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# Thomas County

## K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge  
for Life*

Laurel Despain

4-H & Youth Development

[ldespain@ksu.edu](mailto:ldespain@ksu.edu)

Joanna Johnson

Office Professional

[joannajohnson@ksu.edu](mailto:joannajohnson@ksu.edu)



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December 2023

Volume: 185

### Friend of Extension

The Thomas County Extension Council have selected Sheila Krehbiel as their Appreciation Award recipient for her continued support of Thomas County Extension. Sheila has helped judge the 4-H project record books for many years. These record books are completed and turned in at the end of the 4-H year. In addition, she has judged Model Meetings for 4-H Club Day several times. Sheila also attends many events that the office hosts throughout the year. She always goes out of her way to come and catch up with the employees in the office or even wave hello as she's walking down the hallway. Her continued support of the office is appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

Thank You, Sheila for all you have done for the Thomas County Extension Program.

### Friend of 4-H

Nutrien Ag Solutions has been a large supporter of 4-H for many years. In the past, they have donated supplies to beef weigh-in and have allowed us to use their grill for our Post-Fair brunch. In addition to their support of programs throughout the year, Nutrien Ag Solutions is a very generous supporter of 4-H when it comes to the Thomas County Fair. Not only do they purchase several animals at the Livestock Auction each year, but they also contribute to the Buyer's Meal after the auction. Nutrien donates the meat and their employees donate their time to grill the meat for the livestock buyers. Without their continued support, the Thomas County 4-H program would not be where it is today.

Therefore, we would like to recognize Nutrien Ag Solutions with the 2023 Friend of 4-H Award and look forward to many more years of working together. Thank you for all you do for the Thomas County 4-H Program.

### 4-H Family of the Year

Each year the 4-H Council selects a "Family of the Year", based on their service and dedication to Thomas County 4-H. This year we would like to recognize Melanie Meitl and her family.

Melanie has been volunteering with 4-H for several years. She has donated her time at various events including horse shows and at Fair. Melanie has been a trophy sponsor and a livestock buyer. In addition, Melanie has worked behind the scenes to promote 4-H and add a helping hand when it is needed. Melanie has also served as a valuable resource for club and countywide fundraisers. In addition to Melanie, the Jackson girls have been active in the Thomas County 4-H program. Over the years, Miah and Mallory have been involved in many projects and also served various leadership roles within their club.

You can always count on Melanie and her girls to be one of the first to volunteer their time and efforts at fair, community events, and 4-H club activities.

This family lives 4-H, so please join me in congratulating Melanie Meitl and her girls. Thank you for all you do for the Thomas County 4-H Program.

## December

**5th—Crop Pest Management School**— in Colby  
Repeat session in Russell on Dec. 6th.

[Register here!](#)

**5th—Virtual Kansas Local Food Roundtable**

[Register here!](#)

**5th & 7th—Online Grant Writing Workshop**

[Register here!](#)

**5th & 12th—Tax Strategies for Midwestern Farm and Ranch Women-Online**

Sessions 2 & 3.

[Register here!](#)



**6th—K-State Garden Hour: Beekeeping Basics-How to Start Your Own Colony**— via Zoom

[Register here!](#)

**6th—Living Well Wednesday:** Rapid Development of Baby Brains and Why it Matters— via Zoom

[Register here!](#)

**7th—Virtual Kansas Local Food Roundtable**

[Register here!](#)

**7th--Cow/Calf Production Clinic** in Emporia

[Register here!](#)

**14th--Cow/Calf Production Clinic** in Washington, KS

[Register here!](#)

## January

**4th—Calving School**- in St. John

**9th—Calving School**- in Sublette

**11th--Calving School**- in Holton

[Register here!](#)



**16th & 17th—Cover Your Acres**— in Oberlin

[Register here!](#)

*Cover Your Acres*  
Winter Conference

**17th-18th—Soil Health U-** in Salina

[Register here!](#)

**22nd-24th—No-Till on the Plains-** in Wichita

[Register here!](#)

**24th--Local Food Virtual Town Hall**

[Register here!](#)

**24th-25th—FSMA Produce Safety Grower Training-** 1-5pm online both days. This training is for produce growers in Kansas and Missouri and other regulatory or support personnel.

