

Sunflower Extension District #6



April 2026
Online! Newsletter
www.sunflower.ksu.edu

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

Inside Your Newsletter...

- Garden To Do List, Testing Germination Rate of Old Seeds..... Horticulture Production page
- Chemical Weed Control Guide, Virtual Fencing for Livestock..... Ag & Natural Resources page
- Good Gut Health..... Family & Consumer page

New Hires in the District

Exciting times here in the Sunflower Extension District. As we have 2 ladies retiring and moving on we are hiring 2 great staff members to replace them. Meet Kim Artzer and Cindy Sherlock.

Cindy will be the new Office Professional in the Cheyenne County Office. She will be working in all areas in Cheyenne County and looks forward to helping everyone.

Kim will be the new 4-H Development Agent in the District, with her main office being in Sherman County. Here is a little bit about her: I am excited to step into the role of 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent and continue my lifelong work in education. I bring more than 29 years of experience in education, including the past eight years managing educational projects across the country. My passion has always been helping young people learn, grow, and discover the many ways they can make a difference in their communities.

Goodland is home for my family. I am married and we are the proud parents of two former 4-H members, which has allowed me to see firsthand the positive impact 4-H can have on youth and families. Those experiences helped shape my passion for working with kids and supporting opportunities that build confidence, leadership, and life skills.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with animals, working on homesteading projects, and prepping food by freeze drying or canning. I also love visiting lakes and the ocean whenever I can. I look forward to connecting with local youth and families and helping the next generation discover their strengths, explore new interests, and grow through 4-H.

Sunflower Extension District

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Kim Artzer



Cindy Sherlock





Garden To Do List

- Cut back ornamental grasses just above ground level, leaving no more than 3-6 inches of stubble. This allows for new growth, while reducing the frequency with which grasses may need divided.
- Continue starting seeds indoors. Many cool season vegetable crops can be transplanted outdoors into the garden from mid-March to Mid-April, including broccoli, kale, cabbage, potatoes, and beets.
- Peas, leeks, lettuce, and onions can be planted outside in early March if weather conditions allow. These seeds are able to sprout in cooler weather, when soil temperatures reach around 35 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs as growth emerges. Once flowering begins, fertilizers will be too late to benefit the bulb for the next growing season.
- Conduct a soil test before the growing season begins. Soil amendments will be much easier to incorporate before new gardens or flowerbeds are planted.



Testing Germination Rate of Old Seeds

Most gardeners have seeds from past gardening seasons. Whether they were extra seeds leftover at the end of the row, seeds collected from the garden, or gifts from other gardens, the question that remains is this: will these seeds still grow?

Seeds, just like the plants they come from, are living things. This means that even though they sit in a dormant state, waiting for the ideal conditions to start growing, they are alive and impacted by their storage conditions. The longer a seed is stored, the more the quality of that seed decreases, and the less likely it is to grow. Heat, humidity, moisture, and temperature fluctuations the seed is exposed to during storage only further decreases a seed's lifespan.

Most seeds, when stored well, can easily be saved for one year and still germinate, or sprout from the seed and grow well. Seeds stored for three to four years often experience a significant decrease in their ability to germinate, however when stored in ideal conditions, some seeds can survive ten or more years in storage and still germinate. Since there is so much variability in how long a seed can be stored, it is best to test old seeds before planting.

To test if old seeds are still worth planting, gathering up a paper towel, plastic bag or container, and some water for an easy, at-home experiment. Here is what you will do:

1. Start by taking a couple of sheets of paper towel and dampen them with water. Wring out any excess water and lay the paper towel out flat.
2. Place 10 or more seeds on one-half of the damp paper towel. The more seeds tested, the more accurate the results, however, only plan to use a portion of the total seeds available.
3. Fold the paper towel over the seeds, covering the seeds, and place it in a plastic bag or container. Seal the bag to trap in the moisture. Consider labeling the bag with the date and type of seed tested.
4. Place the bag in a warm location of the house, such as on top of the refrigerator, in a sunny window, or over a heating vent. Warm temperatures above 70 degrees Fahrenheit will speed up germination.
5. Check the seeds every few days for signs of germination and see if additional water is needed to keep the paper towel damp. Most seeds will germinate within 5-10 days, however some seeds may take slightly longer.

