

Living In The Country Seminars

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

Once every few years the Geary County Extension Office hosts a country living expo. A series of seminars provide information that is of interest to a lot of folks, but especially those that live outside incorporated city limits. 2014 is a Country Living Expo year and the date is this coming Saturday, January 25th. The sessions run from 9 a.m. through noon and the event will be at the Geary County 4-H/Sr. Citizen's Building at 1025 S Spring Valley Road.

The programs are presented at no charge and are open to everyone. No pre-registration is required. Sessions will be presented simultaneously in the dining room and the east room at the 4-H Building. While I'd encourage you to spend the entire morning at these informative sessions, you are welcome to show up for just one or two if those are the ones that catch your interest. Let's preview the presentations that are scheduled for next Saturday.

The first session at 9 a.m. in the east room is Keeping Horses on a Few Acres. One of the common reasons that I find for people wanting to live in the country is so that they can have horses. Horses aren't as "easy keepers" as some folks lead you to believe and they can turn small grassy paddocks into dirt lots really quick! K-State Research and Extension Dickinson County Ag and Natural Resources Agent, Laura Marks, will be presenting a great program on how to manage your horse(s) to maximize your enjoyment, the horse's health and causing the least amount of negative impact to the land. Laura has a lot of experience working with horses and you will find her presentation helpful and interesting.

From 10:00 a.m. to noon we will have a "super session" on beginning beekeeping. Everyone has heard a lot about the problems honeybees have been facing across the country and many gardeners and homeowners have developed a recent interest in keeping a hive or two of bees. Being a former beekeeper I can tell you that it is a fun and fascinating hobby, but can entail a fair amount of work! Sharon Dobesh-Beckman, beekeeper and K-State faculty member, will have an awesome hands on session so you can see much of the beekeeping equipment that it takes and have a lot of one on one time with Sharon.

Meanwhile, in the dining room, we have three great sessions planned. Starting at 9:00 a.m. Jason Hartman with the Kansas Forest Service will be presenting a session on fireproofing the rural residence. We've all seen some of the catastrophes with wild fire in the western US, and we are not without our risks here. Jason will explain things you can do to minimize the wildfire risk to your residence.

At 10:00, Lisa Davies with the Geary County Health Department, will discuss how to manage your private water well. While rural water districts are more common than they once were, there are still a lot of folks who depend on their own water well. Lisa will discuss how to keep it safe and functioning properly.

At 11:00 we will have a program on radon in Kansas homes. January is Kansas Radon Action Month and Brian Hanson, Radon Program Coordinator for Kansas State University will discuss how this naturally occurring gas can cause problems in our homes. Geary County is in an area known to have elevated levels and everyone should check their home regularly.

I hope to see a lot of you at the Country Living Expo next Saturday. If you have any questions give me a call at the Extension Office, 785-238-4161, or email me at cotte@ksu.edu.