State Extension agent and nutrition expert, Tranda Watts, has retired after more than 42 years of service. She has served five counties in northwest Kansas, all while commuting from her home in Gove. Her last official day was Jan. 3rd, 2015.

Tranda’s expertise in Food, Safety, Health, and Nutrition will be greatly missed in the Twin Creeks District. Tranda was able to build great working relationships throughout our district and was well respected for her work with the Breakfast 101 Program, Walk Kansas, Full Circle Aging Expo, Hand Washing presentations, and a multitude of questions from individuals requesting information on canning, baking, quilt storage, radon testing and almost anything relating to daily living.

Tranda plans to spend more time with her family and do some substitute teaching after retiring from her K-State Extension responsibilities. The Twin Creeks staff wishes Tranda the best and would like to Congratulate her on her retirement. Thank You for your dedication!!! Job Well Done, Tranda!!!
What is Trich?

Trich is a highly contagious sexually transmitted disease (STD) in cattle. Trich is sexually transmitted to the cow during the breeding process. In 2010, Trich was added to the Kansas reportable disease list. Positive cases must be reported to the Kansas Animal Health Commissioner.

How is Trich Detected and Managed?

Trich is physically unnoticeable in bulls; only testing can confirm the presence of the disease. Cows may experience pregnancy loss (generally at 50-70 days of gestation), abortion within 5-7 months of gestation and/or infertility. The primary herd sign is prolonged calving interval or high open rate at pregnancy checking time. Cows usually clear the infection on their own, however immunity is short-lived and cows are susceptible to reinfection the following season. Bulls may be tested for the disease. After two weeks of sexual rest, a veterinarian can collect a sample and send it to an approved laboratory for a one-time PCR test. Bulls that are positive for Trich must be sold for slaughter only. There is no legal treatment for bulls or cows that have this disease. Culling infected bulls and open cows is the best management method for controlling Trich positive herds. Prevention is the best way to protect your herd.

Trich Statistics and Other Info.

- The PCR test is 98% sensitive.
- The PCR test costs around $50 – $70.
- Kansas needs to test more bulls. There is a lack of testing (only 1.5-2%) in our state.
- Cows can be tested, however the test is not very reliable.
- Trich can survive the freezing and thawing process in frozen semen.
- All positive bulls will be required to go to slaughter regardless of circumstance.
- Nutrition and body condition score play no part in prevention of this disease.

Plan Ahead for Business Succession

Passing a family business to the next generation can be difficult, both for the retiree and for younger family members.

To help Kansas farm and ranch families plan for succession, K-State Research and Extension and Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services are teaming up to offer five “Planning for Farm and Ranch Succession” conferences.

Meeting date and location include:

- March 3: K-State Agricultural Research Center, Hays

More information, including online registration, is available at Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services.

Upcoming Farm Bill Meeting

February 10, 2015
Phillips County Fairgrounds
1481 HWY 183
Phillipsburg, KS
Cody Miller
Phillips-Rooks Extension District
Phone: 785-543-6845
Email: codym@ksu.edu

Keep Poinsettias Blooming

December is prime time for poinsettias, and researchers at Kansas State University, Virginia State University, and others, have conducted trials of poinsettia cultivars to rate plants on growth characteristics and the development of bracts (the colorful leaves that seem to be the plant’s flowers). Horticulturists recommend that holiday plants be placed near windows to benefit from sunny winter days, but they must be protected from drafts and cold air. Winter care recommendations include adding lukewarm water when the soil is dry to the touch. Soil should be kept moist, not soggy, so plants don’t wilt.

Cold Stress: What is Cold to a Cow?

Justin Waggoner, Beef Systems Specialist

As we all know there is no typical weather pattern in Kansas. We experienced a mild fall this year and thus far winter has been interesting in the Sunflower State with record high temperatures followed by brutally cold and windy days. The downside is that we don't know what might happen in the New Year, as we approach what are typically the coldest months of the year. Most cattle producers know and appreciate that cold weather increases nutrient requirements. However, the obvious questions that come to mind are "What is cold to a cow?” and "What increases (energy, protein, etc.) and by how much?"

