From the Desk of the Director

Crisp and Peppery Radishes

Scott City Safe Kids Day

Tips & Tricks for Establishing Trees

Pine tree issues?

Community Garden Plots Available!

Public Enemy #1: Palmer Amaranth

Please Share the Road

Tractor Safety Training

Protect Your Skin From the Sun

It's Grilling Time

Activity Spotlight

Upcoming District Events

4-H Livestock Roundup

Scott County Small Animal Tagging

State Nomination Deadline

YQCA Reminders

Upcoming Finney County 4-H Events

Club Reports

Upcoming Scott County 4-H Events

Club Reports

Upcoming State 4-H Events

2 Upcoming Programs

3 At Home with Carol Ann
   - From the Desk of the Director
   - Crisp and Peppery Radishes
   - Scott City Safe Kids Day

5 Planting the Plains with Anthony
   - Tips & Tricks for Establishing Trees
   - Pine tree issues?
   - Community Garden Plots Available!

7 Topics from the Turnrow with Renee
   - Public Enemy #1: Palmer Amaranth
   - Please Share the Road
   - Tractor Safety Training

9 Joyful living with Jennifer
   - Protect Your Skin From the Sun
   - It's Grilling Time

11 4-H District Roundup With Janet
   - Activity Spotlight

12 District 4-H Happenings
   - Upcoming District Events
   - 4-H Livestock Roundup
     - Scott County Small Animal Tagging
     - State Nomination Deadline
     - YQCA Reminders

13 Finney County 4-H Happenings
   - Upcoming Finney County 4-H Events
   - Club Reports

14 Scott County 4-H Happenings
   - Upcoming Scott County 4-H Events
   - Club Reports

15 State 4-H Happenings
   - Upcoming State 4-H Events

West Plains District
Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8 AM - 5 PM
Lunch hours excluded and subject to change

Finney
620-272-3692
Anthony Reardon
Jennifer LaSalle
Renee Tuttle

Scott
620-872-2930
Carol Ann Crouch
Janet Harkness
Kerri Sides
Kay Harkness

West Plains District
Extension Newsletter

Inside this Issue

www.westplains.k-state.edu
Upcoming Programs: May 2021

- May 1st: Babysitting Clinic, 4-H Building from 9 AM - 4 PM
- May 5th: K-State Garden Hour: Herbs - From Seed to Seasoning, Zoom Webinar @ 12 PM
- May 5th: Chronic Disease Management, Finney County Extension Office @ 5:30 PM
- May 6th: Power Your Silage Performance, Alegria Express Event Building (Garden City) from 4 PM - 8PM
- May 8th: Scott City Safe Kids Day, Palmer Park from 10 AM - 1 PM
- May 10th: West Plains Extension District Board Meeting, Finney County Extension Office @ 7 PM
- May 12th: Chronic Disease Management, Finney County Extension Office @ 5:30 PM
- May 18th: Pots, Planters & Annuals Workshop, Wm. Carpenter 4-H Building @ 6PM
- May 19th: K-State Garden Hour: Xeriscaping - Beautiful Landscaping with Less Water, Zoom Webinar @ 12 PM
- May 20th: Pots, Planters & Annuals Workshop, Finney County Extension Office @ 6 PM
- May 31st: Offices Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

Upcoming Programs: June 2021

- June 3rd: Tractor Safety Training, Wm. Carpenter 4-H Building (Scott City) from 8:30 AM - 4 PM

Follow us for the Latest Updates!
Hello everyone and welcome to the West Plains Extension District Newsletter! We are excited to bring the West Plains Extension District the best that K-State Research and Extension has to offer. As some of you know, last July the Finney County and Scott County Extension programs teamed up and formed the West Plains Extension District.

This districting has been a great move. We are now a fully staffed extension program with five agents, covering Family & Consumer Science, Agriculture, Horticulture, and 4-H. These areas offer health and wellness, home environment, lawn & garden, and farm management expertise, with educational programming as well as traditional 4-H programming.

It is often said that extension is one of the best kept secrets in Kansas. We have plans to change that by offering solutions to many of our county residents’ needs. Extension advice and most of their services are free, so please take advantage of our knowledge and willingness to help.

