



September 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension



Director's Note

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Wyandotte County Director

September is a great reminder that strong neighborhoods grow from simple acts of connection, and with Good Neighbor Day on the 28th, it's the perfect time to reach out to someone on your block and also stay connected with Extension as we work together to build a kinder, more engaged Wyandotte County.

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4-H Youth Development

SPECIAL EDITION: RE-HIRING AN AGENT POSITION

We are sad to announce that Casey Ling, 4-H Agent, resigned in August. The Executive Board and staff are sorry to see Casey go, and we wish her the very best in her next chapter.

Naturally, the big question is: "When will we get a new agent?"

Understanding the Hiring Process

Hiring an Extension agent involves several coordinated steps. As director, I have submitted the initial paperwork to K-State Administration for approval. From there, the university works with the state 4-H specialist, the eastern regional director, human resources, and the local county director to develop the position announcement and advertising plan.

Hiring Timeline

To help everyone understand what to expect, here is the anticipated timeline:

- Mid-September: Position opens
- Mid-October: Position closes (must remain open at least 30 days)
- Late October: Executive Board conducts interviews
- Early November: Start date is determined
- Before the Holidays: Our goal is to have a new 4-H Agent in place

After the position closes, the hiring team reviews all candidate folders and removes applicants who do not meet minimum qualifications. Common reasons include an unrelated work history, a lack of a related degree, or missing required documents. This screening step ensures the Executive Board receives a strong pool of qualified candidates.

Interviews and Selection

The Executive Board will hold a special session to interview candidates, ask questions, and determine who best fits the needs of Wyandotte County. Candidates are invited to visit the office beforehand to meet staff and learn more about our Extension programs.

If no candidate is selected, the hiring team reviews the position description and begins a new search cycle.

"So, when will they start?"

The start date depends on the candidate's availability. Most individuals provide a two-week notice to their current employer. We also coordinate their onboarding schedule with K-State for training and payroll setup. From beginning to end, the hiring process typically takes three to four months.

Support During the Interim

While we work through the hiring process, 4-H Clubs are encouraged to reach out to Lotus, our 4-H Office Professional, for assistance. We also collaborate with neighboring Extension units to help with field questions, and local agents and staff step in to support ongoing commitments until the new agent is fully onboarded.

Welcoming a New Agent

When the new agent arrives, staff welcome them and often host a small celebration with guests. Their first year is filled with training, learning procedures, and getting to know the community they will serve.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this opening, please request the position description at ddias@ksu.edu



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TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS TO KEEP YOUR FALL STRESS-FREE

With the start of fall, the air feels fresh and cool. Golden leaves fall from the trees, and cozy evenings bring a new mood to our days. This is the season for warm sweaters, hot drinks, and early holiday planning. The fall often means added responsibilities—school events, extra meetings, holiday prep, and shorter days. If you want your season to be stress-free and productive, these Time Management Tips for fall season are especially for you.

1. Reset Daily Routine

Just as we switch from summer wardrobe to fall wardrobe, it is also important to reset your daily routine. Days are getting shorter now, so it is best to get up early in the morning and wind down a little early in the evening.

- Add 15 minutes of “planning time” to your morning routine.
- Make a fixed schedule for bedtime so that you get proper rest.

2. Prioritize seasonal tasks

Fall brings a lot of extra things – yard cleaning, school functions, holiday shopping, and party planning. If you try to do it all at once, you will feel overwhelmed. That's why it is very important to prioritize tasks.

- Make a task list at the start of each week.
- Highlight important tasks and complete them first.
- Eliminate or delegate unnecessary tasks.

3. Plan cozy breaks

Being productive does not mean that you work all day without a break. Fall is a season of naturally slowing down and enjoying the little pleasures. Fall evenings are best for family – cozy dinners, movie nights, and weekend outings. But if you don't manage your time properly, these moments get missed.

- Take a mindful 10-minute break every 2–3 hours.
- Make a hot coffee/tea break a small ritual.
- Take a short walk in the evening and enjoy the fall leaves.
- Breaks help you feel more refreshed and focused.

4. Start on holiday prep time

Fall is the time for holidays – parties, gifts, and gatherings. If you start planning now, you won't have last-minute stress later.

- Make gift lists and set a budget.
- Declutter your guest room now and get it ready.
- Organize wrapping papers, decorations and supplies in a storage box.

Fall is the perfect season to get a little organized in your home. Small steps like organizing the entryway, resetting the kitchen pantry, and decluttering the living room directly save you time.



KEEP FOOD SAFE THIS SEPTEMBER

September is National Food Safety Education Month, making it a great time to reflect on everyday habits that can protect you and your family from foodborne illness. Food safety is essential at every step, from preparing ingredients to cooking meals and storing leftovers. Remember the four important steps: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Start Clean and Keep Foods Separate

Always wash your hands with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food. Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean as well. Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs should be kept separate from ready-to-eat foods to help prevent cross contamination. Another way to keep food safe is to use separate cutting boards and utensils when possible.