Cattle are most comfortable within the thermo-neutral zone when temperatures are neither too warm nor too cold. During the winter months cattle experience cold stress anytime the effective ambient temperature, which takes into account wind chill, humidity, etc., drops below the lower critical temperature. The lower critical temperature is influenced by both environmental and animal factors including hair coat and tissue insulation (body condition). The table below lists the estimated lower critical temperatures of cattle in good body condition with different hair coats. In wet conditions cattle can begin experiencing cold stress at 59°F, which would be a relatively mild winter day. However, if cattle have time to develop a sufficient winter coat the estimated lower critical temperature under dry conditions is 18°F.

Cold stress increases maintenance energy requirements but does not impact protein, mineral or vitamin requirements. The general rule of thumb (for a cow in good body condition, BCS = 5 or greater) is to increase the energy density of the ration by 1% for each degree (Fahrenheit) below the lower critical temperature. The classic response to cold stress in confinement situations is an increase in voluntary intake. However, it has been documented that grazing beef cows may spend less time grazing as temperatures decline below freezing, which reduces forage intake (Adams et al., 1986) and makes the challenge of meeting the cow’s nutrient requirements even greater. In many cases feeding a greater amount of low-quality hay may not provide sufficient energy. Therefore providing additional energy by feeding a relatively higher-quality hay or grain may be required. More information on cold stress and nutrition may be found in "Beef Cow Nutrition Guide", Publication #C-735 which may be accessed online at http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/C735.pdf.
Cold Hardening in Winter Wheat

Kansas temperatures took a sudden dive on November 11 and stayed unusually cold for quite a while. Since then, there have been periods of mild weather and moisture—enough that a little new growth of leaves and tillers could be seen in some fields. Where this is the case, is that wheat in condition to survive the winter? In short, the answer is “probably so.” Where new growth occurred in December, that doesn’t mean the wheat will have lost its winter hardiness. The wheat may not be as cold tolerant now as it could be, however. As long as temperatures are at or below freezing at night, there won’t be much new growth. And the new growth that occurred can still re-harden. During the fall, winter wheat seedlings spend the first month or so of their lives developing their first leaves, the crown, and a secondary root system. All the while, the seedlings are building and storing the energy they will need to go through the cold acclimation process and survive the winter. Normally seedlings will need at least 2-3 true leaves and a tiller or two to have built up enough stored energy reserves to survive the winter. The seedlings will have a better chance of winter survival if their crowns are well developed in firm soil, about a half-inch below the soil surface. Winter hardiness or cold tolerance is a physiological process triggered by gradually cooling temperatures in the fall. During the process of cold acclimation, certain genes within winter wheat begin to initiate the production of “anti-freeze” type substances to protect the cell membranes. The process of cold acclimation within a sufficiently developed wheat seedling begins when soil temperatures at crown depth fall below about 50°F. Photoperiod also plays a role in this process. Winter survival depends on the crown remaining alive, and the substances that produce cold acclimation are most needed within the crown. It takes about 4-6 weeks of soil temperatures below 50° at the depth of the crown for winter wheat to fully cold harden. The colder the soil at the depth of the crown, the more quickly the plants will develop winter hardiness. After the cold hardening process begins in the fall, wheat plants can rapidly un-harden when soil temperatures at the depth of the crown get above 50°. But the plants will re-harden as crown temperatures cool below 50° again. By the time winter begins, winter wheat will normally have reached its maximum level of cold hardiness. Wheat in Kansas normally has its maximum level of winter hardiness from mid-December to mid-January, unless there are high temperatures during that period. Even during the depths as winter, winter wheat is still respiring and roots may be growing—as long as the ground is not frozen. It is not unusual to find a much more developed crown root system in early February than existed in early December. Once winter wheat has reached the level of full cold hardiness, it will remain cold hardy as long as crown temperatures remain below about 32°—assuming the plants had a good supply of energy going into the winter. If soil temperatures at the crown depth rise to 50° or more for a prolonged period, there will be a gradual loss of cold hardiness, even in the middle of winter. The warmer the crown temperature during the winter, the more quickly the plants will start losing their maximum level of cold hardness. Winter wheat can re-harden during the winter if it loses its full level of winter hardiness, but will not regain its maximum level of winter hardiness. Even at its maximum level of winter hardiness, winter wheat can still be injured or even killed by cold temperatures if temperatures at the crown level reach single digits. As soil temperatures at the crown level rise to 50° or more, usually in late winter or spring, winter wheat will gradually lose its winter hardiness entirely. Photoperiod also plays a role in this process. When the leaves switch from being postare to upright, the plants will have completely de-hardened.

