

A Happy Thanksgiving to One and All

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

As hard as it may be to believe, another Thanksgiving is about to descend upon us. It's been a terribly divisive year on many fronts and now many are faced with possibly stressful family gatherings and/or long road trips with the family in the car. In the midst of all of this it may be hard to remember to be thankful for anything. Yet I think the most important thing that we can do in the days between now and Thanksgiving is take time to think about all we do have to be thankful for or more importantly WHO we have to be thankful for, and then tell them. If you need some ideas, just keep reading and take some notes!

First of all, I'm thankful for my wife. I'm not an easy person to live with. I'm a smart aleck wise cracking know it all with an insatiable love of puns. I'm convinced she puts up with the first three only because she loves puns even more than I do. But she is a companion on the many road trips we make in a year. She's a supporter and an encourager when I've got one day left in fair week. When I don't know if I can make it to the end of the week, she's there to make sure I do. And she loves birdwatching as much as I do!

I'm thankful for my co-workers. They have to put up with my puns, my jokes, my stories of birds I've seen. When those nice fall and spring days come along and I can find an excuse to be out looking at something (wheat, pastures, lawns, rhubarb - you name it) which is only an excuse to be outside, they are the ones that are often stuck back in the office to take your calls and promise you that they will give me your message as soon as I get back. I am, professionally, what I am, only because of the incredible co-workers and support staff at the Extension Office.

I'm thankful for all of you: the county commissioners who support the Extension Office, the people who call in with all the questions, even those of you who simply read this column every week. You give me a sense of purpose, a reason to get up every morning and look forward to going to work. You allow me to go home virtually every night knowing that I have helped at least one person during the day. Without purpose our lives mean nothing and all of you give me a life that is worthwhile and fulfilling every single day.

I'm thankful for living in this part of Kansas. We take for granted that we can see the sun rise over the horizon every morning and sink below the horizon every evening. These panoramic vistas are not the kind of thing that most people in this country get to see. I had a group of Extension workers from all over the country in the middle of the Flint Hills in early October. Wide open spaces in every direction and they didn't want to leave. We are so incredibly lucky to live where we do. Take time to recognize that, and enjoy it.

Most of us will sit down somewhere Thursday to a table filled with good safe food. Most of us have never really known what it is to be hungry, yet we take it for granted. We don't have to look far to find people who are not so fortunate. Let's take the time to be thankful for the abundance we have been blessed with and then silently resolve ourselves to find ways in the coming year to make sure that others have adequate food for their needs as well.

We really do have plenty to be thankful for. It is very easy for all of us to focus on what we don't have and fail to realize how MUCH we really do have. If you have food, family and friends on this Thanksgiving week, you should be the most thankful person alive. I know I am! Happy Thanksgiving everyone!