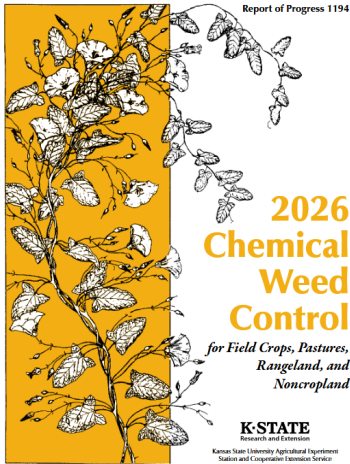


Determine the germination rate of the seeds by counting the number of seeds that have started to grow and divide that number by the total number of seeds tested on the paper towel. Multiply by 100 to determine the % germination rate.

$$\frac{\text{\# of Seeds Growing}}{\text{Total \# of Seeds Tested}} \times 100 = \% \text{ Germination Rate}$$

A germination rate of 90% or above is excellent for most seed species. Germination rates between 70-80% are still acceptable, and common for many types of seeds. For seeds within this range, consider planting a few additional seeds to offset the lower germination rate is 50-60% or less, it will probably be best to purchase new seeds for the upcoming growing season.

When the germination test is over, most often seeds from the test are disposed of. Seedlings are extremely delicate as their first root (called a radicle) emerges, and handling and seed counting may damage the radicle. If the emerging roots or shoots are damaged, the plant will not survive. If the seed can be handled carefully, without damaging the emerging plant, the seeds can be planted in the garden or in pots for transplanting outside later. This will be most easily accomplished with larger seeds, such as sunflowers, pumpkins, or squash.



Haven't got the newest Chemical Weed Control Guide? If you desire a hard copy stop in at any of our Sunflower District Extension offices. If an electronic version works better for you, access a copy at this link: www.agronomy.k-state.edu/extension/weed-management/

Virtual Fencing for Livestock

Virtual fencing is not new to the world, dog owners have been virtually mapping their lawns and letting fido roam without fences or a leash for a few years now. The dog wears a collar that emits a sound or vibration when the animal comes close to the virtual boundary, letting the dog know to put the brakes on.

Apply this concept to a larger acreage and a larger animal. A livestock manager maps a pasture and adorns the stock with a device that monitors the animal's movement through GPS, controlling livestock distribution in rangeland without physical fences. When the livestock reaches the limit of the virtual fence, a series of loud beeps emit from the collar. As the animal nears the boundary, they receive a benign shock. Cattle, sheep, and goats have demonstrated the ability to rapidly learn the virtual fencing cues.

Virtual fencing has the potential to improve soil and water quality through managed grazing. Managed grazing is the careful monitoring and movement of livestock density and timing. It can stimulate plant regrowth and add manure to the soil. While managers with traditional fences practice managed grazing, it requires much more labor, and animal movements are limited to pastures defined by physical fences. Virtual fencing allows managers to frequently and efficiently move livestock from one pasture to the next and define new within-pasture boundaries.

Other benefits of virtual fencing include eliminating wildlife conflicts with wire fencing and usage in areas that are difficult to build traditional fences. Another application is the exclusion of livestock from certain areas, like riparian zones, newly burnt pasturelands, or areas of forage toxicity concerns.

There are challenges associated with virtual fencing. Learning the software and how to set up paddocks, exclusions and identification of animals is one challenge. A second challenge maybe the time investment to collar all the livestock that need to be virtually fenced. Another consideration to account for is what containment rate within a paddock is acceptable, which will vary based on producers' perspective, what "fail rate" is a producer comfortable with?

