



# River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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

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Extension District



It's never too early to start planning your garden and landscape! Join Post Rock and River Valley Extension to learn how to make your landscape stand out this spring.

Please RSVP to the Concordia Extension Office to reserve your spot by Feb. 13th. Free to participate. Questions? Contact Kelsey Hatesohl, 785-243-8185 or [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu)

### Topics Include:

- Basics of Landscape Design
- Choosing the right plants
- Landscaping for all seasons
- Hands on workshop, designing your own landscape plan

**Fridays-**  
**February 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Noon Hour**  
**(12:10-12:50 pm)**

Cloud County Co-op  
Conference Room  
1401 E 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Concordia, KS 66901



*Register Here*



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# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH AND PARTICIPATE IN K-STATE AND EXTENSION'S UPCOMING HYPERTENSION AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM (HAPp)

## The Facts...

- Having hypertension increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, which are leading causes of death in the United States (CDC, 2022).
- Nearly half of adults in the United States (47%, or 116 million) have hypertension (CDC, 2022).
- Only about 1 in 4 adults (24%) with hypertension have their condition under control (CDC, 2022).

The Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Program (HAPp) is an independent Self-Monitored Blood Pressure (SMBP) pilot program that K-State Research & Extension (KSRE) is introducing in 2023. It is inspired by the American Heart Association's Check, Change, Control Program (CCC) and the CDC's Healthy Heart Ambassador Program (HHA).

Participants will receive a FREE upper arm blood pressure monitor during this program.

## What is SMBP, and why is it important?

SMBP is defined as the regular measurement of blood pressure by the patient outside the clinical setting, either at home or elsewhere.

SMBP is important because:

- It empowers the patient to manage their blood pressure and play an active role in their healthcare.
- It increases health literacy (through working with community and clinical partners).
- There is strong evidence that patients who engage in SMBP along with clinical or community support can lower their high blood pressure.

## The goals of this project are to:

- Improve healthy literacy surrounding Hypertension.
- Help participants become advocates for their own health.
- Help participants make connections between lifestyle/behavior and their blood pressure readings.
- Connect participants with Community resources.
- Encourage participants to share their SMBP readings with their health care provider.

Extension agents will be trained to be Healthy Heart Ambassador Coaches by KDHE trainers. Extension agents will not be diagnosing or interpreting blood pressure numbers. The agent's role is to help participants have proper SMBP technique and the tools (BP chart for example) to make their own determination if blood pressures readings are within a healthy range. Agents will also provide regular nutrition, health literacy education sessions, and can link participants to community resources.

## To participate:

- Participants must be at least 18 years old.
- Have been diagnosed with high blood pressure or have been prescribed high blood pressure medication .
- **Not** have experienced a cardiac event within the last 6 months.
- **Not** have atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias.
- **Not** be at risk for lymphedema.

## Timeline:

### March

- The HAP Project begins
- Kick-Off Meeting Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> 5:30PM
- The Extension Agent will hold office hours every Wednesday 8:00AM-4:30PM
- Nutrition Education Workshop Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> 5:30PM

### April

- The Extension Agent will hold office hours every Wednesday 8:00AM-4:30PM
- Nutrition Education Workshop Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 5:30PM

## May

- The Extension Agent will hold office hours every Wednesday 8:00AM-4:30PM
- Nutrition Education Workshop Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 5:30PM

## June

- The Extension Agent will hold office hours every Wednesday 8:00AM-4:30PM
- Nutrition Education Workshop Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> 5:30PM
- Completion of the HAP Project

### Participants are expected to:

- Register by March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Measure their blood pressure at home at least twice per month for four consecutive months.
- Attend office hours twice per month for four consecutive months, to discuss their SMBP readings with the Extension Agent.
- Participants are also highly encouraged to attend the Nutrition Education Workshop that occurs once per month, for four consecutive months.

To register or ask questions please reach out to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent, at 785-243-8185 or [kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu](mailto:kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu).

## **RESCHEDULED- DINING WITH DIABETES PROGRAM TO BE HELD IN HANOVER REGISTRATION DUE FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

**Date:** Begins March 2nd

**Time:** 5:30PM-7:30PM

**Location:** Kloppenberg Senior Center  
512 E North St  
Hanover, KS 66945

**Nutrition and physical activity** are keys to managing your type 2 diabetes, but where do you start? The *Dining with Diabetes* program can help!

Designed especially for people with type 2 diabetes, this program will help you learn the skills needed to promote good health.

