



# River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

[rivervalley.ksu.edu](http://rivervalley.ksu.edu)

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## SHOP KANSAS FARMS HELPS CONNECT CONSUMERS TO KANSAS PRODUCERS

First Friday speaker says more than 148,000 have joined the effort

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Rick McNary thought he had a great idea when he started an online group to connect America’s consumers to Kansas farm and ranch families.

One year and more than 148,500 members later, it appears he was right.

McNary is the founder of Shop Kansas Farms, a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/shopkansasfarms>) that is helping to direct consumers across the country buy locally grown foods from Kansas producers.

He was a featured speaker July 2 during K-State Research and Extension’s monthly online series, First Friday e-Calls (<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship>), which helps to nurture small businesses and inspire entrepreneurship in Kansas.

Shop Kansas Farms, he said, was partly inspired by a beef dinner he and his wife had a little more than a year ago.

“We noticed at our local grocery store that the meat counter was empty that day,” McNary said. “It got me to thinking, we just had some great beef (purchased directly from a local producer), so how can I connect people I know with that farmer and the beef they are producing.”

Shortly after, McNary launched Shop Kansas Farms on Facebook and within 24 hours, he had more than 5,000 members. “I felt like a little kid who was walking along a dam, saw a leak and I was trying to plug it,” he said.

Shop Kansas Farms, LLC has since added a website (<https://shopkansasfarms.com/>) and is helping to connect consumers from across the United States with Kansas products. It has formed connections with another popular program – From the Land of Kansas (<https://www.fromthelandofkansas.com/>), managed by the Kansas Department of Agriculture – to help inspire consumer interest in Kansas-grown products.

McNary said many producers on his site have reported as much as a 500% to 600% increase in direct sales to consumers. He pointed to one such producer who had 20 customers in 2019, and more than 500 in 2020.

There are more than 775 farmers selling products on his site. “When I look at that list, I see 775 entrepreneurs,” he said. “To me, the best part of this is that we have stimulated entrepreneurship in Kansas.”

Deb Brown, co-founder of Save Your Town (<https://saveyour.town/>), a consulting business that guides people toward making their small towns a better place to live, said post-pandemic surveys have indicated that a growing number of consumers have become disappointed in the selections at their grocery stores, and are moving toward supporting local farmers.

“96% of those who responded to one survey indicated that locally grown food is the healthiest available in their community,” Brown said.

Consumers’ growing interest in local foods is largely credited for the rise of such popular sites as EatWild.com (<http://eatwild.com/>), GrassRootsCoop.com (<https://grassrootscoop.com/>) and ChopLocal.com (<https://choplocal.com/>), among others, she added.

Brown’s and McNary’s full talk and other First Friday presentations are available online from K-State Research and Extension at <http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship>.

Story by: Pat Melgares

## REPORTS OF BLUE-GREEN ALGAE

We have had some reports of blue-green algae in small ponds in the River Valley District. Blue-green algae can produce toxins that can affect the liver, nervous system, skin, and other organs. The most common complaints after recreational exposure include vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes, eye irritation, and respiratory symptoms. Exposure to algal toxins can cause illness or possibly even death. There are no known antidotes to cyanobacterial toxins. Prevention is the best option for protecting humans and animals. The photo below, taken in Cloud County in Mid-July 2021, shows what blue-green algae can look like in the water. Blue-green algae are often concentrated on or near the water surface with visible soup-like scums and/or the water appears bright green or blue-green, or even occasionally red or pink. The most concentrated portions of the ponds are typically found on the down-wind side.



There are some quick tests that we can utilize to help determine if we likely have blue-green algae. A photo of the jar test is shown below. This jar test sample was taken from the same pond as the picture above. For the jar test, simply take a sample of the water by dipping it just below the surface and filling it about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Be sure to use latex or rubber gloves to prevent skin exposure. Let the jar sit in the refrigerator overnight. A positive result will have formed a green ring around the top of the jar as seen in the photo below. A negative test would have almost all settled to the bottom.



The stick test is the other quick test for determining if a pond has blue-green algae. Thrust the stick into the surface mat and slowly lift out of the water. If the stick comes out looking like it has been thrust into a can of paint, the mat on the pond is likely to be a blue-green algae scum. If the stick pulls out strands that look like green hair or threads, the mat on the pond is likely filamentous green algae.