Winter/Spring Options for Winter Annual Broadleaf Control in Wheat

There are several herbicide options for control winter annual broadleaf weeds in wheat. Generally, fall applications will provide the best control of winter annual weeds with any herbicide, as long as the weeds have emerged. Some herbicides can work well even when applied during the dormant part of the season, while others perform best if the crop and weeds are actively growing. The key difference relates to the degree of soil activity provided by the herbicide. Herbicides that have good residual activity, such as Clean, Finesse, Amber, and Rave can generally be applied in January and February when plants aren’t actively growing. Most other herbicides, which depend more on foliar uptake, will not work nearly as well during the mid-winter months, when the wheat and weeds aren’t actively growing, as compared to a fall or early spring application. This may be especially true this year due to the colder temperatures and dieback of foliage this winter/spring herbicide applications can be effective for winter annual broadleaf weed control as well. Spring applications generally are most effective on winter annual broadleaf weeds soon after green-up when weeds are still in the rosette stage of growth, and during periods of mild weather. Once weeds begin to bolt and wheat starts to develop more canopy, herbicide performance often decreases dramatically. Spring-germinating summer annual weeds often are not a serious problem for a good healthy stand of wheat coming out of the winter. However, if wheat stands are thin and the wheat is very late developing, early-germinating summer annual weeds such as kochia, Russian thistle, and wild buckwheat may be a problem, especially at harvest time. Many of these weeds may be controlled by residual herbicides applied earlier in the season. If not, postemergence treatments should be applied soon after weed emergence and before the wheat gets too large in order to get good spray coverage and achieve the best results. Another important consideration with herbicide application timing is crop tolerance at different application timings. For example, 2,4-D should not be applied in the fall or until wheat is fully tilled in the spring. On the other hand, any herbicide containing dicamba can be applied after wheat has two leaves, but should not be applied once the wheat gets close to jointing in the spring. Herbicides containing dicamba include Banvel, Clarity, Rave, Pulsar, Agility SG, and several generic dicamba products. Dicamba is one of the most effective herbicides for kochia control, but if the wheat is starting to joint, it shouldn't be applied. At that point, Starane Ultra or other herbicides containing fluroxypyr would be a safer option and could still provide good kochia control. Most other broadleaf herbicides in wheat can be sprayed from the time that wheat starts tilling until the early jointing stages of growth, but the label should always be consulted to confirm the recommended treatment stages before application. We generally see minimal crop injury and no yield loss to topdress fertilizer/residual herbicide applications during the winter months. However, these combinations can often cause considerable burn to the wheat if applied when the crop is actively growing and with warmer weather.
Health Insurance: Making a Smart Choice

Open Enrollment for the new online health insurance marketplace is in full swing and will end February 15th. Employers may also have plans for you to compare. Comparing health insurance and choosing a plan for your family is a big decision and can often be confusing.