*Dining with Diabetes* is taught by trained and caring educators. The program includes:

- planning meals and snacks with delicious and healthy recipes
- cooking demonstrations and food sampling
- motivation and support — connect with others who are living with diabetes
- ideas for being more active
- an understanding of how diabetes affects your overall health

Thursday, March 2nd

Thursday, March 9th

Thursday, March 16th

Thursday, March 23rd

RECIPE DEMO AND TASTING EACH CLASS

Call Kaitlin Moore at 785-243-8185 or email her at [kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu](mailto:kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu)

*The River Valley District Dining with Diabetes (DWD) program fee is \$25.00. Due to funding from the Washington County Community Foundation the DWD program fee has temporarily been reduced to \$0.*

For more information visit  
[k-state.edu/diningwithdiabetes](http://k-state.edu/diningwithdiabetes)

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## THE WHAT, WHY, AND WHEN OF SCO AND ECO CROP INSURANCE

When it comes to corn and soybeans, over 90% of farmers in Kansas and across the United States purchase some sort of crop insurance product. Most growers use Revenue Protection (RP) policies, but in recent years additional crop insurance options have been greenlit by farm bills that may be of economic interest to farmers in the River Valley District. They are the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO). New research has surfaced that reveals how farmers might be able to strategically utilize SCO and ECO in conjunction with their RP policies to get the biggest bang for their buck in crop insurance.

SCO was introduced as a crop insurance option by the 2014 Farm Bill. It provides additional, county-level coverage on top of an individual crop insurance plan, from 86% coverage down to your individual policy coverage level. For example, if you have an RP policy that covers up to 80% of your yield, SCO will provide coverage from the 81% to the 86% yield level for a partially subsidized upcharge. It is important to note, however, that you are only eligible for SCO if you already hold an underlying individual crop insurance policy, and only acres that are enrolled in the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program are eligible to have SCO applied to them.

ECO is a much more recent addition to crop insurance options, being introduced in the 2021 crop year. It provides even more additional county-level coverage on top of your individual crop insurance plan, from 90% or 95% coverage down to the 86% coverage level. While, like SCO, you must have your acres enrolled in PLC and have them covered by an individual crop insurance policy, you do not need to have your acres covered with SCO to have them covered with ECO. This would effectively leave a gap in your coverage between 81% and 86%, at which levels no indemnity would be triggered.

Crop insurance plans that incorporate SCO or ECO may look similar to higher-coverage individual plans, but there are several important differences to keep in mind. For one, while individual insurance plans may be subsidized at varying rates, SCO and ECO are consistently subsidized at 65% and 44% for RP, respectively. The other key difference is that SCO and ECO have their premiums and indemnities calculated based on county-level data, whereas many individual policies utilize farm-level data. In this way, a farmer may be able to diversify his methods of indemnity determination as a built-in hedging mechanism.

Recent studies have indicated that there may be different ratios of indemnity to premium depending on whether one uses a straight RP plan or RP/SCO/ECO combination. One example of this is the difference between a straight 85% RP plan and an 80% RP Plan with an 86% SCO supplement. In most counties in the Midwest since 2014, producers were typically paid out a higher indemnity-to-premium ratio on *corn* acres if they swapped the 85% RP for the 80% RP+SCO, including the four counties in the River Valley District. This means that the net return on investment for your crop insurance policy would have been *higher* over the long run if you had an 80% RP+SCO instead an 85%RP. Further improvements to this ratio are made by adding in ECO coverage.

The pattern is *reversed* with *soybeans*! If you swapped an 85%RP for an 80% RP+SCO with soybeans, chances are that you received a *lower* indemnity-to-premium ratio over the long run. The same story is true with the additions of ECO, although inclusion of ECO makes things slightly less poor.

Despite evidence that swapping to an SCO-incorporating plan with corn will earn more money relative to premium costs over the long run, SCO and ECO are still very modestly utilized (respectively used at 6.4% and 3.8% rates of all crop insurance policies). If you would like to access more information about SCO and ECO crop insurance options, please contact Luke Byers at the Clay Center Extension office at 785-632-5335 or by email at [lsbyers@ksu.edu](mailto:lsbyers@ksu.edu). Stay in touch with your local crop insurance agent to stay informed about growing developments with your crop insurance options.

### Medicare Basics Program

Each year many people are approaching their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, contemplating retirement, and starting their journey with Medicare. Medicare, all its parts, and the advertisements can be confusing. Let us help. Join Jordan Schuette, Adult Development and Aging Agent for a Medicare Basics Program. Program details:

**Belleville – February 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**4-H Building on the NCK Free Fairgrounds**  
**901 O Street Belleville, KS 66935**  
**6:00 p.m.**

Please RSVP for the Belleville Medicare Basics Program by calling the Belleville Extension Office at 785-527-5084. We do schedule one-on-one appointments in all four offices of the River Valley Extension District. If you are New to Medicare or have other questions about Medicare contact Jordan Schuette in the Washington Office at 785-325-2121.