[Register here!](#)

[Register here!](#)

**25th-26th--KARTA Ag Tech Conference** in Manhattan

[Register here!](#)

## February

**4th--Swine Profitability Conference**— Hosted at the Stanley Stout Center in Manhattan, KS

**6th-7th--High Plains No-Till** in Burlington, CO

[Register here!](#)

**14th-16th—Women Managing the Farm Conference-** Held in Manhattan, the theme this year is “Rise”.

[Register here!](#)

[Register here!](#)



**21st-22nd-- Farming Evolution** in Holyoke, CO

**Crop Talk Online Series**— Stay tuned for more information!

**Soil Fertility School**— Stay tuned for more information!

For a complete listing of upcoming events, please visit our website: [thomas.k-state.edu](http://thomas.k-state.edu).

## Why are there still leaves on trees?



After a rapid drop in temperature from warm fall weather in Kansas, trees are keeping their leaves longer. Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said this is called marcescence. “Marcescence is defined by leaves that wither but do not detach from the plant,” Domenghini said. “When the temperature drops quickly, as we have experienced this fall, many trees didn’t have time to develop an abscission layer at the base of each leaf. The abscission layer is what separates the leaf from the tree and prompts it to fall to the ground.”

Marcescence doesn’t harm the tree but may indicate the tree has some damage. The temperature change can affect the tissues beneath the bark, causing the tree to not receive adequate food necessary for survival. The xylem — the structure in the tree that carries water from the soil throughout the plant — is not damaged and will help the tree continue to maintain life, Domenghini adds.

“If you are seeing trees with marcescence, nothing needs to be done now except prevent further stress,” she said. Domenghini recommends further preventing stress by keeping the soil moist around trees entering winter.

“Without knowing the extent of the damage to the tree tissue, it is impossible to know what the end result will be, but if only a small portion of the tissue was killed the tree may still recover,” she said. “Trees with excessive internal damage will typically show symptoms the summer after the damage occurred.”

## Alternative Feedstuffs for Cattle

The term ‘alternative feedstuffs’ can mean a lot of different things, but in feeding cattle, it includes edibles not commonly found in the feed bunk.

K-State Research and Extension beef specialist Justin Waggoner uses soybean hay as an example. He said cattle producers don’t normally feed soybean hay, because soybeans are usually harvested as grain, but with recent drought conditions producers have been utilizing this alternative.

“This category of alternative feedstuffs is really broad and all encompassing,” Waggoner said. “Everything from cereal type breakfast products to chili pepper, and salsa waste that would come out

of a salsa factory, (and) even nut hulls. So it’s really a broad category that I think is sometimes hard to define.”

Waggoner says his discussion with producers includes knowing what products were applied to the soybeans and how the product was produced.

“We really have to understand the process of how the product was produced, (including whether there) are any artifacts or chemicals from production,” Waggoner said. “Maybe it’s even the cleaning process of that factory.”

When looking for alternative feedstuffs, he said it’s important to evaluate if there is something that could be a concern in the product. The other side of evaluation is logistics and knowing how much of the product is going to be produced and what the delivery expense will be in addition to how the product is handled, stored and delivered.

“A few years ago a producer was looking at cull produce waste that was gathered out of grocery stores in large metro areas,” Waggoner said. In cases like this, it is pertinent to determine whether that product needs to be fed in a short period of time or if it is capable of being stored for larger volume deliveries. Product packaging also needs consideration of if it needs to be removed prior to feeding, some packaging can be processed, however it may end up in the manure.

Geography also plays a role in the use of alternative feedstuff. Waggoner said many products are regionalized and not accessible to every producer. Poultry litter is considered one of many regionalized products that various cattle producers have access to in Kansas.

“We do see some bakery product waste that comes out of some factories and the analysis on those is always pretty favorable,” Waggoner said. “There’s really a gamut of products that are out there and it just kind of depends on the scale and the volume of those products that might be available.”

“I advise producers to do a complete analysis of the products that are out there,” Waggoner said. “That includes both the macro as well as the micro minerals and in some cases, we’ve also had some producers find some interesting elements like heavy metals that are likely a byproduct of the production process or some artifact of the process.”



## Money-Saving Gift Ideas for the Holidays



When the holiday season rolls around, many family budgets become strained. With a long list of family and friends, finding enough money to go around may be challenging. To help reduce the stress of your next holiday season, try making gifts instead of purchasing them.