When you're comparing plans, you want to make sure you consider your health needs. Consider how often you went to the doctor last year and consider future health needs such as pregnancy or a surgery. Then consider your budget. What can you afford to pay per month for a plan and also how much can you save to help meet deductibles and coinsurance costs. Then you're ready to sit down, look at plans, and crunch some numbers. You may be comparing employer plans or looking at plans in the online marketplace at healthcare.gov. The Extension Office has workbooks that can help you compare plans as well as classes. Just stop by or call your local office to request a workbook.

One on one appointments are also available for plan comparison and enrollment using the healthcare.gov marketplace with Extension Agent and Certified Application Assistor, Julianne Shoup. To make an appointment, just call your local office. At 675-3268, 475-8121, or 877-5755.

Positive family communication is vital when making decisions to pass on the family business or farm. Families face many obstacles when planning for the next generation, whether it is understanding how long term care costs can affect the inheritance to communicating effectively to promote family health. Strengthening families’ efforts to plan for the future is the theme behind K-State Research and Extension’s “Preserving the Family with Estate Planning.”

Making a Smart Choice

Relationship Tips of the Month: Practice Effective Communication Skills

- Practice listening skills. Allow the other person to finish what he or she is saying, without jumping in — or jumping to a conclusion.
- Consider your response before speaking, rather than blurtting out the first thing that comes to mind.
- Be aware of non-verbal that can carry more weight than words. Looking away when a spouse or partner is talking to you or walking out of a room in the middle of a conversation are examples.
- Need to address a touchy topic? Set a time and place to discuss it, and opt for a "soft start," using "I" rather than "You" messages that suggest blame. Calmly saying: "Having to clean up the dirty dishes from everybody’s snacking will delay dinner" rather than an angry: "You left a mess in the kitchen!" is more likely to bring cooperation.
- Acknowledge irritants for what they are, and set aside a time to talk about and resolve them, rather than allowing an issue to escalate. For example, if a wife comes from a family that gets up from the table and does the dishes immediately, and a husband from a family that prefers to leave the dishes for later, work together to come up with a plan that will satisfy both.
- Be willing to compromise. If personal spending from a joint account is becoming an issue, develop a budget in which each spouse or partner has a personal allowance that is his or her money to save or spend as he or she wishes.
- Focus on positive interaction, as it typically takes five positives to overcome a negative.
- Be respectful — and appreciative. If both parties are tired, say "thank you" to the one who volunteers to go to the grocery store, fix a meal, or make life easier to ease the stress.
- Nurture trust by being truthful and dependable; if breached, trust can be difficult to rebuild.
- Make "No Needling" the rule — not doing anything intentionally to irritate the other person.
- Be aware that sarcasm and putdowns can erode a relationship. Humor can break the ice, but it's best to make fun of yourself, rather than another.
- Continue to date, as couples who continue to date continue to grow their relationship.
- Be spontaneous, particularly in making everyday opportunities enjoyable — and fun.
- Strive for balance in planning time together — and apart. Shared interests can be beneficial, but taking time to explore individual interests allows each partner or spouse to grow and bring more to a relationship.

Don't wait to seek help from a marriage or family counselor if having difficulty in resolving issues in your marriage.

-Tips from Charlotte Olsen, Family Studies PhD and K-State Extension Specialist

Medicare Basics Classes

Are you turning 65 in the next 6 months? Or helping a family member about to go on Medicare? Do the terms, Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D, supplemental insurance, Medicare Advantage Plans, and Medigap plans all seem like Greek to you?

Come learn about the basics of Medicare at a class taking place near you. Classes will be held from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm with locations TBD. RSVP to your local office by March 22nd.

March 23rd —Norton
March 25th—Oberlin
March 30th —Oberlin
Join Walk Kansas!!  
March 15-May 9, 2015

The program that promotes activity and fitness typically has about 16,500 participants annually.