NOTE: No test is 100% perfect, and that includes the jar test for blue-greens. The test relies on the buoyancy adaptation of most free-floating (planktonic) blue-green algae. In Kansas, bloom complaints are overwhelmingly the result of the forms that are buoyant. However, there is a small possibility (<2%) that the algae in your particular test happen to be nonbuoyant species for blue-greens, resulting in a false negative test. Likewise, some swimming forms of non-blue-green algae (like Euglenoids) may

form a surface layer during a jar test, resulting in a false positive. Fortunately, most *Euglena* blooms will be reddish in color rather than green. Although the jar test does provide a quick and inexpensive way to confirm whether you have a blue-green community in your lake, it does not tell you what species are present, nor does it tell you whether they are actually producing toxins. Be aware, too, that just having blue-green algae present does not mean your pond is automatically hazardous. Many lakes and ponds in Kansas typically have blue-green algae in them. Hazardous conditions occur when the number of blue-green algae is large, and composed of species capable of generating toxins. For that information, a microscopic examination of the water, combined with a chemical test for toxins, would be required for a more complete picture.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment only tests samples from public waterbodies. Kansas State University will assist you with issues regarding private waterbodies. If you are conducting one or both of these tests on your private farm pond or lake and you determine that you do have a blue-green bloom occurring in your pond, you may obtain further assistance by going to this website: [www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/pond\\_owners](http://www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/pond_owners)

## FREE SOYBEAN CYST NEMATODE SAMPLING

After harvest is an excellent time to soil sample for the soybean cyst nematode (SCN). Currently, 58 of Kansas's 105 counties are known to be infested. In those counties it tended to start in fields next to a river. In fields currently infested, knowing your nematode population numbers is an excellent way to determine if your management plan is working. If numbers are going up, you know that the population of nematodes in your field have overcome the resistance in the most recently planted soybean variety and that use of that variety should be discontinued in infested fields. Many soybeans that offer SCN resistance use the same gene PI88788.

This year the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab is offering free soybean cyst nematode testing as part of a grant received from a SCN Coalition grant. The SCN Coalition is group of University researchers, extension specialists and agriculture company representatives who are concerned about the evolving threat from soybean cyst nematode. The Coalition is supported in part by Kansas Soybean Checkoff Dollars contribute through the North Central Soybean Research Program and the United Soybean Board.

The free testing program ends September 1st, 2021. You can pick up a SCN sampling packet up at each of the county offices. Soil samples submitted to the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab should include contact email, county and field ID. Send to the address below:

K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab  
4032 Throckmorton Hall PSC, 1712 Claflin Rd  
Manhattan, KS 66506

You can also drop off the sample at our office as well. The only thing is the Producer must pay for shipping or they can drop it off in the drop box on the north side of Throckmorton hall.

If you have any questions contact Rebecca Zach at the Belleville Office 785-527-5084 or [zrebecca@ksu.edu](mailto:zrebecca@ksu.edu)

## IS MY LAWN STILL ALIVE?

Is your lawn turning brown like it does through the winter? During the hot periods of the summer, lawns will enter into a dormancy. Normally, a healthy lawn can stay dormant for a good 5 weeks and still recover. After the five weeks are up, it is important to keep the crown hydrated because if the crown dies, the plant dies.

The recommendations differ for a lawn that was overwatered or received so much rain this spring that it produced a limited root system. Such a lawn may die unless allowed to slowly enter dormancy. This is done by shutting off the water gradually. For example, instead of watering several times a week, wait a week before irrigating. Then don't water again for two weeks. Thereafter, water every two weeks as described below.

Apply about 1/4 inch of water every two weeks to hydrate the crown. This will be enough to hydrate the crown but not enough to encourage weed germination and growth.

If you are wondering if the turf is still alive, pull up an individual plant and separate the leaves from the crown. The crown is the area between the leaves and the roots. If it is still hard and not papery and dry, the plant is still alive.

When rains and cooler weather arrive, the turf should come out of dormancy. However, we will probably have to deal with weeds that germinate before the turfgrass grows enough to canopy over and provide enough shade to keep weed seeds from sprouting. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

# **NCK FALL FIELD DAY**



***TUESDAY AUGUST 17  
6 PM AT SCANDIA HEADQUARTER***

## **Tour Topics**

**Row-spacing and layered residual herbicides in soybean  
Dr. Sarah Lancaster**

**How do field peas fit in North Central Kansas crop rotations?  
Dr. Kraig Roozeboom**

**The hidden half: Corn root development, water and nutrients  
Dr. Colby Moorberg and Dr. Dorivar Ruiz Diaz**

## **Dinner to Follow**

Contact Rebecca Zach if you have any questions. 785-541-0283 or email at [zrebecca@ksu.edu](mailto:zrebecca@ksu.edu)

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting the event contact Rebecca two weeks prior to the start of the event. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to explore the association between social isolation, loneliness, social connection factors, and depression.

