

WEST PLAINS EXTENSION DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

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OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAY - FRIDAY | 8 AM - 5 PM

FINNEY COUNTY OFFICE:
620-272-3670

SCOTT COUNTY OFFICE:
620-872-2930

OFFICE PROFESSIONALS:
COZETTA O'DEA & JESSICA LOPEZ



JANET HARKNESS
4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
JLP27@KSU.EDU

CAROL ANN CROUCH

DISTRICT DIRECTOR
CCROUCH@KSU.EDU



YESENIA GOMEZ
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENE
YGOMEZ@KSU.EDU

LAUREN LITTON

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
LLITTON@KSU.EDU



MADISON COLVIN
4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
MCCOLVIN@KSU.EDU

UPCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS

WINTER
2025

Print or screenshot this page to keep up to date with all of our upcoming activities!

(* indicates a pre-registration is required.)

February

- 2/7 - West Plains 4-H County & District Club Days
- 2/11 - William Carpenter 4-H Foundation Meeting, 6:30am, Scott Co Extension Office
- 2/12- Skillathon/Quizbowl practice, 6 pm, Extension Office
- 2/14-2/16 CIA in Topeka, Ks
- 2/21- Regional 4-H Club Days, Leoti HS
- 2/21-2/22 - 4-H Horse Panorama, Rock Springs Ranch
- 2/23 -Scott County 4-H Council Meeting, 6:15pm, Wm Carpenter 4-H Building
- 2/23- Scott County 4-H Ambassador Meeting, 7pm, Wm Carpenter 4-H Building
- 2/23 - Scott Co Cloverbud Club - 4pm, SCES Library
- 2/28 - Scott County 4-H Ambassador Evening

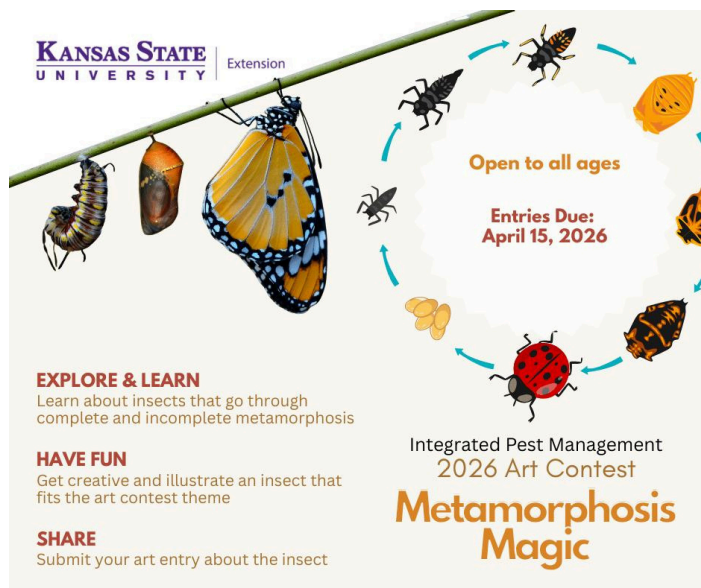
March

- 3/7 - Junior Beef Producers Day, KState
- 3/12 - WP 4-H Shooting Sports County Fair Shoot - BB, Air Rifle & Air Pistol, SCCC Bldg, 5:30pm
- 3/16 - Scott Co YQCA #1 & Horse Safety Video, 9-11am, Wm Carpenter 4-H Building
- 3/21 - NW 4-H Super Saturday Judging Contest
- 3/22 - Scott County Beef Tagging, 2pm
- 3/24 - Scott Co Cloverbud Club - 4pm, SCES Library
- 3/24-28 - National 4-H Ignite in Washington, DC
- 3/26 - Scott Co YQCA #2 & Horse Safety Video, 6:30-8pm, Wm Carpenter 4-H Building
- 3/29 - WP 4-H Shooting Sports 1st Responder Shoot, 2pm, SCCC Building

*Meat judging practices held every Monday (unless specified otherwise)

*Livestock judging practices held every Tuesday (unless specified otherwise)

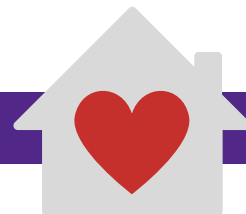
*Skillathon/Quizbowl practices are TBD after Feb 12th meeting



K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact West Plains Extension two weeks prior to the start of the event at 620-272-3670/620-872-2930. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

*Cover Headshot Photo Credit: AnneMarie Photography

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Are frozen canned foods still safe to eat?