MANHATTAN, Kan. – It’s as simple as putting one step in front of another. That’s the idea behind Walk Kansas, an eight-week K-State Research and Extension program that starts March 15, designed to promote activity and better health. “The days are getting longer, and many of us are eager to get outside and be more physically active,” said Sharolyn Jackson, Walk Kansas coordinator with K-State Research and Extension. “Even Kansans who do not routinely walk or have other fitness routines find Walk Kansas to be an easy way to get moving.” Groups of six people, one serving as a captain, work toward a common goal – typically to walk at least 150 minutes per person per week, which collectively is enough to walk 423 miles over the eight-week period. Though the team does not actually walk across Kansas, 423 miles is the equivalent of the distance across the state. Registration is through K-State Research and Extension county or district offices. Most registration materials are also on the Walk Kansas website. Teams that want a greater activity that promotes cardiovascular health. Don’t have a team? Jackson recommends contacting your local K-State Research and Extension office and asking to be placed on a team. This year marks the 14th year for Walk Kansas. With a cumulative total of 203,250 participants over the first 13 years, it is considered one of the most successful K-State Research and Extension programs in the state’s extension history. “We have a lot of conveniences in our lives today,” Jackson said. Taking care of ourselves is a privilege. Investing in your personal health now pays off down the road, and being physically active is one of the most important steps we can take to improve our health.”

How does Walk Kansas work?

• Co-workers, family members, friends and neighbors form teams of 6 people who will track minutes of physical activity and food choices during the 8-week challenge.
• Each team identifies a goal, or challenge, it wants to reach. Three challenges are offered. Challenge 1 is the distance across the state, and would require each member to reach the minimum guidelines for physical activity, 150 minutes per week. To reach Challenge 2, the team must go across and back, or 5 hours per week for each participant. Challenge 3 takes the team 1200 miles around the perimeter of the state, a 6-hour-per-week goal for each person.
• Walking isn’t the only activity that counts. Read through your “Move More – Feel Better, Physical Activity Guide” to learn about moderate and vigorous activities that count, and strengthening exercises. Just a reminder – any activity you report should be performed for a minimum of 10 consecutive minutes.
• Participants record daily fruit and vegetable consumption.
• Team members report progress to their team captain each week. Team captain reports totals to local program each week.
• Friendly competition can be motivating so check team progress on this website.

How do I get involved?

It's as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Start a Team! Gather 6 people (including yourself) who will motivate and encourage each other, and decide who will serve as captain.

2. As a team, choose a name and decide which challenge your team will work toward.

3. Register for Walk Kansas! Registration and participant materials are available from your local Extension office. Check their website for more information. Most local programs like to have registration one week before Walk Kansas begins.

How will Walk Kansas motivate me?

• You will receive a weekly newsletter with physical activity and health tips, healthy eating information, and a tasty recipe.

• Attend a kick-off/or celebration event in your local community. Most counties offer incentives and prizes during and after the 8-week challenge.

• Check your team progress compared to others across the state. Friendly competition keeps the program fun and motivates you in reaching your goals.

• Let others know you are committed to living a healthy lifestyle by wearing a Walk Kansas t-shirt!

• Take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about programs and resources at your local Extension office.
Entering the 2015 Year “On Purpose”

With the year 2015 well on its way, New Year’s Resolutions become one of the most talked about topics in the adult world, but can be very beneficial for youth as well. The main goal behind resolutions is to be better in the year 2015 than you were in 2014. Changing habits and attitudes is generally the main focus to meet those challenging goals, but determination and willpower play an important part in that success. Your character is simply made up of the habits and attitudes you possess daily, therefore, a resolution to change habits and attitudes will effect in a “bonus resolution” in changing and improving your character. With the ever increasing concerns about bullying in our society, setting goals and resolutions for youth should be a priority that we as adults encourage in our youth to attempt to improve habits and attitudes that affect character changes that will hopefully diminish negative behaviors and attitudes.