Did you know that at the extension office, you can take the pesticide applicators test, purchase radon kits, get a water well sample kit, send in soil and tree samples, and order trees to plant? We can also help check your canning gauge, share research-based recipes, give tips on being a caregiver, and provide health and wellness information. We engage youth ages 7-18 in 4-H activities that teach about citizenship, leadership, public speaking skills, STEM activities, life skills, and the care of animals.

So, let the West Plains Extension Office be your next call for help with many of your needs. To reach us, the Finney County office is located at 501 S. 9th Street and can be reached at 620-272-3670 and the Scott County office is located at 210 W. 4th Street, Suite 1, and the number is 620-872-2930.

Ask for Anthony Reardon for any horticultural questions, Renee Tuttle for agronomy, Jennifer LaSalle for Health and Wellness, Janet Harkness for 4-H, and myself, Carol Ann Crouch, for district director or home environment questions.
SAFE KIDS DAY

Presented by:

SAFE KIDS SCOTT COUNTY

WHEN
May 8th, 2021
10am - 1pm

WHERE
Palmer Park
On Jefferson St

HOT DOG FEED

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

CAR SEAT CHECK
Car seat technicians
Available for car seat safety checks.

TOUCH A TRUCK
Check out & learn about different unique vehicles in our community.

BIKE RODEO
Bring your bike and complete a bike safety course

SAFETY INFO BOOTHs
Water Safety
Vaping/Smoking Dangers
Sugar Intake

SPONSORS • Scott County Health Dept. • Scott Recreation Commission • Scott County Emergency Management • Scott Community Foundation • West Plains Extension • Wheatland Electric • Scott Coop • Scott City/County Fire Dept. • Scott City Police Dept. • American Implement • Scott County EMS • Scott County Sheriff Dept. • JF Beaver Advertising
Tips and Tricks for Establishing Trees

Adding a tree to one’s landscape can come with many benefits. What better way to create a perfectly-shaded lounge area than with something natural, that will last for decades? What better way to shield from the wind, than planting a specimen that dually decorates and screens your yard? Planted strategically, trees can even keep your home cooler in the summer months, helping you save on your energy bill. With spring in full swing, many will be planting trees in their yard for these reasons and more. And there are steps you can take to ensure their success.

Selection of a tree type will always play a factor in the overall success of your planting venture, due to the simple fact that not all trees survive in western Kansas. Extreme temperatures, soil pH, wind, and water availability are just a few factors that inhibit many trees from growing here. So how do you know what trees you can rely on? The Kansas Forest Service has an excellent publication, aptly labeled “Preferred Trees for Southwest Kansas” and this is a great starting point for choosing a tree. You’ll be able to see the trees that are known to not only survive, but thrive. Here you’ll also be given information on their tolerance of full sun, light shade, alkaline soil, drought, wet soil, and pests. Additionally, it tells their mature height and spread, if they flower, if they fruit, and their autumn color capabilities. So, keep in mind, while there are many factors to weigh while choosing a hardy tree, you have options and there are Kansas-dwelling trees out there with the traits that you desire.

A significant factor in the survivability of your tree is going to be in how you treat it at planting. Before planting, make sure your tree is being kept in the shade as it waits and that it is staying watered. The lack of soil surrounding the root ball can leave it prone to drying out quickly when left in the elements, and this will stress out your tree in an already stressful situation for it –the planting.

When planting, best practice is to remove any wire or burlap that may be surrounding your root ball. This may differ from what you’ve heard in the past, and the simple reason for this is that, with developing technologies and further studies, we now know better. That wire cage and thick burlap do not disintegrate as quickly as we once thought they would, and they’re actually likely to eventually girdle the roots of your tree, cutting off its sap flow and killing it.

Remove the wiring and the burlap, and then inspect your roots. If you find roots encircling the root ball, they need to be cut so that they no longer grow in a circle. These too will eventually grow to girdle your (other) roots. The same goes for any roots on top of the root ball that are crossing over others. Taking a shovel to the root ball as a whole to loosen it up is best practice for a successful planting. Be certain while doing this, however, that you are not cutting into a tap root or the thicker, branch-like, roots. These will be the primary roots for stability, and they’ll also be the ones creating your smaller capillary roots for water uptake.

