolls!

Learn more about Sunflower Summer at www.sunflowersummer.org.

ALZHEIMER’S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

June is Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month. Alzheimer’s is a progressive brain disease which over time destroys one’s thinking abilities, memories, and ability to carry out simple tasks. Currently, around 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease with this number projected to rise to 16 million by the year 2050.

Researchers believe early detection of Alzheimer’s disease will be important to understand how to prevent, slow, and eventually stop it in the future. To detect Alzheimer’s early it is important to understand the ten warning signs of the disease. These have been defined by the Alzheimer’s Association as:

1. memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. challenges in planning or solving problems
3. confusion with place or time
4. difficulty finishing familiar tasks (at home, work, or leisure)
5. difficulty understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. changes in mood and personality
7. withdrawal from social activities or work
8. new problems with words in writing or speaking, misplacing things
9. losing ability to retrace steps
10. poor or decreased judgement

Alzheimer’s is irreversible and it cannot be prevented, slowed, or cured. However, steps can be taken to live an overall brain-healthy lifestyle. Engaging in a brain-healthy lifestyle can improve your well-being, overall health, and it may reduce the risk of cognitive decline as you age. Some of these steps include engaging in regular exercise (at least 150 minutes per week), stop smoking, wear a helmet to protect your head, eating a healthy diet (emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains), try to maintain a healthy weight, and control your blood pressure. Challenge your brain by learning something new, playing games or cards, and staying social with family, friends, and your community. These habits are best implemented early and continued throughout your lifetime, but it is never too late to adopt healthy lifestyle practices.

You can learn more about Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month by visiting the Alzheimer’s Association web-site at https://www.alz.org/. If you have questions about Alzheimer’s resources you can contact Jordan Schuette, Adult Development and Aging Agent at 785-325-2121.
**MEDICARE BASICS TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON**

Medicare and its parts, options, and plans can be confusing. Whether you are starting Medicare soon or are already on Medicare, consider attending Medicare Basics to learn about the benefits, enrollment, eligibility, and more! Please join us for a Medicare Basics Program at the following location:

**Monday, June 24, 2024**
**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**
**6:30 p.m.**
**RSVP to 785-325-2121**

Medicare Basics is free to attend, but registration is requested. If you would rather schedule a personal appointment or if you have specific questions regarding Medicare, please call Jordan Schuette at 785-325-2121 or jschuette@ksu.edu.

**JUNE IS ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH**

No one is immune to abuse, and this includes older adults. Elder abuse is defined as an intentional act or failure to act that causes or is likely to cause harm to an adult. It can occur anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. The six most common types of elder abuse are physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation.

In Kansas, the most common form of elder abuse is financial abuse. The most common way this abuse is executed is through scams. These financial scams target older adults and can be financially devastating to those with high income or low income. It can be difficult to determine if these scams are legitimate or not because the scam artists are persuasive and work hard to gain your trust.

The top 10 most reported scams targeting older adults are:

1. Telemarketing, phone, charity, or imposter scams
2. Grandparent scams
3. Medicare or health insurance scams
4. Internet fraud
5. Funeral and cemetery scams
6. Sweepstakes, prizes, or lottery scams
7. Home repair or reverse mortgage scams
8. Investment schemes
9. Counterfeit prescription drug sales
10. Fraudulent anti-aging products

These are some steps you can take to prevent becoming a victim of a scam: use caller ID, screen calls or do not answer calls from people you do not know, do not answer a phone call if the caller ID shows your own phone number (this is called spoofing), delete suspicious emails, and hang up on pushy telemarketers or salespeople. Be wary of sharing your personal information and be sure to consult a trusted family member or friend if you feel uncomfortable.

All this information and more can be found in the K-State Research and Extension Handout, “Elder Abuse and Neglect: What You Should Know.” Other topics in the handout include descriptions of the six most common types of elder abuse, IRS and Health Care Scams, Warning Signs of Abuse, who is at risk for abuse, who perpetrates abuse, how abuse can be prevented, managing the stress of caregiving, how to report suspected elder abuse, and more helpful resources.

**IT’S STRAWBERRY SEASON**

Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring. Fresh strawberries are tasty by themselves or in any meal or beverage. Here are some fun facts!