K-State food scientist says broken or unsealed cans should be discarded

K-State Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Cold, winter weather and the potential for power outages creates challenges for keeping food safe. Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said frozen canned or jarred foods can be a safety hazard.

“If you have canned foods, either home canned or commercially canned, in a storage location that froze, first check for broken seals or seams in metal cans or broken glass jars in both commercial or home canned foods due to expansion of the food and liquid inside the container,” Blakeslee said.

If all preservation containers are intact, they can be saved. The texture of the food may be softer than expected.

Blakeslee recommends discarding canned foods with broken metal seams or canned foods with broken glass, which can lead to contamination. This includes home canned foods that came unsealed and thawed. “Examine the containers for signs of bulging, rusting or leaking contents. Never taste any food that has changed color or has an off odor,” she said.

“If a glass jar became unsealed but is still frozen, examine the contents carefully for spoilage. These jars can be safely used immediately or transferred to a new container and stored in the refrigerator or freezer.”

For extra safety, boil foods such as meats, fish, vegetables and poultry for 10 minutes before using.

To prevent a future food crisis during cold weather, Blakeslee suggests moving containers to a warmer location or wrapping jars or cans in paper and cover with blankets to insulate them. For best quality, choose a cool, dry, dark location. The optimal storage temperature is between 50-70 degrees Fahrenheit. Use within one year.

“Another option for vulnerable storage locations is to prop open the pantry or cupboard doors to allow warm air inside,” Blakeslee said.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science, publishes a monthly newsletter called You Asked It! that provides numerous tips on food safety. Learn more about food safety in cold weather from the K-State Extension Food Safety website.

More information is also available from local extension offices in Kansas.

COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS

HOSTED BY **Kansas Department of Agriculture**

Join us for a free roundtable discussion to collaborate with agricultural business owners, leaders, and community stakeholders explore industry opportunities and share available programs. Discussion topics will include:

- Workforce Challenges
- Business Strengths
- Growth Barriers
- Incentives
- Untapped Export Potential

Feb 19 | 8:30-10:00 AM

William Carpenter 4-H Building
608 Fairground Road
Scott City, KS 67871

For more information contact KDA Agribusiness Development Manager, Jake Renner.

785-477-8258 | jake.renner@ks.gov

Kansas
Department of Agriculture

KANSAS
COMMERCE

First Impressions

Feb. 5, 2026
6:00pm
Dinner will be served, please RSVP
Wm. Carp. 4-H Building
608 Fairground Rd
Scott City, KS

How does a First-Time Visitor View Our Community?

A Tool for Vital Communities

“First Impressions” is a program of K-State Extension.

The purpose is to help communities learn about existing strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of visitor. The results from a “First Impressions” visit can serve as the basis for community action.

For More Information Contact:

Carol Ann Crouch, Director,
West Plains Extension
Email ccrouch@ksu.edu
Phone 620-872-2930
Sign up by calling or scanning the QR code.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension
West Plains District

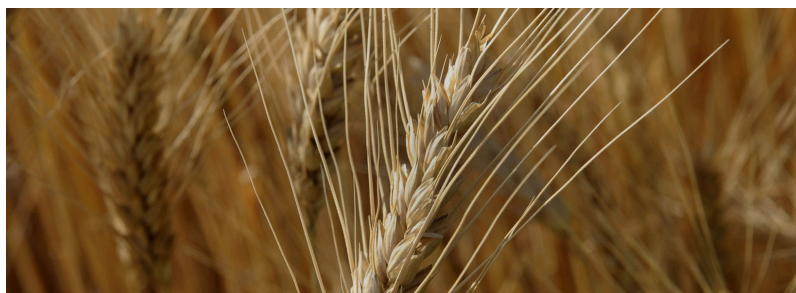
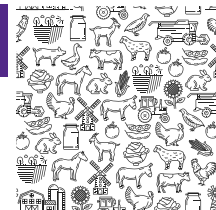
Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Carol Ann Crouch at 620-872-2930 or ccrouch@ksu.edu.
Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Scott Community Foundation
SECURING OUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE

SCOTT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY INC.



Hello, my name is Yesenia Gomez, and I'm excited to join K-State Research and Extension as the Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent for the West Plains District. I look forward to working alongside community members to promote well-being and provide programs that empower individuals and families. I graduated from Fort Hays State University in May 2025 with a bachelor's degree in Health Studies, and I bring professional experience in health, wellness, and science education. In this role, I'll be developing and delivering educational programming related to family, finance, health, and science. As someone who was born and raised in Garden City, Kansas, I'm proud to continue giving back to the West Plains District and am committed to serving the communities that shaped me.