Consider these fun and economical gift ideas:

- ◆ Create gift baskets. For the family member who loves movies, make a “night-in” basket. Get a large bowl for popcorn to use as the container. Add packaged popcorn and a coupon for a free movie rental. Gardening, sports or any other themed baskets also work.
- ◆ For parents with young children, provide a homemade coupon good for free baby-sitting. Other ideas include coupons for helping walk the dog, painting or cleaning.
- ◆ Create a recipe booklet with favorite holiday recipes. Copy the recipes onto festive recipe cards, punch a hole in the corner of the cards and tie them together with a red ribbon. Holiday photo albums also can be used to hold recipes.
- ◆ Fill a holiday mug with packets of flavored tea, hot cocoa or coffee for those who enjoy warm beverages. Or tie a packet of soup mix to a large wooden spoon. Include a bowl and package of biscuit mix for a complete gift.
- ◆ If you are computer savvy, create homemade calendars for family members. These could include highlighted birthday and anniversary dates. Try adding family photos for a personal touch.
- ◆ Repurpose old tins, filling them with cookies, muffins or other holiday goodies. A gift like this will be a delight to anybody who has little time for baking.

- ◆ Make homemade mixes in a jar. Mixes for soups and cookies are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make.

The gift recipient will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and also will value the convenience. [Click here](#) to try any of these four tasty and inexpensive recipes during this holiday season. You can decorate the jar with fabric and a ribbon. Either photocopy and cut out the provided recipes or hand-print each recipe on a card and attach it to the jar.

## Popular Holiday Plant Can be Maintained Year-Round

In all their colorful glory, poinsettias are a great addition to any home during the holiday season.



Ranging from red, white, green, pink or a color combination, poinsettias can be maintained year-round, says Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini.

“Poinsettias do best with temperatures between 65 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit,” Domenghini said. “Consistency is key so as to avoid drafts from windows or heat sources, such as the fireplace or space heaters.”

While bright, indirect light is preferred, Domenghini advised keeping poinsettia leaves from touching cold windows. Soil should be kept moist as well.

“If it dries completely, the poinsettia will wilt and potentially lose some leaves,” Domenghini said. “Water the plant in the sink until water runs through the drainage holes of the container.”

She warns that the roots will rot if the poinsettia is left in standing water, such as in a saucer or in the plastic sleeve they are often sold in.

“Fertilizing and other maintenance is not necessary until after the holidays,” Domenghini said.



## Achievement Banquet

On November 16th, we had another successful Achievement Banquet where we celebrated many 4-Her's and their accomplishments from this past year. Contact the Extension Office if you would like a copy of the Banquet Awards Listing. Also, we still have some prizes for members to pick up.



## Horse Panorama



The 2024 4-H Horse Panorama has been scheduled for January 27th at the K-State Salina

campus. Horse Panorama is a compilation of various contests related to the Horse Project. Contests include: quiz bowl, hippology, public speaking presentations, photography and educational posters. More details about registration [here](#). For questions visit the Extension Office.

## Pizza Fundraiser

Thomas County 4-H members will be selling pizza during the months of December and January! Please find a 4-H Youth if you would like to place an order.

Our pizza assembly day is planned for Saturday, February 3rd.

4-H members, save the date!



## Dog Judge Training & Re-Certification

The 2024 Kansas 4-H Dog Judges Training and Recertification will be held in Leavenworth on January 26-28, 2024. If you are a parent or someone who wants to help our 4-H youth with the Dog Project, please consider taking the training. New judges are always needed. Registration deadline is January 15th.

## Junior Producer Days

Junior producer days are held to provide educational material and hands-on experiences for youth, parents, leaders, and extension agents. Click [here](#) for the flyers, more information, and registration.

### **2024 Junior Beef Producer Day**

Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024

Cost: \$20/person

Registration Deadline: February 12, 2024



### **2024 Junior Sheep Producer Day**

Date: Saturday, March 16, 2024

Cost: \$20/person

Registration Deadline: February 26, 2024



## Band APP

This is a friendly reminder for 4-H members, leaders, and parents to download and stay up to date with the BAND app. BAND is a mobile application used to facilitate group communication. You can find announcements, reminders, calendars, photos, files, and more on the application. There are groups for each club, 4-H Council and Thomas County 4-H. You can join the county group at [this link](#). If you want to join a group or need help downloading/navigating the app, please contact the Extension Office.

