SUMMER 2023

Join Us for the Geary County Free Fair

The Geary County Free Fair is a great family-friendly annual event held at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Building and Fairgrounds at 1025 S. Spring Valley Road in Junction City. There is something for everyone to enjoy. In addition to seeing the many amazing projects completed by our area 4-H youth, the public can participate in several events, a few of which are highlighted below:

**Sunday, July 23**  – Youth Pedal Pull open to all area youth ages 4–12. Registration is open in the beef barn from noon to 1:00PM. Event begins at 1:00PM. There will be prizes and medals for qualifying youth! The event is a great spectator sport so come join us at this year’s Pedal Pull!

**Monday, July 24**  – Open Class

Photography entries accepted from 3:00 – 6:30. Youth ages 4 through adult entries accepted. Great opportunity for the hobby photographer to show their work! Judging begins at 4:00PM. Entries accepted for Textiles & Visual Arts from 3:00 – 7:00PM. Case for a Cause entries accepted, as well. See the Open Class Fair Book guidelines for all entries including our special contests*. 

**Monday, July 24**  – Visual Arts; Textiles; & Agriculture, Floriculture, and Horticulture entries accepted from 3:00 – 7:00PM. Open Class Decorated Squash Contest* entries accepted during this time, as well.

**Tuesday, July 25**  – Judging entries for Textiles, Visual Arts & Case for a Cause Special Contest* begins at 9:00AM. Agriculture, Floriculture, and Horticulture entries accepted from 8:30 – 11:00AM.

**Wednesday, July 26**  – Open Class Food Preparation and Food Preservation Entries accepted from 8:00AM – 1:00PM. Judging of these entries will take place beginning at 3:00PM. Open Class Decorated Squash Contest* judging will take place at 4:30PM. Special Baking Contest* entries accepted from 4:30 – 5:00PM with judging to follow at 5:00PM.

**Thursday, July 27**  – A kid favorite - the Milford Nature Center will share information and live animal exhibits (weather permitting) from 4:30 – 6:30PM. Join us for the 4-H Barbeque and Watermelon Feed from 4:30 – 6:30PM. Enjoy a pulled pork sandwich, chips, veggie sticks and all you can eat cold watermelon for $10, then head out to the beef barn to watch the final showcase of the 4-H Youth projects that will be auctioned off to the public which begins at 6:30PM.

For more information about these events and more, stop by the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office to pick up an Open Class book with event guidelines and a flyer of all the scheduled events at the Geary County Free Fair.

*See the Open Class Fair Book guidelines for all entries including our special contests*.
Eating Outdoors: Handling Food Safely

Deb Andres, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Keep your food safe: from the refrigerator/freezer — all the way to the picnic table! Picnic and barbecue season offers lots of opportunities for outdoor fun with family and friends. But these warm weather events also present opportunities for foodborne bacteria to thrive. As food heats up in summer temperatures, bacteria multiply rapidly.

To protect yourself, your family, and friends from foodborne illness during warm-weather months, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical. Read on for simple food safety guidelines for transporting your food to the picnic site, and preparing and serving it safely once you've arrived.

Pack and Transport Food Safely

• Keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40°F or below to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while still frozen so that they stay colder longer.

• Organize cooler contents. Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another. That way, as picnickers open and reopen the beverage cooler to replenish their drinks, the perishable foods won’t be exposed to warm outdoor air temperatures.

• Keep coolers closed. Once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold longer.

• Don’t cross-contaminate. Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped. This keeps their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables.

• Clean your produce. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cooler — including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper towel.

Source: U.S. Food & Drug Administration: Food Facts – Handling Food Safely While Eating Outdoors:
How to Improve Indoor Air Quality While Cooking, Even Without a Range Hood

Deb Andres, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Are you thinking more about the indoor air you breathe? If you are, you aren’t alone. Awareness of indoor air quality has surged over the past few years, though for very different reasons. Most recently, millions in the Northeast U.S. looked for indoor air solutions as smoke from Canadian wildfires blanketed the region and led to a decline in outdoor and indoor air quality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, air cleaners were harolded as a main line of defense against illnesses spread by bacteria and viruses.