Scan to access the article

Understanding Herbicide Resistance: Why they don't work like they used to



KARL leadership program opens applications for upcoming class



KANSAS
cattlegwomen

Kansas CattleWomen is a statewide network of women connected by a shared purpose: to promote and protect the beef industry through education, advocacy, and service.

We are ranchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and advocates working together to support Kansas agriculture and the communities that keep it strong.

We proudly affiliate with the American National CattleWomen (ANCW), giving our members access to national programs, resources, and a wider voice for the beef industry.

> LEARN MORE





Upcoming Events



SPEAKERS

Sarah Lancaster
Weed Scientist

Pat Geier
Weed Scientist

Jeremie Kouame
Weed Scientist

Deepak Joshi
Precision Ag Specialist

Adam Oyler
Commercial Applicator

FEBRUARY 17TH 2026

- **WICHITA COUNTY - 9:00 A.M. - LUNCH PROVIDED**
Wichita County Community Building
506 East M St. Leoti, KS

FEBRUARY 17TH 2026

- **GRANT COUNTY - 6:00 P.M. - DINNER PROVIDED**
Grant County Civic Center
1000 W Patterson Ave, Ulysses, KS

FEBRUARY 18TH 2026

- **COMANCHE COUNTY - 12:00 P.M. - LUNCH PROVIDED**
Veterans Building
215 E Main St, Coldwater, KS

FEBRUARY 18TH 2026

- **PAWNEE COUNTY - 6:00 P.M. - DINNER PROVIDED**
J.A. Hass Building
400 E 18th St, Larned, KS 67550

MORE INFORMATION CALL

GRANT COUNTY: 620.356.1721
COMANCHE COUNTY: 620.582.2411
PAWNEE COUNTY: 620.285.6901
WICHITA COUNTY: 620.375.2724



REGISTER HERE!

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SOIL FERTILITY SCHOOL

February 25th & 26th 2026

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension

Speakers:

Lucas Haag, PhD
Associate Professor
Agronomist-in-Charge, Tribune

Augustine Obour, PhD
Professor, Soil Science

Jessica, Shelby & Jenna
Local Agriculture and Natural
Resources Extension Agents

CONTACT US

Kearny: 620-355-6551

Meade: 620-873-8790

Pratt: 620-672-6121

FEBRUARY 25TH 2026

- **Kearny County - 12:00 PM - Lunch Provided**
Kearny County Fairgrounds
1482 Rd R, Lakin, KS 67860

- **Meade County - 6:00 PM - Supper Provided**
Meade County Fairgrounds - Building B
613 W Washington St, Meade, KS 67864

FEBRUARY 26TH 2026

- **Pratt County - 10:00 AM - Lunch Provided**
Pratt Area 4-H Center
81 Lake Rd, Pratt KS 67124

Register here!



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K-STATE FORAGE SCHOOLS

DATES & LOCATIONS:

February 3 - 9:30 am
Wakeney
Trego County Fair Grounds

February 3 - 3:00 pm
Sylvan Grove
Livestock Commission Building
Supper following thanks to sponsors
Bank of Tescott and Central Valley Ag

February 4 - 9:30 am
Stockton
Harding Hall 4-H Building

February 4 - 5:00 pm
Atwood
Rawlins Co. 4-H Building

February 5 - 9:00 am (MT)
Sharon Springs, CAB

February 5 - 5:00 pm
Dighton
Lane Co. 4-H Building



Forages can fit in many operations. Join us to hear about recent research in winter and summer forages.

SPEAKERS:

Augustine Obour
K-State Soils Specialist at Hays
Logan Simon, K-State Southwest Area Agronomist

There is no cost to attend

REGISTER TO ATTEND

<https://bit.ly/ForageSchools>
Please register by February 2



2 CCA Credits have been applied for in Crop Mgmt

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to physical, vision or hearing disability, contact Jeanne Falk Jones, K-State Agronomist for 785-462-6281.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension

K-State Agronomy Science & Solutions Conference: Research to Results

Tuesday, February 3, and Wednesday, February 4

Virtual Event | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm each day



K-STATE AGRONOMY SCIENCE & SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE

RESEARCH TO RESULTS

RSVP online to receive the Zoom link and reminders.

\$20 per day or \$30 for both days

4 CCA/CEU credits available

The K-State Agronomy Science & Solutions Conference: Research to Results is a two-day virtual event featuring 30-minute presentations on topics relevant across all Kansas cropping stems, including corn, soybeans, wheat, and sorghum.

