



# River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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

**December 2023**  
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Extension District

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## Navigating Opportunities and Risks: Production and Forage Considerations

Thursday, December 14th: 10:00 am- 2:30 pm

Register by December 11th

### Program Topics:

Registration is from 10:00-10:30 am

- Making Dollar and Cents of Our Risk Management Tools
- Forage Sampling in a Drought Year
- Cowherd Nutrition Coming Off Drought
- Open Discussion, Q & A

### Location:

FNB Basement  
101 C St  
Washington, KS 66968

**Cost: \$10 at door**  
**Meal Provided**

**K-STATE** | River Valley  
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### Registration:



Scan the QR Code to  
Register!

Contact: Livestock Agent  
Kaitlyn Hildebrand: 785-243-8185

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Accommodation for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting the event contact Wade Reh two weeks prior to the start of the event at 785-632-5335. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so.

## LAND LEASING STRATEGIES PROGRAM 2024

The River Valley District will be hosting two more locations for the land leasing strategies program. Join us on January 16<sup>th</sup> at KSDS in Washington and January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Concordia at the Commercial Building on the Cloud County Fairgrounds, as Livestock Production Agent Kaitlyn Hildebrand and Agriculture and Natural Resource agent Luke Byers discuss lease agreement basics, landlord/tenant relations, and negotiation/communication skills. This program will cover the importance of having a written lease and the items that should be included in it to ensure an equitable agreement for all parties. Participants will also learn negotiation strategies as well as best practices to improve relationship between landlords and tenants. The power of negotiation and communication is key when building a lease agreement. Be on the lookout for more information to come. If you have any questions feel free to contact Kaitlyn Hildebrand in the Concordia office, 785 -243-8185 or [khildebrand@ksu.edu](mailto:khildebrand@ksu.edu).

## PLANNING FOR THE THIRD TRIMESTER

*Sandy Johnson, extension beef specialist, Colby*

The third trimester of pregnancy is a crucial period because of the rapid growth the fetus undergoes and because it is our opportunity to improve cow body condition prior to calving if needed. It is easy to forget those things when we can't see the growing fetus and a growing winter coat may be deceptive when it comes to body condition.

The table below is a simple reminder of when the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester begins based on various dates for the start of the spring breeding season.

Start of breeding	Start of 3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester	Start of calving
May 1	Nov. 6	Feb. 8
May 15	Nov. 20	Feb. 22
June 1	Dec. 7	March 10
June 15	Dec. 21	March 24

Fetal growth is exponential during this time with blood flow increasing 3 to 4-fold from mid to late gestation.

In the last 60 days, 75% of growth occurs, or 60 pounds of an 80-pound birth weight. The total weight of the pregnancy with fetus, fluids and membranes at calving is around 100-150 pounds total. This process never ceases to amaze me.

Early in pregnancy, the placenta, organs and limbs develop. Muscle fiber growth starts early as well, and the number of fibers is largely determined by the 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy. The size of muscle fibers and formation of fat cells that produce marbling occur later in gestation and nutrient restriction at this time can reduce the size of muscle fibers and formation of fat cells that produce marbling. The impacts on muscle fiber size have been demonstrated in heavier calf birth weights (no change in calving difficulty), weaning weights, and carcass weights. Additional marbling is not as consistently evident across studies, however by harvest time many additional factors may come into play.

As little as 1 pound of a 28% protein supplement per day during late gestation for cows grazing native range has been shown to be beneficial to calf weights and heifer performance. This level of restriction in the unsupplemented cows was not enough to reduce pregnancy rates compared to supplemented cows.

Feed costs are high this year, but strategic supplementation can pay off in calf weaning weight. Pay particular attention to first calf heifers that are growing themselves in addition to the fetus.

## RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

**DECEMBER 25, 2023 THRU  
JANUARY 1, 2024  
TO CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS  
HOLIDAYS  
AND  
MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 2024  
IN HONOR OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY**

# Optimizing Soil Fertility For Your Bottom Line

Guest Speaker: Dr. Dorivar Ruiz Diaz  
K-State Research & Extension  
Soil Fertility & Nutrient Management Specialist



**9:30 AM - 1:30 PM (Lunch Provided)**  
**\$10 Registration at the door**

To register for any date, call the Clay (632-5335) or Saline (309-5850)  
County Extension Office

**Dec. 13 - Nitrogen Management**  
Clay County Fairgrounds, Clay Center

**Jan. 10 - Phosphorous Management**  
Delphos Auditorium, Delphos

**Jan 24 - K, S, pH, SOM Management**  
Cloud County Fairgrounds, Concordia

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Luke Byers, (785) 632-5335.