- Eight strawberries contain more vitamin C than one orange.
- A serving (1 cup) of strawberries has twice as much fiber as a serving of grapes.
- Strawberry flavor is influenced by weather, the variety, and stage of ripeness when harvested.
- On average, there are 200 seeds in a strawberry.

Learn more at:

extension.illinois.edu/small-fruits/strawberries

and
californiastrawberries.com

Learn about preserving strawberries at www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF1178.PDF

This information is from Karen Blakeslee’s You Asked It! Newsletter, you can read more here:

rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/

If you’d like to pick up a hard copy of this K-State Extension publication on preserving strawberries, reach out to one of the local Extension Offices, or call Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent at 785-243-8185
START PLANNING FOR CANNING NOW

Now is the time to make sure canning equipment is ready for the food preservation season. Here are some reminders:

- Get dial pressure gauges tested. The Presto® Pressure Gauge tester will test gauges made by Presto including the brands National, Presto®, Magic Seal and Maid of Honor. We will not test All American brand gauges. If the test shows more than two pounds of pressure off, it should be replaced.
- Check your jars for cracks, chips, etc. Decide how many new lids to buy.
- Make sure rubber gaskets on pressure canners are not cracked and are still pliable.
- Look for new tested recipes to try!
- For more information, see www.rrc.ksu.edu. Click on “Food Preservation”.

This information is from Karen Blakeslee’s You Asked It! Newsletter, you can read more here: rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/
Questions about canning or bringing in your pressure gauges for testing can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent at 785-243-8185

CERTIFIED APPLICATION COUNSELOR

Our Family Resource Management Extension Agent, Monica Thayer, has completed her training to become a Certified Application Counselor (CAC) for the Federal Marketplace. Previously, she held a similar role from 2019 through 2023 and is excited to be able to provide this service again.

As a CAC, she is available to assist individuals and families understand, apply for, and enroll in health insurance coverage through the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM or Marketplace). The FFM is an online marketplace for individuals and families to purchase health insurance plans.

While Open Enrollment for the FFM is November 1st through January 15th, individuals and families may be able to enroll in or change plans if they have certain income, experience specific life events, or qualify for Medicaid or CHIP. Generally, if you are eligible for Medicare, you are not eligible for insurance through the FFM.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment with Monica, contact her at the RVED-Belleville Office at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2024 IN OBSERVANCE OF THE JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY

Thanks to those who attended the 2024 Local Food Producer Workshops in February & March!
If you were not able to attend, recordings are available!

Four in-person Local Food Producer Workshops (formerly called the farmers' market/direct-to-consumer workshops) were held this February and March. These workshops are a great opportunity to connect with other producers and learn more about how to sell high quality, safe and healthy food to benefit the local community. These workshops are co-sponsored by K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Alternative Crops, and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

Presentations shared during the 2024 workshops included:
- Meat & Poultry Regulations
- Kansas Sales Tax
- Tips on Marketing and Making a Profit Selling Local Food
- Food Sales at Farmers’ Markets
- Business Planning, Accounting & Recordkeeping
- Accepting SNAP at Farmers’ Markets

If you were not able to attend, there are recordings available for you to view. The recordings are on the From the Land of Kansas website at:
https://www.fromthelandofkansas.com/page/farmers-market-regional-workshops

We look forward to offering these workshops again in 2025!

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT FAIR DATES

Cloud County July 16-21, 2024
Washington County July 16-21, 2024
Clay County July 23-28, 2024
Republic County July 29-August 3, 2024
SELECTING SIRES TO CREATE REPLACEMENT FEMALES

K-State beef cattle experts offer genetic advice on what data to use in decision-making.

When making a decision, many people believe it is important to gather as much information as possible to set the path for the future. When selecting sires, beef producers have a lot of data to reference, said the experts at Kansas State University’s Beef Cattle Institute. The experts focused on selecting bulls that could work as sires mated to first-calf heifers, and that the female calves from these matings could be retained in the herd as replacement heifers.

“When it comes to heifer matings, it is important to look at the potential sires’ calving ease direct EPD (Expected Progeny Difference), but it is also recommended using a selection index as part of the sire selection process,” said Bob Weaber, K-State beef cattle geneticist and head of the Eastern Kansas Research Extension program. He said the selection indexes are built from multiple data inputs, which gives producers more information than a single-trait data point, such as an EPD.