To participate in this research, you must:

- Be a rural area resident in KS or Missouri
- Be 65 years old or older



Participation in this study involves:

(1) Around 20-30 minutes of survey (either phone or online)

- Scan the QR code above with a camera to access the screening survey or click the link. [https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9HL4o79mcDq2Khw](https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9HL4o79mcDq2Khw)
- Or contact Interviewers for a phone survey directly:
  - **Arely Yanez: 620-927-0699**  
[aeyanez@ksu.edu](mailto:aeyanez@ksu.edu)
  - **Miranda Urban: 785-342-7993**  
[mirandau@ksu.edu](mailto:mirandau@ksu.edu)
- A \$10 gift card will be offered for completing the survey.

(2) After completing the survey, 10 volunteers will be invited to do an interview (either phone or zoom call)

- A \$20 gift card will be offered for completing the interview
- Contact the interviewers to schedule an interview.

-To find out more information about this study, please contact **Dr. Jun** at: [simj@ksu.edu](mailto:simj@ksu.edu) or **785-341-1561**

**Study Title:** *Social Isolation, Loneliness, Social Connection, and Depressive Symptoms among Rural Older Adults during the Pandemic*  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Jung Sim Jun

## SCHOOL SUPPLY SHOPPING

Back-to-school shopping is upon us and for many families, that means a large expense that can often be forgotten while planning your budget. Consider these tips and hints while buying school supplies.

**Take inventory.** Before you do any shopping, grab that school list and see what you have on hand. Go through school supplies and clothes to determine what your child can reuse instead of purchasing new. For example, not replacing a backpack or pair of shoes can be a big savings.

**Set a budget.** Once you know what you need to purchase, be realistic when looking at your finances to determine what you can afford. This is also a great teachable moment for young children. Give them the budget amount, supply list, and help them make smart choices to stick to the budget. Do you need that \$5 designer notebook when you can purchase a generic one for \$1?

**Compare prices online.** Check prices online at multiple stores for needed items to find the cheapest option. It may take a few moments, but it can be a big savings, especially when considering purchasing more expensive items, such as clothes and shoes.

**Consider second-hand shopping.** Check out garage sales, thrift stores, and consignment shops for gently used items. You could also consider swapping with friends or family to get new-to-you things, such as backpacks, clothes, and shoes.

**Watch for sales.** During August, most all school supplies are on sale, but if your child has a backpack or clothes they can continue to use, sometimes prices are even lower in September to get rid of the remaining school supplies.

**Don't let the expense of starting back to school put a dent in your budget.** Take the time to consider all your options and be a smart shopper.

## BACK- TO- SCHOOL PARENTING

If your family is anything like mine, you probably get a little off schedule during the summer months. Lots of activities with a later sunset means later bedtimes and wake up times. But August is here, which means school is about to start. Schedules, routines, and organization can help reduce the stress of returning to school.

Most of the time, school means homework so have a set location and time. Check in daily with your children to see what needs done. Make sure to have supplies needed to complete any work sent home from school.

**Establish a bedtime routine** with a set time for your children to be in bed. It can be helpful to write the routine down. For younger children, you can use pictures or a chart to help them learn the routine. Routines can help children learn responsibility and build self esteem in their ability to do tasks.

**Establish a morning routine** as well. Getting out the door for school and work can be hectic. Consider using an alarm clock and having children wake themselves. Again, have a

written routine for getting ready for the day and use pictures for younger children if needed.

To help with those routines, organize so everything has a place. Maybe it's a basket, cubby or a hook in your house so your child knows where their school items, such as a backpack, lunch box, and shoes, go every day after school. This will help with the morning routine, so no one has to take time to find needed items.

In addition to these tips, talk with your children. Share the routines and schedules, but also take the time to seek input from them. Be present, turn off electronics, and ask your children about their day. Make time for conversations.

A little preparation and communication can be helpful in the weeks to come as families transition back to school as it can be a stressful time. Enjoy these moments with your children, as parents all know the days are slow, but the years go fast.

## MEDICARE PART D PLANS 2021

It may be August, but that means Medicare Part D Open Enrollment is right around the corner. Though information about specific 2022 Medicare Part D Plans will not be available until October. Near the end of September or first part of October, Medicare Beneficiaries with a Part D Plan will receive information from their company informing them of any changes for 2021. The Open Enrollment Period for Part D Plans will be October 15<sup>th</sup>-December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) Counselors are available in your area to provide assistance shopping and enrolling in 2022 Part D Plans. Appointments will be available at all four office locations in the River Valley Extension District. Be on the lookout in the September River Valley Extension District Newsletter for more information on appointment times. Some location's appointment times fill up fast, so make sure to call **after** September 1, 2021 to schedule your appointment. If you are new to Medicare or have any Medicare questions please contact Jordan Schuette, in the Washington County Office, by phone at 785-325-2121.