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## SORE, SCRATCHY THROAT?

It's a familiar sensation as the days grow shorter and colder: a scratchy, painful feeling when you swallow, talk, or even just breathe. Sometimes, a sore throat is little more than a nuisance. But it can also be a sign of serious infection. So how do you know which is which? And what can you do to soothe a sore throat?

Many things can trigger a sore throat, explains Dr. Alison Han, an infectious disease expert at the NIH Clinical Center. "It can be an allergen. It can be an infection, like a virus or bacteria. Sometimes, it's even just dry air," she says.

So, when should you call your health care provider? That depends on how bad the sore throat is and what symptoms come with it, Han explains. "If it's a mild sore throat and a runny nose, some congestion, that's probably a typical cold," she says. But severe pain plus symptoms like a high fever and a loss of interest in eating or drinking may be serious.

How long a sore throat lasts also matters. "If it's been more than three days, then you might want to seek medical advice," Han says. "But at any time, it's always reasonable to call your doctor and get an opinion."

A very contagious bacterial infection called strep can cause a sore throat, high fever, and swollen glands. Children may also have nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain. Strep can cause other serious health problems. So, it's important to see a doctor as soon as possible if you think someone in your household has strep.

If test results confirm strep, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics. Even if you feel better after a few days, it's important to finish the entire prescription. **Most causes of a sore throat, though, don't need antibiotics. These include allergies as well as colds, flu, COVID-19, and RSV, which are all caused by viruses. Antibiotics only work against bacteria.** Doctors can sometimes prescribe antiviral medication for certain viruses, like flu or COVID-19.

There is no treatment for the common cold, but over-the-counter products for symptom relief may help. For example, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin (not for kids) can reduce pain. Mild allergies can be treated using over-the-counter antihistamines, decongestants, or

nasal sprays. But you may need prescription medication or allergy shots for severe allergies.

A sore throat is a common symptom for the current variants of COVID-19. "If you have a sore throat and some other cold-like symptoms, it's reasonable to do a COVID-19 test," Han says. This can help you stop spreading the disease to others.

For most causes of a sore throat, time is the best healer. Lozenges, lollipops, or other hard candies can help soothe your throat. Experts now recommend that children under the age of 4 don't use any over-the-counter cold and cough medications.

For young kids who might choke on candy, cold liquids or popsicles can help numb the pain.

**The best way to prevent a sore throat is to avoid the germs that cause them. Wash your hands often. Stay clear of other people who are sick. And make sure you are up to date with the vaccines recommended for your age group, including flu, COVID-19, and RSV.** "These shots can help protect ourselves and our loved ones," Han says.

### Tips for Soothing a Sore Throat

- Warm liquids can help. Try hot tea with lemon or gargling with warm salt water.
- Keep your throat moist with lozenges or hard candies. Do not give these to young kids.
- Ice chips or popsicles may help numb the pain.
- Painkillers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can reduce throat pain. Read the label to make sure products are safe for children. Never give aspirin to kids.
- Keep the air in your bedroom moist with a clean humidifier or vaporizer.
- Avoid smoking or inhaling second-hand smoke. Smoke can irritate the throat.

This article is from News in Health, a free monthly newsletter from the National Institutes of Health. You can learn more about it here: [newsinehealth.nih.gov](https://www.newsinehealth.nih.gov)

If you have questions about the difference between allergies, a common cold, COVID19, the flu, and RSV, or if you have questions about staying up-to-date on vaccinations, please reach out to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent at 785-243-8185 or [kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu](mailto:kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu).

