



April 2024

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension



Director's Note

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Wyandotte County Director

Are you taking care of you? I often encourage my staff to be sure to take care of themselves. The idea of work /life balance is important for all of us. Making sure we take time for ourselves and continue to find ways to grow and learn shapes us into becoming better. I think you will find that these articles and programs are a great way to start to take care of you!

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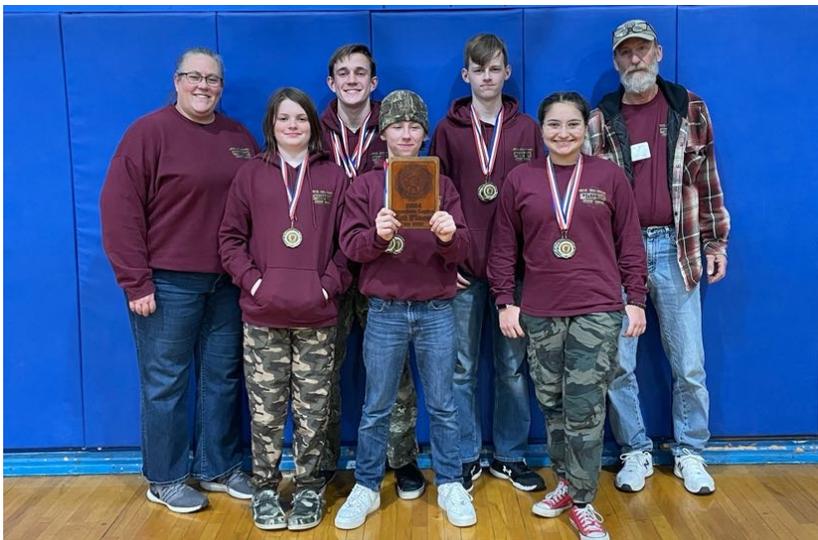
Wyandotte County

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WYCO 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS TEAM!

Wyandotte County 4-H has a thriving Shooting Sports program. Youth members of the program can choose from 10 different disciplines to pursue including archery, air rifle, BB, and muzzle loading, among others. The 4-Hers practice every week in preparation for their competitive matches. Preparation for matches does not only include target practice, but a holistic approach to the 4-H member's lifestyle. 4-Hers learn about other factors that affect their performance including caffeine and sugar intake, adequate sleep, emotional intelligence, and electronic device usage fatiguing their eyesight. Each year the 4-H Shooting Sports Team competes in matches across the state, showcasing all of their hard work and dedication to the sport.

On March 10th, the Wyandotte County 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator, Cyndi Bird said, "Great news! The kids shot fantastically this Saturday. The BB team participated in the American Legion match which is a qualifier for the Daisy Nationals. This match includes taking a test. The team finished first and is now qualified to attend Daisy Nationals in July in Rogers, AR. The Air Rifle team participated at the Jackson Nemaha match, as well as 1 of 2 pistol shooters. Henry Bird scored a personal best score of 543 taking 1st and winning the top shot competition."

We are so proud of the 4-H youth and their families who dedicate so much of their time, energy, and focus to the 4-H Shooting Sports program. We wish you all the best of luck at Daisy Nationals!



Family and Consumer Sciences

INVOLVING THE FAMILY IN GOAL SETTING & DECISION MAKING

Involving family members in family-decisions gives each a voice and allows for the opportunity to work through, clarify, and resolve issues in ways that can best meet everyone's expectations and the needs of all.

As you continue to navigate in 2024, this is the perfect time to reflect back and think ahead. The perfect time for goals, and plans!

There are three important reasons for goals:

Goals give you clarity. Putting words to your hopes and desires makes them more attainable.

Planning helps you prioritize. You can't say yes to everything. So, what's most important right now?

Goals guide you. In your life, your schedule, or building new habits, goals will point you in the best direction and keep you focused.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

Before any issue can be addressed, the family must reach a consensus about what the issue is and how it relates to individual expectations and family values.

- Does everyone see the problem the same way?
- Do all family members understand the issue?
- Have family members shared their opinions and expectations?

Step 2: Generate Alternative Strategies

The process of generating alternative strategies involves listing all possibilities and includes seeking additional guidance when necessary

- Has everyone had a chance to generate strategies for addressing the issue?
- What resources, expertise, and guidance are available for exploring additional options?

Step 3: Choose the "Best" Strategy

Choosing the best strategy is easy when all family members agree, but what about when they don't? Remember, the best strategy is an alternative that offers the most benefits at the least cost for each family member.

Can family members reach a consensus on one course of action knowing that there are other possible alternatives?

- If agreement is not possible now, have family members determined a future time for reaching a consensus?

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

Once they have decided, even if only a temporary one, family members must develop an action plan and ways to evaluate its effectiveness.

