

Sunflower Extension District #6



January 2026



Newsletter

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January 2026

Go to www.sunflower.ksu.edu for more details on these programs.

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K-State Extension Calving School

Dr. Anthony Tarhoff, DVM Kansas State University

Thursday, January 15th, 2026

5:30 p.m. MT/6:30 p.m. CT

Community Activity Building (Wallace
County Fairgrounds)

316 W. Ramon St.

Sharon Springs, KS 67758

**Registration:**

Free to attend, meal will be provided!

Call any Sunflower District Ext. office, or
Greeley County Ext. office or register
online at: <https://tinyurl.com/4bty2efn>

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities, and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Rheanna Melcher, 720-341-9557 or Todd Schmidt, 620-376-4284.



Insect Overwintering



As temperatures drop, insects go through an abrupt change in life style. Their activity and development largely cease, but they have strategies to survive the winter. Insect overwintering is frequently used to refer to a sort of hibernation undertaken by insects to survive the cold temperatures. Insects can overwinter in any stage of their development unless they migrate. Most insects have a single generation life-cycle, but there are some that require two or more years to fully develop. Some insects, such as whitefly and tomato psyllid, can't survive unless they're protected by a greenhouse or heated, indoor shelter. Those insects, and others such as Monarch butterflies, normally survive by migrating south and returning north for an upcoming growing season. Other insects survive by adding an "antifreeze," called glycerol, to their cells. In addition, most insects seek out protective sites and spend the winter below ground, under debris or in insulated areas. Winter diapauses, a state in which insects stop growing and developing, is broken only if a certain period of cold weather passes or insects become aware that days are getting longer. Some other insects, such as lady beetles and box elder bugs, survive as adults in a process very similar to that of a bear hibernating in a cave. The overwintering pupae of most butterflies are attached to an above-ground object. Geranium budworm and other hornworm pupae survive in packed earthen cells three inches underground. Mosquitoes, grasshoppers, aphids and scales spend the winter as eggs. Bark beetles, such as mountain pine beetle and wood borers, live on as partially grown larvae under the bark of infested trees. An insect's worst enemies are the alternating extremes of very cold and very warm weather that can come during late winter. This is the same type of weather that also endangers plant survival.

Compost Pile Maintenance



Decomposition in the compost pile slows down as the weather gets cooler. Avoid turning the pile during this time of year since the inside of the pile is warmer and turning it to the outside will cool down the entire pile. The freezing and thawing that often takes place through the winter is actually beneficial for decomposition. If you choose to add food waste to the compost pile through the winter months, recognize it will not decompose as quickly and could attract pests. You can prevent this by covering any scraps with a layer of dried leaves or bury them into the heap. Keep the compost pile moist to promote decomposition. The pile should not be waterlogged however because this restricts oxygen and causes rotting. The edges of the pile will dry out first and a light sprinkling of water may be sufficient if there has been no precipitation.



Keeping an eye out for Theileria

Kansas State University beef cattle experts are urging producers to stay alert this winter as new research reveals that Theileria, a tick-borne parasite affecting cattle across the region, may be spreading in more ways than once believed. In a recent episode of the [Beef Cattle Institute's Cattle Chat podcast](#), veterinary entomologist Cassandra Olds explained how shifting transmission patterns and overlooked management habits could leave herds more vulnerable than expected — and what producers can do now to stay ahead of the disease. “Theileria is tick-borne but can also be spread by sucking lice, possibly stable flies, limited placental transmission and contaminated needles or equipment,” Olds said. “This emphasizes the importance of single-needle use and highlights how difficult vector control can be.” Olds stressed that while ticks remain the primary concern, secondary vectors and poor hygiene during routine herd management procedures significantly increase risk. “Producers need to be aware — it's not just about ticks anymore,” she said.

Experts recommend that producers take the following steps to reduce transmission risk:

- Implement strict, single-use needle protocols during vaccinations, treatments and pregnancy checks.
- Clean and disinfect equipment such as dehorners, taggers, and castration tools - between animals.
- Evaluate external parasite control plans to ensure they include lice management during winter.
- Monitor incoming cattle, especially replacements, for signs of anemia or weakness, which may indicate Theileria infection.
- Consult with a local veterinarian to create a diagnostic and response plan if unexplained cases of anemia occur.

By Chey-Lynn Vaske, K-State Extension news service

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES:



Making “Cents” of a Shifting Ag Economy

Join us for an engaging conference that explores the current farm financial landscape! Topics presented include:

- International trade and tariff impacts.
- Budgeting for crop profitability.
- Ag policy and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.
- Farm transition considerations, and much more.

City Limits Convention Center, Colby
8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 14, 2026
SCAN ME!
Register today!
AgManager.info/profitability

This institution is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact. Robin Reid four weeks prior to the start of the event at 785-532-0964 or robinreid@k-state.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when possible. Requests for interpretation or translation of vital information, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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Cover Your Acres

January 20 & 21 at The Gateway in Oberlin, KS

Full Program Offered Each Day

Early Registration Through January 14th, 2026

Tuesday - \$60, Wednesday - \$55, Both Days - \$80

Walk-In Registration at Conference - \$80/day, cash or check

The conference fee includes lunch, morning and afternoon refreshments, and educational materials.



Taking Care of Self Celebrating a New Year

Adding More Activity to Your Life

If you have decided to get more active, congratulations! Making that decision is an important first step in becoming a healthier person. Keeping these key points in mind: Being fit helps you look and feel your best and reduces your risk for a heart attack, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

Knowing why you want to get more active can help you make a change. Start with small, short-term goals that you can reach pretty easily. It's easier to stick to something when you have early, frequent successes.