## VAX FACTS: DID YOU KNOW?

- It takes two weeks for the flu vaccine to take effect
- It is SAFE for pregnant women to get vaccinated against the flu. It even helps protect baby for the first 6 months of life
- Adults 65 years and older, adults with chronic conditions, pregnant women, and infants and children under the age of five are at the highest risk of flu complications
- Staying up-to-date on vaccinations helps ease the burden on the health care system and protects the vulnerable members of your family and the community
- The Immunize Kansas Coalition wants to protect all Kansans from vaccine preventable diseases. Check out their website for more information: [immunizekansascalition.org](http://immunizekansascalition.org)

## SOME FUN WAYS TO KEEP MOVING DURING THE WINTER!

- Bundle up and go for a walk
- Build an indoor obstacle course – use painters’ tape, couch cushions, chairs, jump ropes, pool noodles, pots and pans, anything you have around the house!
- Have a dance party
- Go sledding
- Play balloon volleyball
- Develop a scavenger hunt for your family members or friends to complete
- Shovel snow
- Stream a fitness video
- Make indoor hopscotch with painters’ tape
- Try indoor bowling with empty water bottles
- Play follow the leader
- Build a fort with pillows and blankets
- Visit a playground
- Clean your room or vacuum
- Blow bubbles outside, they might freeze if it is cold enough!
- Enjoy a bike ride
- Have an indoor snowball fight with wads of paper
- Try yoga
- Use painters’ tape to make a balance beam
- Build a snowman
- Fly paper airplanes

## MEMORIES OVER MATERIALS

December is here and for many, that means shopping and gift giving. As you are shopping, consider giving a memory instead of more materials as there seems to be a cultural shift to minimalism.

Everywhere you look and listen, there are commercials and advertisements of the hottest toy, electronic, and even vehicle to purchase for a loved one. It is the season of giving. Even though retailers want us to believe that the holidays are all about materials, give the gift of time and memories to those you love.

Instead of more materials to be tossed aside after the newness wears off, consider giving an experience that will create memories. A gift of an experience can be tailored exactly to the person. Purchase admission to a local zoo, amusement park, movie theater, or museum. Find lessons to further a person’s skills, such as horseback riding, a musical instrument, or painting. For those real adventurous people in your life, send them skydiving or ziplining. These are just a few examples as the possibilities are endless.

Being a parent of young children, I understand that having something to open may be important, so I am not saying to scrap every gift. Consider following the adage of “Something they want, something they need, something they wear, and something they read.”

Iowa State Extension’s “Science of Parenting” Blog has lots of great information, including this post about gift-giving to children: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting/2016/12/21/consider-giving-kids-less-stuff-more-time-during-holidays/>.

## DON’T LET HOLIDAY SPENDING CREATE FINANCIAL HAVOC

Holidays can be stressful. Your plans may include hosting, traveling, giving gifts, preparing meals, and more. Consider a few of these tips to not let finances add to your stress during this upcoming holiday season and eventually the new year.

Set a budget. Budget can be a scary word but ultimately you need to know how much money is coming in and how much is going out so you can pay for the necessities, like housing, utilities, groceries, etc. Once you know your income and expenses, you can plan how much you would have for holiday spending. It is critical that you stick to that amount, so be realistic.

Make a list. This is especially important when shopping for food or gifts. Know exactly what you are buying, who you are shopping for, and even a dollar amount of what

you'd like to spend within your budget. This will help minimize impulse or duplicate purchases that put a dent into your finances.

Use cash. Swiping a card is convenient, but can cause you to spend too much money. By utilizing an envelope system with cash, once you've used up your money, you are done shopping.

Watch for sales. Remember that list I mentioned earlier? If you know what you are wanting to purchase for meals, gifts, or even travel accommodations, make it a regular habit to check for sales throughout the year if possible.

Consider alternatives. If certain gifts, foods, or even travel plans are too expensive, seek out other options. Can you make a gift? Can you get a cheaper cut of meat? Can you stay home and utilize a videoconferencing service to spend time with loved ones?

Don't let holiday spending lead to debt and added stress. The holidays are about spending time with family and friends. Take the time to make smart financial decisions so you can enjoy your holidays rather than worrying about how you will afford them.

If you need assistance with financial management, contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu) for free resources on budgeting, paying off debt, increasing savings, and more.

## **MAKING YOUR LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE**

The holiday season is upon us and Santa's not the only one who can benefit from making a list and checking it twice. Holidays tend to be a stressful time for individuals and families, especially financially with all the added expenses. Financial situations may even be a little tighter than normal due to the rate of inflation so making a list can help with those holiday gift purchases.