Topics Include:

- Turning Farm Data into Decisions
- Perennial Weed Control
- Strategic Tillage Decisions
- Irrigation Management
- Fertility Management When Budgets Are Tight
- Spray Water Quality
- Residual Herbicides
- Soil pH and Soil Health

To register, scan the QR code or visit

commerce.cashnet.com/KSUAGRONENT



Questions? Contact Kathy Gehl at kgehl@ksu.edu

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension



We are now accepting registrations for the 2026 Citizenship Washington Focus Trip. This is a states-independent trip from CWF that is part of Ignite. See the Kansas 4-H Webpage for all the information.

Your paragraph text

What: Road trip across the USA stopping to see Philadelphia, Gettysburg, the Liberty Bell and more! Meet, learn, share and tour with youth from other states and respected resource people. Walk among places that have made history and places that are making news today. Visit Capitol Hill, government departments, historic sites, and memorials. Get a close-up view of the political process through visits to Capitol Hill. Meet with the Kansas Congressional and Senate delegations to discuss legislative issues. Participate in workshops and assembly groups to learn life skills and discuss possible solutions to domestic and international problems. Interact with 4-H members from other states, learning and sharing about 4-H and other interests and issues. This trip has filled up quickly in the last few years, make sure that you do not delay in signing up to attend!

The trip will be in conjunction with Oklahoma and Missouri 4-H from June 13-23, 2026.

Cost: \$2500 - not required when registering, but arrangements will be made after February 16th for payment.

Register Here

--- Registration will be collected by February 5th and spaces will be limited! Youth must be 15 by June 1, 2026.

Kansas has 10 youth slots and 1 adult chaperone slot to fill. The adult chaperone has to be a registered 4-H Volunteer. A one-page front and back Information Sheet can be found [here](#)



2026 K-STATE JUNIOR BEEF PRODUCER DAY

Program

Join us on March 7, 2026, for the biennial K-State Junior Beef Producer Day! This event is a fun-filled educational day for youth, parents, beef project leaders, ag teachers, and extension agents to expand their knowledge of youth beef projects. Presentations by K-State faculty, staff, K-State livestock judging team members, students, and guest speakers will cover topics that may include selection, nutrition, daily care, meat science, reproduction, health, grooming, and showmanship. An optional YOCCA certification class will be offered at the end of the day. A complimentary lunch and t-shirt will also be provided for those who register by the deadline. The registration fee is \$20 per person for those who sign up by February 13. The fee will increase to \$30 per person for those who register after the deadline. Only those who register by February 13 will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending the event must register, including youth and adults.

Registration

Deadline: February 13
 Fee: \$20/person
 Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/Beef-JrProducer>
 Late Registration: \$30/person (after February 13)
 *All attendees must register, including youth & adults.
 **Late registrants will not receive a t-shirt.

Questions?
Lexie Hayes
 785.532.1264 | adhayes@ksu.edu

March 7

Tentative Schedule

8:00AM	Check-in
9:00AM	Welcome
9:15AM	Project Selection
10:00AM	Morning Breakout Sessions
	-Nutrition, Meat Science, Daily Care, Grooming & Fitting
Noon	Lunch
1:00PM	Afternoon Breakout Sessions
	-Health, Reproduction, Showmanship
3:15PM	Dismissal
3:30PM	Optional YOCCA Class

Registration Due
February 13

K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture
Cooperating: All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.





Looking for College\$??

Consider joining 4-H!

Join in 8th Grade, remain a member through graduation and qualify as a member in good standing for \$12,000 in interest-free student loans through the William Carpenter 4-H Foundation Student Loan Program!

For more information, contact Janet at the Extension Office,
jlp27@ksu or 620-872-2930.

4-H...It just makes cents!

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
West Plains District



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West Plains District

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND 4-H VISUAL ARTS PAINTING WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 17
1-4pm
Wm Carpenter 4-H Building

Thursday, March 19
9-12pm
Finney County Extension Boardroom

Cost: \$15 per 4-H'er

RSVP with Janet, jlp27@ksu.edu or 620-872-2930 by
March 10.

We will be painting a beach scene on canvas and use our
feet as paintbrushes!

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Get Energized with 4-H! STEM Lab Hands-on Energy Activities

- ✓ Firefly Wind wheels
- ✓ Insulation Activity Challenge
- ✓ Build-A-Turbine
- ✓ Sail Car Challenge

Learn all about different
energy sources and their
uses!