Figure to the right: Virtual Fencing Vendor Comparison chart

Interested in more Virtual Fencing information? Contact Rheanna Melcher at rmelcher@ksu.edu or (785) 332-3171.

Virtual fence vendors for Cattle								
Basic Comparison (February 2026)								
	VF software	Connectivity	Collar battery	Herd size	Pasture size	Up front cost	Yearly cost	
eShepherd from	Gallagher from computer or mobile app	Multiple base stations OR Cellular	Solar charged 7-10 years*	20+	~45ft X 45ft No max	\$250-300/collar** \$5,000-6,000/ base station (if necessary)	Base station: \$18/neckband Cellular: \$24/neckband	
Halter	Mobile app (view mode only for computer)	Multiple base stations	Solar charged 5 years*	50+	~32sq ft/ animal No max	\$4,500/ base station	\$72-96/collar**	
Nofence <small>Also available for small ruminants</small>	Nofence-app from computer or mobile app	Cellular	Solar charged 5-10 years*	5+	0.5 ac - ~10,000 ac	\$309-349/collar** (includes year 1 subscription)	\$35-45/collar**	
VENCE <small>Merck Animal Health</small>	HerdManager from computer or mobile app (view mode only for mobile app)	Multiple base stations	Replaceable one-time use 6-9 months	100+	>200 ac No max	\$10,000-12,500/ base station	\$40/collar + \$10/battery/ collar***	

*According to vendor **Variable pricing based on herd size ***Year-round use requires ≥2 batteries/collar/year

Virtual fence components from different vendors are generally not interoperable or interchangeable. Specific components, GIS data needs, software protocol, software training, frequency and duration of the cues, GPS error, livestock collaring, and livestock training protocols may vary depending on the vendor. Follow the vendor's recommendations and guidelines. Contact vendors for more information on pricing and availability. The University of Arizona does not endorse a specific product.

Questions? Contact Flavie Audoin (faudoin@arizona.edu)
 Access more virtual fence information at RangelandsGateway.org/vf
 Supported from USDA NIFA W&S&E (WDP22-016) and AFRI IDEFAS (2023-68014-38715)



Good Gut Health



Your gut health is a delicate balance between trillions of microorganisms—bacteria, viruses, fungi, and yeast — living together in your gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Strong evidence supports the critical role that gut health plays in overall physical and mental health and well-being. Research has shown poor gut health to be linked to gastrointestinal, metabolic, and neurological disorders.

The gut is often called the “second brain” because of its two-directional communication with the brain and nervous system. When the gut microbiome is no longer balanced, diseases and illness may develop or symptoms may worsen. Many factors influence your gut health, including birth, where you live, and what you eat. Although you cannot change some factors, like your genetics, many other factors are within your control. Focusing on a fiber-rich diet, reducing stress, and getting adequate sleep are a few ways to support a healthy gut.

After participation in this program, participants will be able to:
Describe how their gut health may influence overall health. Participants will learn what diseases and conditions have been associated with poor gut health.
Be able to identify the difference between prebiotics and probiotics, and list foods in each category.

Prepare a day of meals and snacks that meet dietary guidelines based on their recommended intake.

Identify the various factors that influence gut health and determine which of those they can control and which of those they cannot control.

Identify other lifestyle behaviors that can influence gut health outside of diet.

Would you be interested in improving your overall health, or improving their gut health, or in learning how food impacts physical and/or mental health?

This program will be offered in:

Goodland, KS.

At the Sunflower Extension District Office work room on **May 4th from 12:00-1:00 p.m. (M.T.) Please sign up!!!**

St. Francis, KS.

At the Sunflower Extension District Office work room on **May 5th from 12:00-1:00 p.m. (C.T.) Please sign up!!!**

Sharon Springs, KS.

At the Senior Center on **May 13th from 11:30 -12:30, (M.T.) Please sign up!!!**

There will be some taste testing with probiotic and prebiotic foods. So if you want to bring a sack lunch with you, that’s great!