In order to achieve success, it has been determined that the issue is NOT prioritizing our schedule, BUT rather scheduling our priorities. Consequently, those things that we feel are the most important habits and attitudes to improve must be placed on our calendar. Attempting to achieve our resolution goals in this manner will enable us to enter a new year “on purpose”. Take some time to review the 2014 year with your youth and celebrate all that was accomplished, and then take some time to preview the coming year to determine goals to pursue.

Our resolutions many times look and feel a lot like a “goal.” In going through this process with your youth, view your list as an “action” list and a “standard” list. Ask your youth --what are the actions you plan to take, and what are the standards you plan to live by over the next year? To give you some talking points with your youth, the following is a list of some issues that can be addressed to create the goals, actions and standards for the 2015 year.

Ask your youth:

What are your greatest dreams for 2015? What projects will these dreams require of you? What daily actions must you engage in to fulfill them?


In what areas of your life do you most want to grow in 2015?

What books will you read this next year to achieve your growth goals?

What mentors will you seek out to achieve those growth goals? Pairing your youth with another successful adult in the community with similar interests creates a friendship bond and relationship very beneficial for your youth and the community in achieving success.

What events will you attend to achieve those growth goals? Specifically plan events throughout the year to anticipate, knowing that it is one step closer to achieving your goal.

What will you do Monday through Friday to be intentional about your growth? Too many times, resolutions and goals soon are forgotten if not put on your calendar as a continual reminder of the goals you are seeking to make improvements and changes for the 2015 year.

After determining your list of goals, actions and standards, make sure to write them on your calendar in order to continue the 2015 year “on purpose”. You can use this process both individually and as a family. If your plans are listed on your calendar, it will be much easier to encourage your youth throughout the year and your resolutions and goals will not be forgotten.

Take time to celebrate your 2014 year, but look forward to the 2015 year with a definite purpose in mind of intentionally scheduling your priorities for you and your family.

A Competitive Spirit Or “Killer Instinct”

With sports as one of the hottest topics among conversations at this time of year, fans tend to visit about the competitive nature of young athletes and competitors. Is the manner in which a young athlete competes considered a “competitive spirit” or does the athlete use a “killer instinct” to be successful?

In some situations, the athlete practicing the use of a “killer instinct” may have an emotional edge over another athlete, but emotions can work for you or against you. Probably a more valuable tool to possess in any type of competition or every day environment would be “control”. To master oneself is of utmost importance in self-control in all situations. To be able to keep your head or be in control of your emotions in every circumstance is level-headed self-leadership at its finest.

Food for Thought: To play with emotion can boost drive and performance, but it can also lead to behavior that is out of control. A “killer instinct” can lead to scores, or it can lead to penalties, injuries, conflict, misbehavior and even crime. So a “controlled” spirit is more valuable than a competitive spirit. It can fight and win or it can contain itself when needed. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one’s emotions which leads to respect from teammates and opponents.

There are four traits developed in a controlled spirit:

- **Self-discipline**: They can do what they must, even when they don’t feel like it.
- **Emotional Security**: They’re inwardly secure and don’t need to compare or get defensive.
- **Core Values or Principles**: They live by a set of timeless principles that helps them make decisions easier.
- **Clear Identity**: They have a strong sense of identity and know their strengths and weakness.

Contact your local Extension office in Norton, Decatur or Sheridan County.
## February

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Preserving the Family with Estate Planning

Save the date and register now!

February 19th / Stockton, KS / 9:30—4:00
February 20th / Colby, KS / 9:30—4:00

$20 registration fee with family discounts available until Feb 11th. Lunch and information packet will be provided.

To register online go to: www.northwest.ksu.edu under events.
Or call 785-460-4582

Workshop topics include:
- Getting Motivated: Plan for the Future
- Estate Planning 101
- Family Communication
- Long Term Care Planning
- Farm Succession: Making Sure it Happens!
- Q & A with attorneys and experts