If you have a stem-girdling root that is also a thick, primary, root, find a way to cut it while also minimally impacting it. So long as you can guide the root to not grow in a circle around the others, you should be in the clear.

Exposing the root flare when planting (the area where the roots are first visible going down the trunk) will help ensure that you aren’t planting your tree too deep. This is necessary because often in commercial nurseries root flares will be buried as trees grow and are repotted. This accumulated soil against the trunk not only attributes to an undesirable “telephone pole” look, but it is burying an area of the tree that isn’t meant to be underground. Because of this, that bark will eventually succumb to rot, and it will cut off your tree’s sap flow and water uptake at the base.
Digging a proper hole will also be useful in your tree's survivability. Optimally, the hole should be dug to be three times the width of the root ball, which will resultantly leave ample loose soil for the roots to grow into. Once dug, it’s then a good practice to fill your tree hole with water two or three times before ever planting, keeping track of how long it takes the water to absorb into the ground. This will be a great indication as to how often and how much you need to water your tree after planting.

And then water it in! The purpose of roots is nutrient uptake. Not surrounded by soil, they can't do their job --and this will eventually kill them. Watering in your newly-planted tree, you not only give your tree a drink, but you compact the soil that has been moved around. This will re-bury your roots, re-enabling nutrient uptake, and it will significantly aid in stabilizing your root ball. Keep in mind, all soil that came out of the hole needs to go back into the hole, as the tree will eventually sink below ground level otherwise. Aim to have your root ball planted at ground level, with a slight ring soil at the edges for retaining water.

Regular watering should continue throughout the tree's first year of being planted in the ground. It is during this time that your tree is actively establishing its root system, and it needs a lot of water to do so. After the first year, watering can then be reduced to less often.

Applying a mulch ring to your newly planted tree is encouraged, as this will help with both water retention and keeping your root ball from drying out, as well as weed control. The optimal amount of mulch added should be around four inches deep, extending to the edge of the hole you dug --not the edge of the root ball.

Pruning of your tree should be kept to a minimum during its first year in the ground. Every pruning cut made is an “intentional wound,” and too many wounds on a tree that is already stressed (trying to establish itself) will not bode well for the tree. Additionally, these wounds can introduce diseases or rot at very early stage for the tree, when it may not be fully apt to fight them off yet. After the first year, formative pruning cuts that shade can begin being made.

And that should leave you in good shape when establishing your tree! These basic factors covered, you'll have the shade-generating specimen of your landscaping dreams in no time. And if you run into any issues, I'm a call away at the extension office (620-272-3670).

Pine Issues?

Many in the Western Kansas area have recently been noticing a decline in their pine trees, with needles partially dying off at their center. Likely, this is a fungus known as Dothistroma Needle Blight.

Treatment requires two applications of a copper-containing fungicide, one in mid-May and one in mid-June. Care should be taken to make sure all needles are covered, with regular removal of any ground needles. Several years of treatment may be necessary to control the issue as it cannot be fully cured. Contact the extension office to help verify your diagnosis before treatment, as fungicides can be pricey.

Community Garden Plots Available

$10 per Plot
52 - 10'x10' Plots
First Come, First Serve
Located in Finney County

Call 620-272-3670 or stop by 501 S. 9th St
Public Enemy #1: Palmer Amaranth

It has quickly eased its way into most all fields in Southwest Kansas. It is tough to control and arguably grows faster than most any other broadleaf weed in the field.

**It is Public Enemy #1: Palmer Amaranth.**

Palmer Amaranth (Amranthus palmeri) is native to the American southwest. In recent years, Palmer Amaranth has surpassed Kochia in Southwest Kansas as the hardest to control weed in farm fields growing up to six feet tall or more. It has alternate, hairless leaves (the first true leaves are opposite). Mature leaves are distinctly egg-shaped, but younger leaves may be more oblong. Palmer amaranth petioles are usually longer than the leaf. Examining the petiole is a an easy test to determine if the weed in question is a Palmer Amaranth or not. Palmer Amaranth is a very diverse species which makes it oftentimes tough to distinguish it from waterhemp and redroot pigweed. Some biotypes have a dark watermark on the upper leaf surface and some have a tiny hair in the notch at the tip of the leaf.