What does the family ultimately want to achieve?

- What activities must the family carry out to achieve the final goal?
- Who will be responsible for carrying out the plan, and what are their specific responsibilities? It is really discouraging to try to work on family goals for 2024 (or any other time) by yourself. Whether it's simply that no one else has time or energy, or because they just aren't interested, it hurts.

FOOD WASTE PREVENTION WEEK

Monday, April 8, 2024 to Sunday, April 14, 2024

Growing up on a farm there was rarely any food that went wasted. If we didn't eat it the animals (both farm and otherwise) would. This created a keen awareness in me regarding food waste and yet, with the knowledge and experience, I still do. And, I'm not alone. The statistics on how much food is wasted varies given the source but most .gov sites state anywhere from 30-40% of edible food goes to waste. The facts "paint" the larger picture but the core question remains "what can be done about it...what is my role in reducing food waste?"

K-State Research & Extension addresses this issue in the following fact sheet [Working Together to Reduce Food Waste](#) taken from the website [Extension Food Safety, Reducing Food Waste](#). A click on this link takes you to a variety of information including Food Waste Resources, Food Labels, Salvaging Good Food, Composting, Food Pantries and Food Banks. Another fact sheet from www.eatright.org ([Eating Right and Reduce Food Waste](#)) spells out some practical steps to do just that.

Nebraska Extension, UNL Food identified ways we can help reduce food waste such as:

1. Shop the refrigerator before going to the store.
2. Move older food products to the front of the fridge/cupboard/freezer.
3. Keep your refrigerator at 40 °F or below to prolong the life of foods.
4. Freeze, can or dry surplus fresh produce using sa up-to-date food preservation methods.
5. Take restaurant leftovers home and refrigerate within two hours of being served.

For the complete list and further details on each idea (there are a total of 14) go to, <https://food.unl.edu/article/preventing-food-waste>

The encouraging news is...small changes make a collective and lasting impact!



Nutrition and Food Safety

FOOD KEEPER

Handling food safety is vital at home and in the community. However, with so many food safety guidelines, trying to remember them all can be challenging. Thankfully, there is an app for that.

What is FoodKeeper?

FoodSafety.gov has developed a free app called FoodKeeper. With this handy guide, you can have food safety information at the tip of your fingers. Key features of the app include food recall updates and a database of food and beverage storage recommendations. This app can be accessed via computer or mobile device: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>

Food Safety Scavenger Hunt

Using FoodKeeper, see if you can find the food safety answers to these 10 questions:

1. How long will fresh apples stay fresh when kept in the refrigerator?
2. How many days will refrigerated ground beef stay fresh?
3. After being opened, how long will dry pasta (without eggs) stay fresh in the pantry?
4. How long will fresh bagged salad greens last in the refrigerator after being opened?
5. How long will eggs (in shell) stay fresh in the refrigerator?
6. If frozen, how long will salmon stay fresh?
7. After being opened, how many days will orange juice (commercially packaged in a carton) stay fresh in the refrigerator?
8. If stored in the freezer, how long will yogurt stay fresh?
9. How long will apple cider vinegar stay fresh if stored in the pantry?
10. How long will frozen hash browns stay fresh in the freezer?

The answers are at the end of this article.

What you can do in your community:

- With your family and friends, find ways to integrate one or more food safety recommendations into your daily routines.
- Modify recipes to be more food-safe by incorporating food safety guidelines into the ingredients and directions. For example, you could add the safe internal temperature for ground beef (160 degrees Fahrenheit) in a sloppy joe recipe.
- Spread food safety awareness. Encourage friends, family, coworkers and other community members to check out FoodKeeper and direct them to www.foodsafety.gov and the NDSU Extension Food and Nutrition website for more information.

Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. 4-6 weeks from date of purchase
2. 1-2 days from date of purchase
3. 1 year after opening
4. 2 days after opening
5. 3-5 weeks if refrigerated from date of purchase
6. 2-3 months if frozen from date of purchase
7. 7-10 days if refrigerated after opening
8. 1-2 months if frozen from date of purchase
9. Indefinitely if in pantry from date of purchase
10. 12 months if frozen from date of purchase

GARDENING AS EXERCISE: REDUCE RISK OF INJURY

Gardening is an exercise that leads to things of value, ranging from homegrown tomatoes to curb appeal. No matter how beneficial it would be, I just can't get motivated to ride a bike that's going nowhere. Besides, gardening at any level is a lot better exercise than most of us realize. With any form of exercise, there is risk of injury. Gardening is no exception. Even so, research has found gardening can strengthen limbs, help the cardiovascular system, and develop both flexibility and hand-eye coordination. It's adaptable to a range of physical disabilities. It even relieves tension while providing sunshine and fresh air.