“Many producers are looking to manage mature cow size and lactation potential to control maintenance and production costs and that is where using selection indexes can help,” Weaber said. “Using a selection index that is targeted towards replacement females and understanding the marketing endpoint is valuable because it balances out the pressure from growth and performance relative to cost.”

K-State veterinarian Bob Larson agreed and added that the beef breed associations and artificial insemination bull studs make that data available to producers working through the sire selection process. “Each breed association has slightly different indexes, but they are similar, and for building matings to create replacement heifers, it is important to select a bull that is high for the maternal index,” Larson said.

When Weaber works through this process, he goes to searchable databases to put in his criteria and then sorts through the rankings provided to him. “Start the search to find the index for the best-performing animals to meet the marketing endpoint and then sort that sub-group for the single trait that you are most concerned about,” Weaber said. “So, in the case of planning matings to heifers that will be used to create replacement heifers, first sort on the maternal index and then calving ease direct. By doing that you are optimizing the most economically important traits.”

To hear the full discussion, listen to Cattle Chat on your preferred streaming platform.

JUNE IS NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

National Dairy Month is celebrated every year during the month of June throughout the United States. It is a month-long celebration of the contributions the dairy industry has made for more than 85 years. Originally started in 1937 as National Milk Month it was created as a way to promote drinking milk to U.S. consumers as there was a production surplus at the time. By 1939, June became the official dairy month. Whether it’s in coffee, cereal, or smoothies, adding one more serving of milk to your family’s day can help ensure they get the nutrients they need to build strong bones and teeth. Trusted for decades, dairy farm families pride themselves on producing wholesome dairy foods that help their families grow up strong and healthy.

To help celebrate dairy month here are some facts about Kansas dairy farms. Kansas is the 16th-ranked dairy state for milk production and is home to 175,000 dairy cows on 193 dairy farms. Roughly 80 to 85% percent of the milk produced in the state is produced in western Kansas on 29 large farms that originated since 1994. In Kansas, the average dairy cow produces about 7.55 gallons of milk per day. That’s more than 2,755 gallons of milk over the course of a typical year. Kansas has six plants that produce one or more dairy products. The state also has nine on-farm or specialty processing facilities that produce milk, cheese, and ice cream, among other products. Over the years, Kansas has consistently ranked as one of the fastest growing dairy states. Kansas has established itself as a prime location in the U.S. for dairies with its abundant land, feed supply, ideal climate, proactive water policies, and positive business environment. Dairies offer jobs on the farm and throughout the industry in areas including trucking, breeding services and sales, repair services; and veterinary, pharmaceutical, nutrition, and other consulting services.

Let’s celebrate the dairies in the River Valley District throughout the entire month of June.

CONTROLLING BAGWORMS

The time has come to start looking and treating for bagworms. If you noticed the bags on your tree last fall, you will want to spray this spring. Bagworm caterpillars will be present throughout Kansas feeding on broadleaf and evergreen trees and shrubs. Therefore, be prepared to act against bagworms once they are observed on trees and shrubs.
Young bagworms normally hatch in May and initially are about 1/25 of an inch long. The young larvae begin to spin silken bags around themselves which they carry as they feed. Larvae usually feed on the original plant or those nearby. Young larvae may be transported to other hosts via a long silken thread that can be carried by the wind. As the larvae grow, leaf fragments are added to the bag providing a natural camouflage. The visual appearance of the bag will vary depending on the type of foliage the larvae is feeding on. Bagworms are primarily a pest of evergreens; however, they feed on a wide-range of host plants including a number of broadleaf plants, such as: rose, honey locust, hackberry, and flowering plum.

Often the bags are not noticed until the larvae are nearing maturation and the bags approach 1 to 2 inches in length. Mature bags hang off the tree or shrub like Christmas ornaments. Bagworms reach maturity in August. The now mature larvae attach their bags to branches or other objects and change into adults. The adult male is a small, gray, clear-winged moth that resembles a wasp. The female is wingless and legless and never leaves the bag. Males emerge in September and mate with the female through the bag entrance. The female produces her eggs (500-1,000) and dies. The eggs then overwinter inside the bag and the cycle repeats itself the following year.