Palmer Amaranth features are very diverse, due in part that it is dioecious species, meaning male and female flowers grow on separate plants. Female flowers must be pollinated by wind-blown pollen, which can come from up to 1,000 feet away. In addition, Palmer Amaranth can hybridize with waterhemp and smooth pigweed, albeit at low rates.

A single Palmer Amaranth plant can produce over 500,000 seeds if it emerges early. If it emerges later (after July), a single plant can produce up to 80,000 seeds. Eighty percent or more Palmer Amaranth seeds in the upper 1/2 of the soil will germinate quickly once moisture and temperature are favorable.

Resistance to key post-emergence herbicides, coupled with an extended period of emergence, makes residual herbicides critical for Palmer Amaranth control. Herbicides with residual activity should be used in combination with other effective burndown herbicides pre, at-plant and post to help with control. The key to Palmer Amaranth control is to start clean and stay clean. Scout fields often and don't let Public Enemy #1 get away from you this growing season!

Tips for Sharing the Road with Farm Equipment

With spraying and planting season underway, it is important to remember to share the road with farm equipment! Here are a few quick tips to remember:

- **Be alert and cautious.** Give large farm equipment and other slow-moving vehicles space.
- **Do not pass if you are in a "no passing zone" or any any area where it is not safe to do so--intersections, bridges, railroad crossings etc.
- **Make sure the tractor isn’t making a left turn** before you pass on the left.
- **DO NOT TAILGATE!**
- **Be careful when you get the chance to pass.** Farmers will often move their equipment over when it is safe to do so.
- **Give the farmer a friendly wave to thank them for growing the food that feeds the world!**

See a Tractor? Slow Down! Please share the road!
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 your local extension office. Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SUN

“Here comes the sun, here comes the sun and I say it’s all right”
so goes the lyrics to a Beatles song.

The sun is coming and even though we love to soak up the sun, we also need to remember
that it can be our skin’s worst enemy. With the warmer weather approaching take these
precautions when you are out and about in the sun.

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends the following to protect yourself from the sun:

- **Cover Up**: Clothing can provide protection from the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays. Wear a hat
  with a wide brim all the way around (three inches or more) is best because it helps shade
  your eyes, face and neck. Also, wear UV blocking sunglasses to protect your eyes and the
  skin around them.

- **Play in the shade**: Think of the shade as your refuge, especially between 10 AM and 4 PM when the sun is at its peak intensity.

- **Know your Sunscreen**: There are many different kinds of sunscreen on the market. Find the one that works best for your skin type. Keep these things in mind when you are purchasing sunscreen:
  - **SPF** stands for *sun protection factor*. The number tells you how long the sun’s UVB rays would take to redden your skin when using a particular sunscreen compared with the amount of time without sunscreen.
  - **Broad Spectrum** indicates that the sunscreen contains ingredients that effectively protect against UVA rays as well as UVB.
  - **Water Resistance** indicates how long the sunscreen remains effective while you are swimming or sweating.
  - **Sensitive Skin** indicates that it may be less likely to cause skin irritation people with sensitive skin.

- **Shield the Wee Ones**: It is recommended for the first six months of a child’s life to keep them out of the sun. Use all protection on children when out in the sun.

- **Look Out for Windows**: Windows in cars and homes allow UVA rays to pass through. When in your car protect yourself and your family with hats, clothing, sunscreen and UV-protective window film.

*As the Sheryl Crow song goes “I’m gonna soak up the sun, got my 45 on, so I can rock on”.*

By following these recommendations, you can rock on your time in the sun while keeping your skin healthy.
It's Grilling Time

As the weather warms up, our thoughts may start to drift to the wonderful smells of food cooking on the grill.

Nothing says summer like a backyard cookout!

Many people grill food year-round but it is especially popular to cook when the weather is warm. Cooking outdoors can get you out of a hot kitchen and enjoying a low cost, easy, and fast meal.

When grilling for a family dinner or a big gathering always remember to follow food safety procedures. To prevent food borne illness, remember these four food safety concepts: CLEAN, SEPARATE, COOK, and CHILL.

- **CLEAN**: Wash hands with soap and warm water before, during and after preparing food. Clean all surfaces, utensils, cutting boards with hot, soapy water. Rinse fresh vegetables under running water.

