



Geary County

K-STATE EXTENSION NEWS

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Opportunity for Beginning Farmers



Kyler Langvardt, Ag & Natural Resources Agent

One of agriculture's most pressing challenges—preparing a next generation's return to the farm and ranch—is the focus of a series of free, statewide conferences hosted by Kansas State University College of Agriculture this fall.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Conference Series, is designed to equip students, young producers, and new entrants to agriculture with the tools needed to build successful, sustainable careers in farming.

"Returning home to the farm is more than just going back to work—it's about ensuring the long-term viability of a business and maintaining strong family relationships," said Ashlee Westerhold, Director of the Office of Farm and Ranch Transition.

The conference tackles key issues such as:

- Succession and estate planning
- Business structures and intergenerational fairness
- Farm financial management and lease agreements
- Communication strategies for family discussions
- USDA-FSA loan opportunities
- The Kansas Land-Link Program

Through interactive sessions and real-world examples, the conference encourages open family communication and strategic planning—something

former student Garrett Korte credits for a successful return to his family's 10,000-acre, seventh-generation farm.

"They [Ashlee and Robin] make it easier because they start the conversations a lot of people are scared to have," Korte said. "You realize you're not the only one figuring this out."

Details for the upcoming series:

Friday October 17th at the Kansas State Student Union, Manhattan

The conference will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with lunch and materials provided. The conferences are free to attend, but registration is required.

For more information or to RSVP, visit:

<https://www.agmanager.info/beginningfarmer>



"If a beginning farmer or rancher can freely and openly communicate about their goals for the future of the farm with the older generation, they have a much better chance of succeeding," said Westerhold. "These conferences are about helping make that happen."

Healthy Home Maintenance for Fall



Renae Riedy, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

The National Center for Healthy Housing developed a checklist for healthy home maintenance. Fall is one of the times of the year some visual inspections should take place to help either catch issues early or find potential problems. Some ideas to consider--with all the recent moisture, checking spaces that may not be regularly used (such as unused basements and crawl space) are important.

Check the exterior near doors and windows to look for potential air leaks from deterioration of building materials or weather stripping. Look at the roof and any vents. Watch for peeling paint, cracked or missing caulking or glass in windows, and check exhaust ducts and the dryer vent to make sure they are clean and

clear. Inside, clean your major appliances such as your refrigerator coils, exhaust fan screens, dehumidifier, vacuum or furnace.

Peek at all your plumbing that is easy to see in your basement or under your sinks and look for signs of leaks. Check your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detectors. Remember that as the weather cools, rodents and insects will be looking to find a place to winter, so watch for signs of them too.

Using Pumpkin in Your Cooking and Baking



Renae Riedy, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Fall is a popular time to utilize pumpkin in baking and cooking. While often purchased already commercially canned, consider watching for sugar pumpkins and pie pumpkins--the ideal varieties for baking--to utilize in your favorite recipes. These types are smaller in size, have a denser flesh and higher sugar content than the varieties used for carving a jack-o-lantern.

One way to prepare a pumpkin is to first rinse with water, scrubbing to remove dirt. Next cut in half and remove the seeds. Then place on a shallow baking dish cut side down. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes. The pumpkin is ready if the

flesh is easy to poke through. After removing from the oven, flip the pumpkin over and start to mash and scrape the flesh away from the skin. After mashing well, the pumpkin is ready to be used or stored. About 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup is equivalent to one 15 oz can of pumpkin.

Mashed pumpkin can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days or put in the freezer for later use. Canning mashed pumpkin is not recommended; however, information exists for canning pumpkin cut into cubes. This may require a different method of preparation from raw to cooked and ready for use.

PUMPKIN SOUP RECIPE

Ingredients

1 teaspoon margarine
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped onion
2 cups pureed cooked pumpkin or 1 can (16 ounces) pumpkin
2 cups low sodium chicken broth
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup nonfat milk

Directions

Melt margarine in a medium saucepan. Sauté onion until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add pumpkin, broth and nutmeg. Stir to mix well.

Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

Add milk and heat thoroughly, but do not boil. Serve at once.

** Illinois Extension*



CONGRATS TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS WHO EXHIBITED OR JUDGED AT THE STATE FAIR!

Medicare Open Enrollment



Renae Riedy, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Medicare Open Enrollment is Oct 15- December 7. This is an opportunity to review your Part D drug plan or Part C advantage plan to ensure that any changes made in the policies won't negatively impact you. The Medicare.gov website will show the 2026 information after October 1. The information I have seen so far indicates that changes are coming for many plans in terms of premiums and deductibles.

Once the Medicare.gov 2026 shopping tool is up, more information on what tier each prescription medication is assigned to will be worth a look. Only the Blue Medicare RX Essentials will keep the \$0 premium, but this plan is not the lowest cost option for everyone when considering copays and coverages. If you are

enrolled in Medicare Part D or Part C (advantage plan), please look closely at your annual notice of change from your current plan which should have been received by September 30th. It is a good idea to shop each year and working with a SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling of KS) counselor ensures you are receiving unbiased information. Our office is one location to find a certified SHICK counselor, which is a free service. Please give us a call for an appointment if you are interested.

Should You Let Your Lawn Grow in Fall?



Kyler Langvardt, Ag & Natural Resources Agent

As fall temperatures settle in across Kansas, some homeowners may be tempted to let their lawns grow taller, believing longer grass can help protect turf during the cold winter months.

But Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini cautions that this well-intended practice may do more harm than good.

Domenghini said the idea that tall grass provides insulation for the plant crown — the area where the stem meets the roots — has gained popularity in recent years. Yet, when grass blades are left too long, they can flop over, creating a matted layer that traps moisture and encourages the development of winter diseases.

“The best way to prepare turf for winter is to provide adequate care and ensure your plants are healthy,” Domenghini said “This requires care year-round, including fertilizing, watering and mowing.”

Homeowners are encouraged to follow mowing height guidelines specific to the type of turf they're growing. For Kansas lawns, the recommended mowing heights (in inches) are:

Tall fescue: 2.5–3.5., Kentucky bluegrass: 2–3., Buffalograss: 2–3., Bermudagrass: 1–2., Zoysiagrass: 1–2.

“Mowing height can vary within each species depending on the time of year,” Domenghini said. “For example, warm-season grasses may be mowed taller in late summer and early fall to allow them to store more carbohydrates for the winter. That may also help to reduce the occurrence of cool-weather diseases.”

Even so, Domenghini emphasized that even seasonal adjustments should remain within the recommended range for each grass type.

GEARY COUNTY HAD 76 EXHIBITS, 8 PHOTOGRAPHY JUDGING PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER ENTRIES AT THIS YEAR'S FAIR.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Ag Profitability: Making “Cents” of a Shifting Ag Economy

Farmers and ranchers are no strangers to adversity, but today’s challenges are testing the resilience of Kansas agriculture. Ongoing trade disputes and tariffs have disrupted markets and reduced export opportunities, driving crop prices lower while input costs for seed, fertilizer, and equipment remain high. The result is tighter margins and tougher decisions for many Kansas producers. Register for the Tuesday, December 9th session in Manhattan at agmanager.info/profitability.

Geary County 4-H Foundation Bingo/Soup Supper:

Join the Geary County 4-H Foundation at their annual Bingo/Soup Supper on Sunday November 9th at the Geary County 4-H/Senior Citizen Center! Soup and cinnamon rolls will be served at 5:30 p.m. for goodwill donation with bingo starting at 6:15 p.m. Each bingo card will be \$1. Come and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship while supporting Geary County 4-H members.



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