First, make a list of people who you want to give a gift to. This might include family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and more. Next, add ideas or wish lists for each person. Finally, list how much you want to spend for each person.

When you total up all the amounts, if that number is too big to cover, you need to do some trimming. Consider the number of people receiving gifts, the amount you will be spending, or what kind of gift you will be giving. Remember, not all gifts have to be purchased. Handmade gifts can be heartfelt and a wonderful opportunity to utilize your skills and resources.

Now, check that list twice or maybe even more. This list now contains who, how much, and what you are looking for or what items you are making. Check it as often as you need to help you stick to your allotted budget as well as timeframe for

gifts.

You can also use that list to help remind you what you have purchased. I'll be the first to admit that I have returned home from a shopping trip to realize that I purchased two gifts for Person A and nothing for Person B because I simply got wrapped up in the moment and forgot. Once a gift is purchased or prepared, add it to a column on your list so you know what you have and what you are still looking for or needing to create.

Be like Santa this holiday season – make that list and check it twice to assist in minimizing the stress by staying on budget and being prepared.

## **TAMMY WICKSTRUM AWARDED RVD 2023 APPRECIATION AWARD**

Each year, the K-State Research and Extension - River Valley District recognizes individuals and entities that go above and beyond to assist them in their extension mission. At the appreciation dinner in September, Tammy Wickstrum of Republic County was presented the 2023 River Valley Extension Appreciation Award.

Tammy has been instrumental in the Republic County 4-H Horse program's growth as well as our 4-H Dog program. She hosts weekly horse meetings at the arena encouraging members to bring their horses, ride, and learn proper ways to show. Tammy has also held bi-monthly dog meetings for anyone in the County and district to attend. We appreciate her hard work and willingness to keep our 4-H program growing!

Tammy grew up in Cuba, KS with 2 younger sisters and a younger brother and graduated from Hillcrest High School. From a young age, Tammy has had a love for horses, dogs, and helping people. She was a 10-year member of the Merry Meadowlarks 4-H Club, and has been a club & county-wide horse & dog project leader beginning in 1993 for a combined total of 30 years! She passed on her love for the horse & dog projects to her daughter and granddaughters. Her granddaughters are also members of the Merry Meadowlarks 4-H Club and compete in the Horse and Dog Shows.

When she's not working with horses or dogs, Tammy is busy baking and sharing her love of it with her granddaughters making cookies, cupcakes, brownies, and sharing her Czech heritage with them by making Kolaches and Rohlik rolls. In her spare time, she still finds time to ride and compete in local NBHA Barrel Races!

## CHOOSING A PLANT SAFE ICE MELT

Before winter hits us any harder than it already has, let's take time to start thinking about the ice melt you plan to use this year. After an icy winter, have you ever noticed the plants around your walkways or driveways looking burnt or are patches dying out? If so, it's time to look at the deicer you are using and find a more plant safe material to use. Keep in mind deicers can damage concrete surfaces as well as the plants and grass. There are five main materials that are used as chemical deicers; calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, urea, and calcium magnesium acetate.

Calcium chloride is the traditional ice-melting product. Though it will melt ice to approximately -25 degrees F, it will form a slippery/slimy surface on concrete and other hard surfaces. Plants are not likely to be harmed unless excessive amounts are used.

Rock salt is sodium chloride and is the least expensive material available. It is effective to approximately 12 degrees F, but can damage soils, plants and metals.

Potassium chloride can cause serious plant injury when washed or splashed on foliage. It is effective to approximately 25 degrees F. Both calcium chloride and potassium chloride can damage roots of plants.

Urea is a fertilizer that is sometimes used to melt ice. Though it is only about 10% as corrosive as sodium chloride, it can contaminate ground and surface water with nitrates. Urea is effective to approximately 21 degrees F.

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), a newer product, it is made from dolomitic limestone and acetic acid (the principal compound of vinegar). CMA works differently than the other materials in that it does not form a brine like salt, but rather helps prevent snow particles from sticking to each other or the road surface. It has little effect on plant growth or concrete surfaces, and is effective to approximately 20 degrees F.