Support from family and friends can go a long way toward helping you find success in becoming more active. Don't be afraid to let them know what you're trying to do—and ask for their help.

If you're worried about how more activity might affect your health, have a checkup before you start. Follow any special advice that your doctor gives you for getting a smart start.

Other important decisions revolve around physical activity. Should I take the stairs or elevator? Exercise before or after work? Watch TV or go take a walk? Many serious health problems are directly related to personal habits or behavior. Writing a plan is an important step in regaining or maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

A long and healthy life doesn't just happen. Everyday the choices you make influence the quality of life you will experience. Many of the choices you make during the day are food-centered. You might think you only make three food choices daily: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. But you make different choices for every meal and other times during the day.

Over time, poor eating habits affect overall health status. Problems related to obesity or chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis didn't happen overnight.

Start your day with breakfast. Studies show that people who include breakfast eat 100 fewer calories a day than people who don't. Eating breakfast actually jump-starts metabolism and helps the body function better physically and mentally.

Include a fruit or vegetable with every meal or snack. Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in fiber and low in calories. They also provide a wide range of disease-fighting vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Some vegetables and many fruits are naturally sweet, so they can actually tame a sweet tooth.

Reducing portion sizes can also help.

Using a smaller plate, no larger than 9 inches in diameter is recommended. Making a conscious effort to reduce food portion size will do much to reduce the number of calories, as well as the amount of fat and added sugar consumed.

Eat slowly and eat only until you are no longer hungry. Learn to enjoy your food by feeling satisfied and light on your feet instead of stuffing yourself. Slow down. Try laying your eating utensil down between bites or engage in some family conversation around the dinner table. When you routinely stop eating just as you begin to feel full and don't take even one more bite, you can save as many as 500 calories a day, which means losing up to 50 pounds in a year.

Choose to eat more nutrient-dense foods.

Foods that have low nutrient density supply calories but little or no amounts of vitamins and minerals; therefore, they are given the label "empty calories."

HAVE A GREAT NEW YEAR!!!



2026 K-State Junior Beef Producer Day

Join us on March 7, 2026, for the biennial K-State Junior Beef Produce Day! This event is a fun-filled educational day for youth, parents, beef project leaders, ag teachers, and extension agents to expand their knowledge of youth beef projects. Presentations by K-State faculty, staff, K-State livestock judging team members, students, and guest speakers will cover topics that may include selection, nutrition, daily care, meat science, reproduction, health, grooming, and showmanship. An optional YQCA certification class will be offered at the end of the day. A complimentary lunch and t-shirt will also be provided for those who register by the deadline. The registration fee is \$20 per person for those who sign up by February 13. The fee will increase to \$30 per person for those who register after the dealing. Only those who register by February 13 will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending the event must register, including youth and adults.

Deadline: February 13

Fee: \$20/person

Registration link: <https://bit.ly/BeefJrProducer>

Late Registration: \$30/person (after February 13)

2026 K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day

Join us for the biennial K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Presentations will be provided by featured guests, as well as K-State faculty, staff, and students. This event will be an educational day of activities in which youth, parents, extension agents, ag teachers, and sheep project leaders can increase their knowledge of youth sheep project selection and management. A variety of topics will be shared, including an optional YQCA certification at the end of the day. All ages and skill levels are invited! Lunch and a t-shirt are included. The registration fee is \$20/person for those who sign up by March 20 or \$30/person for those who register after that date. Only those who register by the deadline will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending, including both youth and adults, must register. There will be an optional tour of the sheep and meat goat center offered on Friday evening and Saturday after jr. day

Deadline: March 20

Fee: \$20/person

Registration link: <http://bit.ly/SheepJrProducer>

Late Registration: \$30/person (after March 20)



Horse Panorama

The State [Horse Panorama](#) for adults & youth will be on February 21-22, 2026 @ Rock Springs

K-STATE
Research and Extension



Beyond Ready

2026-27 Kansas 4-H Scholarships

Due January 5, 2026 by 11:59 PM CST

The Kansas 4-H Scholarship program is open to graduating high school seniors, current college students, and graduate students who have been part of the 4-H experience. Each scholarship has its own criteria, and you may qualify for several. You will only need to fill out one application to be considered for all available scholarships. For a list of scholarships please call any Extension office. Please note, scholarships are available based upon funds available.



Congratulations!

KS Project Record Books Qualifying for Regionals

Sherman County

Kaelyn Schilling - Beef

Rylea Martin - Foods

Hayden Short - Leadership & Goat

Sarah Nemechek - Horse

Wallace County

Jensen Vandike—Beef

Payton Riedel—Dog

Addison Aldridge—Leadership

Kasen Stramel—Swine

Cheyenne County

Harmony Wilson—Performing Arts



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New 4-H Policy Guide: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/docs/Kansas%204-H%20Policy%20Handbook%202025%20FINAL.pdf>

Cloverbud Policy Guide: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/docs/Policy%20Book-%20Cloverbuds%20Kansas%204-H.pdf>

January 2026

Happy New Year

Sunflower District

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1. Happy New Year! Extension Offices Closed	2. Extension Offices Closed	3.
4.	5. Qualifying KS Project Record Books- due to the Extension Office State Scholarships Due	6.	7. SH-Foods 3:30 - 5:00 PM MT	8.	9.	10.
11. SH—Creative Tables Registration Due	12.	13. KS Project Record Books Regional Judging Scott City	14.	15.	16.	17.
18.	19. <u>Extension Offices Closed</u> 	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.
25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31.

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