These tips may help gardeners benefit from the exercise, but reduce the risk:

- Learn to recognize your tolerance for exertion, and don't exceed your limits. Vary activities, pace yourself and/or take rest times.
- If you get muscle aches and pains, rest and apply a cold pack at intervals throughout the day. Save any heat treatments for a few days later and combine it with stretching exercises.
- Don't ever get so involved that you forget heat-related illness can kill. The younger or older you are, the more vulnerable you are. For everyone, however, the risk goes up in tandem with the air temperature and dew point. So, monitor the resulting heat index – the perceived heat your body will be reacting to.
- Drink water or juice, but not beer or caffeinated beverages. Alcohol and caffeine dehydrate.
- Don't depend on thirst to tell you when to drink. Research shows that it won't. Drink a pint of water before going outside and another 8 ounces after each 30 minutes of gardening.
- Use sunscreen to prevent burns and to head off the potential for skin cancer.
- Wear a brimmed hat and sunglasses. Studies at K-State have found wearing that kind of headgear greatly reduces your risk of developing macular degeneration of the eyes.
- Learn to lift properly. Keep your back straight and knees partially bent. Use leg and buttocks (NOT arm and back) muscles to provide the strength.
- Make use of such labor-saving devices as garden carts and wheelbarrows to move heavy objects. Humans aren't designed to carry half-grown balled-and-burlapped trees.
- As you buy tools, select ones that are sized to fit you. A too-long or too-short handle, for example, can quickly cause muscle strain and fatigue. A too-large power tool can actually be exhausting to use. Then it can become a dangerous weapon when exhaustion makes you lose control.
- Keep power tools away from those too young or too unskilled to handle them safely.
- If tools come with an owner's manual, read it first. Then follow its directions for operating the equipment. Also follow its recommendations for wearing such safety equipment as goggles, ear plugs, leather shoes and/or chemical-proof gloves.
- Make glove protection an absolute necessity when gardening. Cotton gloves can help reduce the number of scratches you get, plus prevent the blisters that often result from repetitive work. Leather gauntlets provide even greater protection if you're working with thorny plants. Any gloves cut the odds for cuts, abrasions, torn fingernails and infections.
- Learn to recognize and avoid poison ivy. Do the same with stinging insects – many of which will benefit your garden.
- Never handle wildlife – alive or dead. If wild animals feel cornered, most will fight as hard as they can. Most also are a haven for microorganisms, ticks, lice and a host of other unhealthy-for-humans "critters." If you ever have to remove dead wildlife from your yard, use a shovel.
- Make it a practice to wash your hands, arms and face thoroughly when you return indoors. Use lots and lots of soap and cool water if you suspect you may have been in contact with poison ivy. During tick season, also take a shower within hours of coming indoors, so you can wash ticks away before they have time to get embedded.
- Take time occasionally to walk through your garden and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

Community Development

LOCAL FOODS, OUR HEALTH AND YOU

Wyandotte County has some of the lowest health outcomes in the state of Kansas. There is a need to increase access to nutritious, locally-grown food. Education, promotion, and support of farmers and mobile markets are part of the solution to help our residents gain improved health. Information on how to obtain food assistance and increasing nutrition education are key to improving our resident's overall health.

Local food initiatives, such as farmers' markets and community gardens provide food assistance to some of the lowest-income populations in our county. These initiatives help to stimulate the local economy by providing support for growers and entrepreneurs to sell their products in a market setting. These urban farmers help to bring high-quality, local foods to many Wyandotte neighborhoods that lack access to a grocery store.

Many shoppers think that they cannot afford to purchase from farmers' market vendors, but in reality, the opposite is true. Programs, such as Double Up Bucks which provides matching funds for customers utilizing SNAP and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits, greatly increase the health impacts being made by farmers markets in our area. There is even a program called PWYA which stands for "pay what you are able". It is available in select markets. Market vendors have even shared that if they are selling products to a limited resource recipient, they often add additional veggies at no cost to help them gain an increased value from their purchase.

Three of the four Wyandotte County farmers markets will open up in May, which is the unofficial start of the garden produce season. These markets are more than just produce, they offer live music, activities for the family, educational demonstrations, farm tours, locally produced items, and of course fresh produce.

Your support of our local food system helps us to build a stronger more resilient community. Farmers markets and community gardens are one way in which we can improve our health rankings and make Wyandotte County a healthier place for all of us!



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Upcoming Events



April 4: From Seeds to Table

April 16: ServSafe

April 17: Feed Your Heart

May 3 & 4: Plant Sale

May 3: Kitchen Restore

Sidewalk Sale

May 3: Volunteer

Appreciation Party

May 15: Flavor Up

May 16: Native Bees

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 for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). 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.

Connect with us!



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