Limiting amounts and usage of these products will decrease the chance of injury to plants. Problems can occur when they are used excessively and there isn't any rainfall to wash/leach the material away from the area. When applying deicers use them in moderation. Don't over apply to make sure all the ice and snow melts away. These products are meant to help break up the ice so it can be removed, not dissolve it completely. So when using chemical deicers remember to use them in moderation to protect your concrete and your plants.

## CHOOSING AND CARING FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Have you put up your Christmas decorations yet? Are you using an artificial tree or are you selecting a live tree? Here are some helpful tips and tricks to picking out the best, longest lasting live tree.

When choosing an already cut Christmas tree there are a few

things you should check to make sure the tree isn't too far gone, before purchasing the tree. If the needles on the tree are a dull, grayish-green color or feel stiff and brittle you should not purchase that tree. The needles are telling you the tree has been cut for a while and has lost too much moisture. If the needles pull off the tree easily that is also a sign of too much moisture loss. You want to find a tree that is green and the needles hold strong when you try and pull them off. The needles on a freshly cut tree should ooze a little if you break them apart. Once you have brought your tree home, you want to recut the trunk. Make a new cut about one inch above the original cut. Making this fresh cut will open up any clogged water-conducting tissues. Once you have made the cut, place the trunk immediately in warm water. This will make sure the tree is taking up water right away – to be nice and green throughout the season.

When deciding on where to place your tree, you want to place it in the coolest spot as possible. Avoid places near a fireplace, wood-burning stove, heat duct, and the television set. The heat from these items will cause excess water loss from your tree, causing it to die quicker. To make sure your tree stays healthy you will want to make sure the water reservoir for your tree stays filled. If the reservoir loses enough water to expose the bottom of the trunk you will have to recut the trunk again to expose new tissue.

I hope these tips and tricks will help you keep your Christmas tree green and healthy for the holidays. If you have any questions feel free to contact me in the in the Washington office by calling 785-325-2121 or emailing [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

## POINSETTIA CARE

Poinsettia varieties will stay attractive long into the new year if given proper care. Here are some important tips to keeping your poinsettia thriving long after the holiday seasons. Place your poinsettia in a sunny window or the brightest area of the room, but be sure to not let it touch any cold window panes. The day temperature of the room should be 65 to 75° F with 60 to 65°F at night. When temperatures get above 75° F it will shorten the bloom life, and below 60°F may cause root rot. You will want to move plants away from drafty windows at night or close the drapes to avoid damage from the cold.

Poinsettias are somewhat finicky in regard to soil moisture. You want to avoid overwatering because poinsettias do not like "wet feet", which means they don't like to sit in water. On the other hand, if the plant is allowed to wilt, it will drop some leaves. So how do you maintain the proper moisture? You should examine the potting soil daily by sticking your finger about one-half inch deep into the soil. If it is dry to this depth, the plant needs to be watered. When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage holes in the bottom of the pot, then discard the drainage water. I hope these tips will help keep your poinsettia thriving into the new year. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the in the Washington office by calling 785-325-2121 or emailing [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

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“2023 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Dec. 5	6pm	Land Leasing Strategies	Clay Center– Fairgrounds, 4-H Conference Center
Dec. 6	12:10pm	Rapid Development of Baby Brains & Why It Matters	Living Well Wednesday Zoom
Dec. 8		RVED Offices Closed for Training	All District Offices
Dec. 13	9:30-1:30pm	Nitrogen Management in Your Soil	Clay Center– Clay County Fairgrounds
Dec. 14	10-2:30pm	Navigation Opportunities and Risks: Production & Forage Considerations	Washington– FNB Basement, 101 C Street
Dec.25-Jan.1		River Valley District Offices Closed for the Holidays	All District Offices
Jan. 10	9:30-1:30pm	Phosphorous Management in Your Soil	Delphos– Delphos Auditorium, 206 W. 2nd St.
Jan. 15		River Valley District Offices Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
Jan. 16	6pm	Land Leasing Strategies	Washington-KSDS, 120 West 7th Street
Jan. 24	9:30-1:30pm	K,S,pH, SOM Management in Your Soil	Concordia– Cloud County Fairgrounds, Commercial Bldg.
Jan. 23	6pm	Land Leasing Strategies	Concordia-TBD
Feb. 8	9:30-1:30pm	Farm Recordkeeping Workshop	Clay Center-Fairgrounds, Conference Center