**SAVE THE DATE**

## Beef Weigh-In

Beef weigh-in will be held February 17th from 9:00am to 11:30am at the CCC Farm. Make-up day will be February 24th if necessary. Please bring cash or check to purchase your tags. Each market steer/heifer is required to have an ear tag at the county fair and state fair. Breeding animals are not required to have tags at our fair.



## Club Meetings in December

Please double-check with club leaders regarding the date and time of your monthly meeting. Many clubs are holding meetings along with other activities and they may be at a different time and/or location than usual. The calendar on page 6 lists more information.

## Project Leader Training



A Kansas 4-H Volunteer Project Leader Training Series was held last fall. All sessions were recorded for future use. Topics include: Personal Development; Public Speaking; STEM; Rocketry; FCS: Textile Science; Animal Science; Livestock; Service Learning; Financial Literacy; and Ag & Natural Resources: Wildlife. You can find more information on the 4-H [website](#). You can find additional resources for various projects on the 4-H website or you can contact the Extension Office for assistance.

## 4-H Camp 2023

Ready, set, register! 2024 4-H camp sessions at [Rock Springs Ranch](#) are now available for registration. This includes half week, full week, Leaders in Training (LIT), and Counselors in Training (CIT) sessions. A full list of session dates and costs for Summer Camp 2024 and additional details can be found [here](#).

## Project Goals

With reenrollment complete, youth have selected their projects and now it is time to set their 2023 goals.

- **Action:** What are you going to do?
- **Result:** What are you going to accomplish?
- **Timeline:** When are you going to complete the action?

A well-written goal combines all three of the above points! Project goals should be set by the end of January. The Kansas 4-H Program has a guide for [Setting Project Goals](#) for free online.

## ZBooks—Online Record Keeping

Speaking of goals, this would be a great time to create an account with ZBooks to begin working on your record books for 2024! ZBooks is an online record keeping platform that is extremely user friendly and designed specifically for Kansas 4-H Project Record Books. Features of Zbooks include mobile friendly, internet based, unlimited entries, permanent records that roll over year to year, and more! There is even a section specific for setting goals for the upcoming 4-H year. Visit [here](#) for instructions on registering for an account, creating member profiles, new project reports, etc. There are even step by step video tutorials to assist you!



## Judge's Training

Our North West Advisory Committee is hosting a judges training in a multitude of projects. The date is set for January 15th and you can register [here](#). This would be a great event for anyone that has been interested in judging 4-H events or even parents that want some more project information!

## 4-H at Home Holiday Activity Guide

Bring 4-H to your home this holiday season with fun, hands-on activities! 4-h.org has a free [Holiday Activity Guide](#) available with 15 fun at-home activities and over 20 tasty cookie recipes. Help your kid continue doing and learning during the holiday season.



# December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Last day to re-enroll in 4-H to participate with 4-H at the Fair	2
3 AH—Meeting @ 4pm	4	5 Crop Pest Management School @ Colby Tax Strategies for Midwestern Farm & Ranch Women-Session 2	6 Crop Pest Management School @ Russell K-State Garden Hour Living Well Wednesday	7 Cow/Calf Production Clinic in Emporia	8	9 SV— Meeting @ Oakley Fun Center 6pm
10 BPG—Meeting @ Senior Center 2:30pm GEM—Meeting @ Gem Comm. Bldg. 4pm	11	12 Tax Strategies for Midwestern Farm & Ranch Women-Session 3	13	14 Fairboard Mtg. @ 8pm Cow/Calf Production Clinic in Washington, KS	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 	22 Office Closed	23
24 Christmas Eve	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas!  NO 4-H Council Mtg.	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30
31	January 1, 2024 Office Closed 				PP = Pawsome Paws SS = Shooting Sports AH = Abilene Hustlers	BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem Gem = Gem 4-H SV = Solomon Valley



# **K-STATE**

**Research and Extension**

**Thomas County Office Complex**

**350 South Range Ave. Suite 16**

**Colby, Kansas 67701**

Bookmark our website for quick reference to educational and informational resources as well as contact information for all of your questions:

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**K-State Research and Extension Thomas County 4-H**



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