### Alzheimer's Resource Fair

Do you know someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia? Are you caregiver for someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia? Then you may be interested in an upcoming Alzheimer's Resource Fair. This Resource Fair is for caregivers, those living with Alzheimer's or another dementia, and/or anyone interested in learning more. Join us to learn about available resources, get information on Alzheimer's and other dementia, and connect with others. Join us at the River Valley Extension District's Clay Center Office for the Alzheimer's Resource Fair on September 14th from 4:30pm to 6pm. If you have any questions feel free to call Jordan Schuette in the Washington Office at 785-325-2121.

## FALL FLING OCTOBER 11TH

Fellowship and fun will be a large part of the upcoming Fall Fling, Monday, October 11th in the Clay Center 4-H Conference Center at the Clay County Fairgrounds. All interested men and women in the area are encouraged to attend. Please bring a salad to share with others. Beverages and table service will be provided. Refrigeration is available for salads. The following programs are scheduled for the day:

Brooke German, Conservation District Manager at the USDA Service Center in Clay Center will be presenting a program on "Pollinators". Brooke will emphasize the challenges pollinators face, the declining populations, and how to do our part to help pollinators in the area.

"Let's Get Birding" will be presented by Calvin Wohler. Calvin will share his enthusiasm for "Birding", give us tips, and spark our interest.

This is a free program and Clay County Homemaker Extension invites everyone to attend. Events begin at 10:30am.

## TOMATO CRACKING

Tomatoes often have problems with cracking caused by pressure inside the fruit is more than the skin can handle. Cracks are usually on the upper part of the fruit and can be concentric (in concentric circles around the stem) or radial (radiating from the stem).

Tomatoes have a root system that is very dense and fibrous and is quite efficient in picking up water. Unfortunately, the root system can become unbalanced with the top of the plant. Early in the season, it may be small in relation to the top growth resulting in blossom-end rot during hot, dry weather.

Later it may be so efficient that it provides too much water when we get rain or irrigate heavily after a dry spell. This quick influx of water can cause the tomato fruit to crack.



Therefore, even consistent watering can help with cracking. Mulching will also help because it moderates moisture levels in the soil. However, you can do everything right and still have problems with cracking in some years. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

## BLOSSOM END ROT

Do you have tomatoes with a sunken, brown leathery patch on the bottom of the fruit? If so, then you probably have blossom end rot. Blossom end rot is not a disease; it is a condition that is caused by a lack of calcium in the soil. In Kansas this is not necessarily the case, because Kansas soils are derived from limestone, which is partially made up of calcium. So, what causes blossom end rot in Kansas? Actually, there are a number of possible causes, especially on tomatoes. Let's look at some of the other possible causes of blossom end rot.

The first possible cause could be that the tomato tops have outgrown the root system. During cooler spring weather the root system can keep up, but when it turns hot and dry, the plant tries to keep itself alive by sending water; with the calcium it carries; to the leaves and the fruit is bypassed. The plant responds to the heat and lack of calcium with new root growth which should allow the condition to correct itself after a couple of weeks.

The second possible cause could be heavy fertilization, especially with ammonium forms of nitrogen, which can encourage this condition. Heavy fertilization encourages more top foliage growth than root growth causing the ammonium form of nitrogen to compete with calcium for uptake through the roots to the fruit.

The third possible cause could be anything that disturbs the plant roots such as hoeing too deep. Mulching your plants will help because it keeps the soil surface cooler and reduces weed growth and promotes a better environment for root growth.

The fourth possible cause could be inconsistent watering. Keep soil moist but not waterlogged. Mulching can help by keeping the soil moisture level consistent over time. Even so, there are some years you do everything right and the condition shows up due to the weather. In such cases, remember that blossom-end rot is a temporary condition, and plants should come out of it in a couple of weeks. You want to pick off affected fruit to encourage new fruit formation.

Even though blossom end rot is most common on tomatoes, it can also affect squash, peppers, and watermelons. If you are noticing that you have a lot of blossom end rot occurring, go through the possible causes and see if you can find what might be causing the problem. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

**River Valley District Extension Offices  
Will be closed on Monday, September 6th  
In observance of the Labor Day holiday.**

**Be safe as you travel and enjoy visits with family  
and friends!**

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PERMIT NO. 3****Address Service Requested****RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT****“2021 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Aug. 3-8		NCK Free Fair (Republic County)	Belleville-Fairgrounds
Aug. 3-7		Kansas Market Wheat Show	Belleville-Fairgrounds
Aug. 4-7		StoryWalk at the NCK Free Fair	Belleville-Fairgrounds
Aug. 17	6pm	KSU-NCK Fall Field Day	Scandia Headquarters
Sept. 6		River Valley Offices Closed for Labor Day	
Sept. 14	4:30-6pm	Alzheimer’s Resource Fair	Clay Center- District Office
Oct. 11	10:30am	Fall Fling	Clay Center– 4-H Conference Center