March 20, 2026
Scott County: 9-12pm
Finney County: 1-4pm



Beyond Ready

To RSVP:
Janet,
jlp27@ksu.edu or
620-872-2930n

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YQCA | YOUTH FOR THE QUALITY CARE OF ANIMALS

FINNEY COUNTY DATES

Tuesday, March 10 @ 6:00pm - Grandstand Meeting Room

- YQCA Training, Hands on Vaccine and Tagging Clinic

Tuesday, March 17 @ 9:00am - Grandstand Meeting Room

- YQCA Training, Hands on Vaccine and Tagging Clinic

SCOTT COUNTY DATES

Monday, March 16 @ 9:00am - Carpenter Building

- YQCA Training, Horse Safety Training

Monday, March 26 @ 6:30pm - Carpenter Building

- YQCA Training, Horse Safety Training



APPLY NOW FOR THE Otis & Mary Lee Molz COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 3RD, 2026



✓ Full-Tuition and Full-Fees Scholarships to GCCC

✓ Available to Current GCC Members, Employees and their Families

✓ Open to Students in any Program of Study

TO APPLY CONTACT THE GCCC FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

📞 (620) 276-9519

🌐 www.gccccks.edu

Integrated Pest Management
2026 ART CONTEST

METAMORPHOSIS MAGIC



KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



CLUB REPORTS:

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H BEACON BOOSTER'S

The Beacon Boosters December meeting was called to order on December 12, 2025. There were 9 members and 8 parents present. The club met at Wal-Mart before the meeting was called to order to participate in the Angel Tree shopping for 2 kids. The December meeting was the annual parents meeting for our club. Each member received a fundraiser packet that is to be returned at the January meeting. Kasen did a project talk about baby sheep. After the meeting was adjourned the members participated in a gift exchange. The next meeting will be held on January 12, 2026.

The reporter's report was submitted to the Garden City Telegram, Finney County Extension Office, and the Beacon Booster's Facebook page on January 5, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Brock Cogan, Reporter

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H FINNEY FLYERS

Finney Flyers

The December meeting of the Finney Flyers 4-H club was held on Sunday, December 7, 2025, at the 4-H building. The meeting was called to order by President, Abby. Twelve members answered roll call. The minutes from the November meeting were read and approved.

The club voted on giving hats and gloves to the Family Crisis Center. Each member needs to bring hats and gloves to the next meeting. The club will match what the members bring and then take them to the center.

District Club Days is February 7 in Scott City and Regional club days will be February 21 in Leoti.

The members decorated the float for the Christmas Parade and enjoyed Pizza. It was a cold but fun night.

Next month's meeting will be January 4 at 4:00 at the 4-H building. The meeting was adjourned.

KJ Plunkett
Reporter
Finney Flyers



FINNEY COUNTY 4-H Wide Awake

Wide Awake December Report

We kicked off our meeting by asking what everyone wants for Christmas for our roll call. It sure was entertaining to hear everyone's answers! I hope they all get what they want! The leaders then talked about 4H Days and how to sign up! We enjoyed playing many Christmas themed games that were created by our own members! We ended the night listening to Madelyn Waggoner give a project talk about grooming her goats! Great job Madelyn. We wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Submitted by Gentry Hands

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H HAPPY HUSTLERS

A Merry Meeting

On December 7th, 2025, the Happy Hustlers 4-H Club held their monthly meeting. At 3:30 we showed up to decorate our 4-H float for the annual Christmas Parade. After the float was decorated, we started our meeting. For song, we sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and sang to the December birthdays. After the song, we played a game of Poison Dart Frog. Following the meeting, we had hot chocolate and Christmas cookies. Then we got on our float and waited for the parade to start. We decorated it with lights, bells, and had the float theme of the Grinch. The parade, though cold, was very fun. The club members got to wish many people "Merry Christmas" and multiple members saw school friends, family, and even teachers in attendance. Following the parade, the club members went back into the 4-H building and enjoyed more hot chocolate and cookies to warm them up. The parade was a blast, and the Happy Hustlers wish you all a Merry Christmas!

-Happy Hustlers reporter Kinley Unruh

Happy Hustlers January Meeting 2026
Jan. 4, 2026

The Happy Hustlers 4-H Club held their meeting on January 4, 2026. We started with a demonstration by Paxton and Grayson. They gave tips for lambing, ear tagging and tail banding. For the song we sang "Home on the Range." Next was recreation and we played a game of chain tag. Then we took a picture for our community service project. We donated winter coats, hats, and mittens for children in need.

By the Happy Hustlers Reporter Kinley Unruh