- **SEPARATE**: Don't cross contaminate. Use separate cutting board, plates and utensils for raw meats and cooked meats. Use a clean plate and utensil when removing cooked meat from the grill.

- **COOK**: To the right temperature. Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. Use a food thermometer when checking the doneness of the meat. Never determine meat doneness based on color or texture. Steaks, chops and roast should be cooked to an internal temperature of 145 F. Ground meat should be cooked to 160 F and all poultry to 165 F.

- **CHILL**: Refrigerate promptly. Don't leave food out for more than two hours or one hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90 F. Once the meal is finished, put leftovers in the refrigerator promptly. Marinate meats in the refrigerator. Discard any marinade not used in cooking. If you do use the marinade, cook it to 165 F.

In addition to Food Safety, **grill safety** should also be considered when grilling. If a **charcoal grill** is used make sure it is used outside in a well-ventilated area and placed on a solid surface away from overhangs, grass and shrubbery. Use lighter fluid made for grilling and do not add lighter fluid to already lit coals. Never leave children or pets unattended near a lit grill. **Gas grills** are a favorite among most people. Use a gas grill outside and never use a gas grill inside. Carbon monoxide is a deadly gas that could be produced by these devices. Keep the grill 10 feet away from any structure when in use and place grill on a solid surface. Never leave a grill that is in use unattended and always keep children and pets away from the grilling area. A **pellet grill** has recently become a popular grill of choice. When using a pellet grill keep wood pellets dry, don't use a pellet grill in the rain, and use in a properly ventilated area with the grill chimney open. Also, do not expose cords to water or other liquids and visually inspect the cords for any damages.

Keep your grills in tip top condition and clean grill after every use. Use a scraper or wire brush but be aware that wire bristles can get into food. Finally, give your grill a cleaning overhaul twice a year.

By following these food safety and grill safety guidelines, your outdoor cooking will be safe, enjoyable and delicious!

Follow these instructions to operate a gas grill safely:
- Open the lid before turning on the grill
- Turn on propane tank
- Turn on knobs of grill burner
- Push the ignition button

Follow these instructions in turning off a gas grill safely:
- Turn off the propane
- Turn off the grill burners
Hello West Plains 4-H! Thank you to everyone who has made the spring the crazy-busy-time it has been! We have a wonderful group of volunteers in the district who have come together to help out with STEM Labs, animal weigh-ins & tagging, club work, spring livestock shows, shooting sports, YQCA training and so much more!

As we move through spring to summer, we are planning for camps, community service projects, County Fairs and the State Fair. Please make sure to check your email and our Facebook pages often as we are sending out all of the important dates and deadlines for events as they come up. This is especially important for livestock projects going to State Fair.

Summer is a busy time at the Extension Office and we are often out and about. We really enjoy visiting and getting all of the paperwork signed but encourage you to please call first to make sure an agent is in-office, especially as we get close to deadlines.
May
• May 1st: 4-H Horse Certificates Due to 4-H Office
• May 4th: Livestock Judging, Finney Co. @ 6:30 PM
• May 11th: Livestock Judging, Scott Co. @ 6:30 PM
• May 18th: Livestock Judging, Finney Co. @ 6:30 PM
• May 25th: Livestock Judging, Scott Co. @ 6:30 PM

June
• June 9-10th: 4-H Camp Lakeside
• June 21-24th: Heart of Kansas Camp
• June 30th: Pollorum & AI Testing for Finney & Scott Counties, Finney Co. Fairgrounds, 5-7pm. (For all poultry, except waterfowl and pigeons. To register, contact Janet, jlp27@ksu.edu.)

4-H Livestock Roundup

State Nomination Deadline

» June 15th «
Market Swine, Commercial Gilt
Market Lamb, Commercial Ewe
All Meat Goat
Commercial Heifer

YQCA
Youth For The Quality Care Of Animals

Finney County 4-H

Please e-mail or drop off a copy of your YQCA certificate to the 4-H Office ASAP! This is a requirement in Finney Co. to participate in the fair.
May
- May 16th: 4-H Ambassadors Meeting, Extension Office @ 4:30 PM
- May 24th: Cloverbud Club, Extension Office @ 6 PM
- May 24th: Finney County 4-H Council Meeting, 4-H Building @ 7 PM

July
- July 21-24th: Finney County Fair

Wide Awake
The April meeting of the Wide Awake 4H club was held on April 12 in person and via Zoom. We heard a project talk by Katie Heiman on pigs and one by Paxton White on goats. Cort Baker gave a parliamentary tip. Gentry Hands and Benjamin Price led the singing of “Apple and Bananas”. Lauren Lightner led recreation with a spiderweb game.