Plan Now for National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2026

It is time to add National Volunteer Week to your calendar so you have a plan to recognize your local 4-H and Extension Volunteers.

Ideas to Celebrate National Volunteer Week:

Recognize the impact of the number of hours contributed to the organization or program.

Recognize the achievements or accomplishments of those with whom the volunteer works.

Have a program participant share a success story about the volunteer.

Provide scholarships for conferences/training.

A handwritten thank-you note or phone call.



****Congratulations!****
Harmony Wilson of the Go-Getters 4-H Club has been awarded an Extension Step Ahead Scholarship

When: June 3-5th, 2026

Where: Kansas State University

Who: Youth ages 13-18 before January 1, 2026 are invited to register

Check back soon for additional details on our 2026 event!

Discovery Days is a mini college experience designed for youth who are 13-18 years of age as of January 1. Youth will have the opportunity to select classes and attend social functions.

The primary purpose of 4-H Discovery Days is to gain new ideas and expand your 4-H experience. You experience this through action-oriented learning activities, fun tours, and great evening social events. You will meet new people, build leadership skills, and grow as a person!



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<http://www.facebook.com/sunflowerwallace>
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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>



ADD/DROP 4-H Project Deadline MAY 1, 2026

- Log into 4-H Online and check your 4-H Project Enrollments at: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/resources/4-h-online/>
- Follow the instructions below to add & drop your projects.
- **FYI:** The 4-H Project Enrollment is not your fair entry.
- If you think you might want to enter a project in the fair and you're not sure you will have the time to complete it, you are not obligated to show, but you must be enrolled in the project to show in the 4-H Division.
- If you have any questions, please call your local extension office.
Cheyenne - 785-332-3171
Sherman - 785-890-4880
Wallace - 785-852-4285
- Other May 1 deadlines include: Market Beef Nominations for the Kansas State Fair & KJLS.
- Livestock Information can be found at: <https://www.asi.k-state.edu/extension/youth-programs/nominated-livestock/>

How do you add or drop your projects?



My 4H project add/drop deadline is on Thursday, May 1, 2026.

You can add or drop projects this year by logging into your profile and follow the steps:

1. Login to your family account.
2. Click on the blue view button next to the member's name.
3. Click on Projects in the navigation pane.
4. Click the Gray (EDIT) Button



Project Alias	Years In Project	State Project	Club Name	Volunteer Type	Consents
Aerospace/Rocketry	1		Country Clovers		No Consents
Ag Mechanics Welding	1		Country Clovers		No Consents
Art	1	Visual Arts	Country Clovers		No Consents

5. Click (select projects) to add additional projects to the member's enrollment.
6. If the member has enrolled in more than one club, use the drop-down to select the appropriate club.
7. Click (select) next to the project desired.
8. If applicable, select the member's Volunteer's Type for the project.
9. Click the blue (add) button.
10. The new project will be added to the member's project list.
11. If you need to delete a project from the member's enrollment, click the trash can icon next to the project.
12. When you have completed making changes to the project, click (close).



April 2026

Sunflower Extension District



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1. (SH) Foods 3:30-5:00 PM MT 4-H Building Goodland FFA Spring Show 8:00-5:00 PM MT SH Fairgrounds Sunflower Board Mtg. 5:30-7:30 PM MT 4-H Bldg	2.	3.  Extension Closed	4. (SH)JR Leaders Scholarship Due
5. Easter 	6. (SH) 4-H Council 7:00 PM MT 4-H Building	7.	8.	9.	10.	11. Junior Sheep Day
12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
19.	20. (SH) Small Animal Weigh-in 5:00-7:00 PM MT Beef DNA Envelope Orders Deadline	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
-----National Volunteer Week-----						
26. (WA) Small Animal Weigh-in 4:00-6:00 PM MT	27.	28.	29. (CN) Small Animal Weigh-in 6:00-7:00 PM CT	30.		

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