Now for the question everyone asks, how do I kill bagworms? The key to managing bagworms with insecticides is to apply insecticides early and frequently enough to kill the highly susceptible young caterpillars feeding on plant foliage. It is important to apply insecticides when bagworms are less than 1/4-inch-long to maximize effectiveness of insecticide applications and subsequently reduce plant damage. When spraying your trees, you will want to thoroughly cover all of the plant parts, especially the tops of the trees and shrubs, where bagworms commonly start feeding.

Insecticides commonly used for controlling bagworms include cyfluthrin (Tempo, BioAdvanced Vegetable & Garden Insect Spray), permethrin (Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Concentrate; Lawn, Garden, Pet, & Livestock Insect Spray), and acephate (Acephate, Orthene, Bonide Systemic Insect Control). Also, products containing Bacillus thuringiensis are effective when used against bagworm larvae while they are still small. Products containing Bacillus thuringiensis and spinosad are organic controls. The best time to spray for bagworms is a couple weeks after the larvae have hatched. Typically, in Kansas June is the best time to apply insecticides. Frequent applications are essential in achieving sufficient suppression of the population. The reason multiple applications are needed is that bagworm larvae do not hatch from eggs simultaneously, but hatch over time depending on temperature.

If left unchecked, bagworms can cause significant damage and ruin the aesthetic quality of plants. In addition, bagworms may kill plants, especially newly transplanted small evergreens, since evergreens do not usually produce another flush of growth after being fed upon or defoliated by bagworms. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.

DEADHEADING ANNUAL AND PERENNIAL FLOWERS

Are you looking for a way to increase the amount of flowers you get on your plants? Are you tired of the one and done flowers? Have you ever tried deadheading your plants? Some plants will bloom more profusely if the old, spent flowers are removed. This is a process called deadheading. Annual plants especially, will focus their energy on seed production after they have flowered once instead of focusing on producing more flowers. If you remove old flowers, the energy normally used to produce seeds will be used to produce more flowers.

Perennial flowers can also benefit from deadheading and will increase the length of the blooming season. However, some gardeners enjoy the look of spent flowers of perennials such as sedum or purple coneflower. The seed produced is a good food source for birds.

Deadheading will not help all plants produce another round of flowers. Some plants that don’t produce flowers again are ‘Autumn Joy’ sedum, impatiens, most flowering vines and periwinkle. These plants only produce one round of flowers whether you deadhead them or not. It’s totally up to you as the gardener on whether you like the look of the spent blooms or if you’d rather take them off.

Plants that do increase bloom production in response to deadheading include geraniums, petunias, marigolds, snapdragons, roses, blanket flowers, and zinnias. These are just a few in a long list of annual and perennial flowers that will bloom repeatedly if you deadhead them.

Deadheading is easily accomplished and doesn’t take much time to complete. With some plants, pinching the bloom between a thumb and finger will pop off the spent blooms. Others will be a bit tougher and will need pruning shears to remove the blooms. Deadheading can increase the length of the gardening season, but it is up to you the gardener on whether you choose to deadhead your plants. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.
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<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
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<td>Wheat Plot Tours</td>
<td>District— See flier on insert</td>
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<td>June 19</td>
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<td>Juneteenth</td>
<td>RVED Offices Closed</td>
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<td>June 21</td>
<td>9am-4:30pm</td>
<td>Youth Mental Health First Aid</td>
<td>Belleville-Republic Co. Hosp., 2420 G Street</td>
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<td>June 24</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Medicare Basics</td>
<td>Washington-Good Shepherd Church, 200 West 4th St.</td>
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<td>June 25</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>A Financial Checkup</td>
<td>Clay Center-RVD Office, 322 Grant Ave.</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
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<td>A Financial Checkup</td>
<td>Belleville-Public Library, 1327 19th St.</td>
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<td>6pm</td>
<td>Red, White &amp; Blooms</td>
<td>Washington-KSDS, 124 West 7th St.</td>
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<td>Clay Center-Event Center, 205 South 12th St,</td>
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<td>Cloud County Fair</td>
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