Beacon Boosters
The March 22, 2021 Beacon Boosters Business Meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm at the Finney Hutcheson Hacienda by President Baylee Hutcheson.

Roll call was name your sport. Those in attendance were: Adam Cook, Maggie Deal, Baylee Hutcheson, Jarica Hutcheson, Kiley Kilgore, Kolter Kilgore, Kaylei Marez, Chelsea Torres, Lexi Torres. There were 4 parents present.

The Flag Salute was led by Jarica Hutcheson and 4-H Pledge was led by Baylee Hutcheson. Recreation was led by Maggie Deal, 4Hers played chopsticks. The February 2021 Meeting Minutes were read and Approved as read. Treasurer Report: No report, Brogan Sperry was excused.

Reporters Report: The Reporter’s Report was summitted to the GC Telegram, the Extension Office, and posted on Facebook by Kiley Kilgore.

Parliamentarian Report: Jarica Hutcheson explained “Division of the house”. Finney County Council: Meeting scheduled after tonights 4H meeting.


Old Business: 4-Hers discussed Kansas 4-H foundation, “Endorse the Course”. Kiley Kilgore made a motion, Kaylei Marez seconded for paying the 50$.

New Business: Barn Yard Olympics Volunteers/Reps. Kolter Kilgore and Kaylei Marez will be the reps. The 4Hers will pay for themselves a the bowling combined meeting with the Happy Hustlers in April. Kolter Kilgore made a motion and Lexi Torres seconded.

The gavel was passed to Vice President Jarica Hutcheson, the program was “How to make band bracelets” by Kaylei Marez. Marez were thanked for being the host this month.

The next Beacon Booster Meeting will be April 11th 2021 at approximately 3”30 pm at the Hard Rock Lanes with the Happy Hustlers. There was a motion to adjourn meeting at 6:48 by Baylee Hutcheson and seconded by Kaylei Marez.
May
- May 8th: Scott City Kid’s Safety Day
- May 12th: Wm. Carpenter Foundation Board Meeting @ 6:30 AM

June
- June 1st, 3rd, & 4th: Quilting Class (Must have fabric by May 11th. Contact Carol Ann for more info.)

July
- July 12-17th: Scott County Free Fair

Lake Wide Awake

The Lake Wide Awake 4-H Club proudly participates in a monthly citizenship activity. Here the members are posing with their March donation of something ‘RED’ to be given to the Breadbasket. We challenge other clubs to do the same and share your activities with the rest of us.

Submitted by Brayson Mayo, Lake Wide Awake, Jr. Reporter
Look for the Friday "West Plains 4-H Happenings" e-mail for more details on these and many other upcoming events!

**River Valley Rabbit Club**

*Spring 4-H Rabbit Show!*

**Saturday May 22, 2021**

12355 Elm Slough Rd St George, KS 66535

Located between Wamego and Manhattan KS. North of Highway 24

Large open arena with plenty of space to spread out.

Appropriate Covid 19 guidelines will be in place.

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**KSU Youth Horse Judging Camp**

**Beginning Section**

June 1, 2021

Manhattan, KS

Sponsored by: KSU Horse Judging Team

**KSU Youth Horse Judging Camp**

**Advanced Section**

June 2-3, 2021

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**SOUTHWEST KANSAS DISTRICT**

**4-H HORSE SHOW**

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

9:00 a.m. Dodge City, Kansas

Western State Bank Expo Center

11333 Hwy 283, south of Dodge City

All entries and accompanying fees ($5.00 per class) must be sent no later than June 15, 2021 to the Edwards County Extension Office, 212 East 6th Street, Kinsley, Kansas 67547. All participants MUST HAVE completed 4-H Horse Achievement Level I booklet, and passed written and riding exams by June 15, 2021 to enter & complete.