Cook Food Safely

You can't always tell if food is safely cooked just by looking at it. Using a food thermometer is the best way to make sure food has reached a safe internal temperature. The use of a thermometer can also help prevent overcooking while ensuring that food is safe to eat.

Don't Forget to Chill

Refrigerate perishable foods and leftovers. When packing food, insulated containers and ice packs can help keep cold foods at safe temperatures. Proper refrigeration slows the growth of harmful bacteria and helps keep food safe.

Food Safety Education Month is a good reminder that safe food handling matters all year long. Whether you are preparing dinner, packing a lunch, or storing leftovers, remembering to Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill can help reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Additional food safety tips and resources are available in the following K-State Research and Extension publications below. These materials offer further guidance on safe food handling, kitchen sanitation, and appropriate refrigeration and freezer storage:

- [At-home-safe-food-handling-its-in-your-hands_MF2465.pdf](#)
- [Food-safety-tips-for-consumers-kitchen-cleaning_MF3637.pdf](#)
- [Safe-food-storage-the-refrigerator-and-freezer_MF3130.pdf](#)

Check out the sources below used for this article to learn more:

- <https://food.unl.edu/free-resources/food-calendar/september/>
 - <https://extension.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/>
 - <https://extension.k-state.edu/program-areas/food-preparation-processing-and-safety/food-safety.html>
- <https://extension.k-state.edu/news-and-publications/news/stories/2024/08/food-safety-kitchen-thermometer.html>

Horticulture

SLIDE INTO SEPTEMBER!

With fall on the horizon and our gardens, landscapes, and lawns beginning their final descent into the dormant season. The days are getting shorter and hot summer temperatures will soon break marking the end of the growing season. In the meantime here are some steps you can take now to ensure your plants are set up for success going into the end of the season.

Ornamentals:

Bulb and tuber plants can be divided and replanted now (with the exception of tulips) dividing perennials benefits plants by preventing overcrowding, increasing airflow, and the plants have more energy to produce blooms. Be mindful of planting depth when it comes to peonies, only 1-2 inches below the soil is sufficient and planting too deep can result in decreased flower production.

Lawns:

Between now and through the month of December is the ideal window for fertilizing cool season grasses (i.e. fescues, kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass) look for fertilizers with an NPK in the range of 3-1-2 for 4-1-2. Keep in mind, fall also bring cool season weed species. Take some time to familiarize control techniques with Kansas State University's publication MF2385 "Weed Control in Home Lawns" (https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/weed-control-in-home-lawns_MF2385)

Fruits & Vegetables:

Most varieties of pears as well as a handful of apples are approaching ripeness, harvesting timely and proper post harvest storage will keep your fruit edible for longer and retaining maximum flavor! For pears, pick before full maturity when the pear is still firm and let ripen at room temperature. For apples, variety is the determinant for when to pick so identification is important, but when you begin to see fruit falling the harvest date is near. Store apples to help them last longer and prevent spoilage. On the vegetable front, begin sewing cold season vegetables such as turnips, radishes, lettuce, kale, and spinach. To round out the tomato season, thin smaller fruits to allow the plants to shift focus to the larger fruit.

Pest of the Month:

This month I wanted to highlight an insect I have fielded several questions about this season, that takes a personal affront to the blooms of our state flower. I'm talking of course about the sunflower head clipping weevil! This beetle will lay its eggs in the bloom of the sunflower, and then chew the stem just below giving it a "clipped" appearance. If you have sunflowers, echinacea, asters that are hanging their heads or missing blooms all together, the head clipping weevil has likely paid you a visit.



Community Development

GOOD NEIGHBORING

A small act of neighborliness can make a big difference. In a time when simple kindness between neighbors is less common, even a brief gesture stands out and can spark a meaningful connection.

You don't have to start with a big event. Begin with something small—a friendly note, a quick check-in, or a shared treat. As relationships grow, a simple food-themed gathering can be a natural next step. The goal is always connection, not entertainment. Strong communities are built one relationship at a time, and every act of kindness helps make life better in the Dotte.

As part of National Good Neighbor Day on September 28, K-State Extension – Wyandotte County invites you to join our Good Neighboring Challenge. Share your photos and stories to be entered into a drawing for a Dotte-themed prize for your neighborhood. All entries need to be submitted by October 1, 2026. Here is the link to upload your good neighbor deed.

https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_af7CQQo72AR9Xw



Upcoming Events



September 1: Cooper Foreman Ribbon Cutting

September 2: K-State Garden Hour

September 3: Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Level One

September 11: Grant Writing Workshop

September 13: Gourds, Grandparents & Grandkids

September 28: Good Neighbor Day

Connect with us!



K-State 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.

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