Cooking’s effect on indoor air quality, and how cooking-related pollutants can be reduced, has also been getting more attention. All cooking, whether done on gas, electric or induction cooking appliances, emits pollutants. An externally vented range hood may be the most effective way to minimize cooking-related pollution like grease, steam, smoke and odors.

Making sure you have proper ventilation should be part of your cooking process. But what if a range hood isn’t an option? While they are great tools for improving indoor air quality, installation and venting of a range hood can also involve significant costs and sometimes structural work. The good news is that there are still plenty of options available. While the solutions listed here aren’t all equal, they all will help improve your indoor air quality while you cook:

Downdraft ranges and cooktops: These appliances come with built-in ventilation that can capture grease, smoke and steam. Some, but not all, are externally vented. Others utilize a filter that removes pollutants before the air is recirculated back into your kitchen.

Over-the-range microwaves with built-in fans: If it’s time to replace your microwave, consider a model with a built-in fan. When installed above your range or cooktop, microwave fans filter and recirculate air. Many also can be converted to vent externally.

Ceiling fans: When combined with open windows, ceiling fans can help reduce pollutants while cooking by improving airflow.

Air cleaners: Many air cleaners are designed to remove cooking pollutants. Look for models with PM 2.5 CADR (Clean Air Delivery Rate). CADR is the value of clean air the air cleaner has been tested to deliver when looking at specific pollutants. PM 2.5 refers to particles 2.5 microns or less, the most common size of pollutants produced by cooking.

Beyond taking advantage of these appliances, home cooks can take a number of steps to improve their indoor air quality while cooking.

1. Make sure your entire cooking area, from the range to surrounding counters, is free of grease and food residue.
2. If you do have a ventilation hood or downdraft, turn it on before you start cooking and leave it on for at least 10 minutes after you finish cooking.
3. Whenever possible, open windows while cooking.
4. Take advantage of all the tools at your disposal to improve indoor air quality. For example, if you have a ceiling fan and microwave fan, use both, along with opening your window.
5. Match the ventilation settings to the type of cooking you will be doing. For example, if you are using multiple burners or cooking with high heat, set your ventilation hood or other ventilation appliance to the highest level.
6. Match the burner size to the size of the cookware, and don’t allow the flame to extend beyond the pan’s bottom surface.
7. When possible, cook on back burners, where ventilation from ventilation hoods or over-the-range microwaves will be more effective.

Source: Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers: https://blog.aham.org/how-to-improve-indoor-air-quality-while-cooking/

SERVED FROM 4:30 P.M. TO 6:30 P.M., TICKETS ARE $10.00 AT THE DOOR AND SUPPORT THE GEARY COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL.
UPCOMING AREA EVENTS:

Geary County 4-H Free Fair:
The Geary County Free Fair will be out of this world fun on July 23rd through the 27th at the Geary County Fairgrounds on Spring Valley Road. With opportunities for both 4-H members and community members to enter a variety of project types and showcase their hard work to the community.

Geary Community Farmers Market:
Hosted by Live Well Geary, the Geary County Market is now open. The Geary County K-State Research & Extension SNAP-Ed program will have a resource and program sign-up booth every first and third Thursday. Market location: JC Naz Church parking lot; 1025 South Washington – Junction City; Thursdays, 4:00 - 7:00 pm; May through October.

Kansas Livestock Association Field Days:
Dates have been set for the 2023 KLA/Kansas State University Ranch Management Field Days. Mushrush Red Angus will host the first event August 10 in Chase County. The August 17 field day will be held in Thomas County at Carpenter Cattle Company. Each event will begin at 3:30 p.m. and include presentations on the history of the host operation and management practices used today, as well as educational sessions and a complimentary beef dinner.

For up-to-date information and the latest news, follow Geary County K-State Research & Extension on Facebook.