## BUILDING BLOCKS OF BABYSITTING

Being a babysitter is a great opportunity, whether just for one evening or the entire summer, but caring for a child is also a very big responsibility. Attend “Building Blocks of Babysitting” so you have the foundation to be the best babysitter possible. Topics covered will include ages and stages of children, basic first aid and emergency procedures, activity ideas, and more! Kaitlin Moore, Macy Hynek, and Jordan Schuette, Extension Agents for the River Valley Extension District, will offer Building Blocks of Babysitting in each of the counties in the River Valley District to youth that have completed 6th grade and higher. Mark your calendars now to attend! Registration details and more information will be released in February! All sessions are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 14  
Clay Center - 4H Building, 205 South 12th Street

Wednesday, March 15  
Washington - FNB Basement, 101 C Street

Thursday, March 16  
Concordia - Cloud County Co-op Conference Room,  
1401 E 6th Street

Friday, March 17  
Belleville - 4H Building, 901 O Street

## POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

This educational class series is designed to help family caregivers. The program will help you take care of yourself while caring for a relative or a friend. You will benefit from this class whether you are helping a parent, spouse, child, friend, or someone who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a 6-week series that will be held virtually, starting on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> and running through Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Each class will begin at 2:00 p.m. and last for about 90 minutes.

The online class includes the Caregiver Help Book and covers a variety of topics. Book price is \$10. Some of the topics include hiring in-home help, helping memory impaired elders, making legal and financial decisions, making decisions about care facility placement, understanding depression, and making decisions about driving. If you have any questions about Powerful Tools for Caregivers or would like to sign-up for the class please contact Adult Development and Aging Agent, Jordan Schuette in the Washington Office at 785-325-2121.

## LIVING WELL WEDNESDAYS

The Living Well Wednesday team is pleased to announce upcoming webinars in 2023.

**Here are topics for the winter series:**

**February 8 - Hypertension Awareness and Prevention**

**February 22 - Mental Health**

**March 8 - Stretching Your Food Dollar**

**March 22 - Positive Parenting**

**(February and March are topics only, not specific presentation titles.)**

All webinars will be recorded and links/resources will be posted on the Living Well Wednesday website: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed/>

## KSRE SEEKING INPUT ON RESIDENT'S NEEDS

Officials with a statewide network that has provided unbiased, research-based information on issues important to Kansans for 108 years are reaching out to learn more about how the organization can best serve residents of the state.

K-State Research and Extension has released a public survey to ask current and prospective users about their information needs. Gregg Hadley, Director of Extension, said the brief survey will help support the organization's efforts to provide education and information in every Kansas county.

“The services we provide are designed to improve Kansans’ lives and communities through education and engagement,” Hadley said. “The results of this survey will help our dedicated extension specialists, agents and researchers provide information and assistance that best meet the needs of our K-State Research and Extension users.”

K-State Research and Extension has offices in every Kansas county, including extension agents and others who provide information and programs specific to local needs.

Any Kansas resident over age 18 is eligible to take the survey in English (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ST2ZLM5>) or Spanish (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SRH9W59>). New Boston Creative Group LLC of Manhattan is conducting the survey.

Questions regarding the survey can be directed to Jerry Grasso, director of communications solutions for K-State Research and Extension, at 785-532-5806 or [jerrygrasso@ksu.edu](mailto:jerrygrasso@ksu.edu).

## **KANSAS PROFILE—NOW THAT’S RURAL: CURTIS AND LORI SWENSON, C&L CRAFTS**

*By Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University*

The design cut into the wood is beautiful, detailed, intricate – and handmade. It was not produced with a laser cutter or computer-aided design, but rather, entirely by hand by a remarkably skilled craftsman in rural Kansas.

Curtis and Lori Swenson are founders and owners of C&L Crafts in Miltonvale. They grew up in the Randolph area, met in school and were married. They would ultimately have four children.

Those children, now grown, have also chosen to live in rural Kansas. They now live in Miltonvale, population 440; Mayetta, population 348; Olsburg, population 218; and Idana, population 54 people. Now, that’s rural.

Curtis took a job in Nebraska where he suffered a terrible accident in which his back was broken in two places. He would have 22 back surgeries, the first of which was 8 ½ hours long. He made a full recovery, but it was a long recuperation.

“I was going stir crazy,” Curtis said. He looked for something he could do with his hands.

“I had watched a guy at Silver Dollar City cut designs into wood and thought that looked interesting.” He bought a scroll saw on sale and found he really enjoyed cutting intricate designs.

“It was therapy,” said Lori, who helped out by doing the finish work.

The Swensons moved to the Miltonvale area in 1996. “When people there discovered what I was doing, they told me we should sell those things at craft shows,” Curtis said. The couple started going to shows and continued to make these products on the side while he worked for the school district, from which he is now retired.

Today, C&L Crafts has sold wood products all over the nation and beyond. These are not your typical trinkets. Every one of these is handcrafted by Curtis and Lori themselves.

They order Baltic Birch type A plywood from a Kansas City company. This wood is especially made for cabinet liners and has no knots or spaces. Curtis orders 1/8, 1/4, and 1/2 inch thicknesses. He can also make designs in oak, walnut, cedar, and even hedge.

The Swensons have attended as many as 40 craft shows in a single year. For a decade, they had a booth at craft shows in Branson during the spring and fall. “They would put me in the number one and number two booths, and I would demonstrate the wood-cutting all day long,” Curtis said. “I enjoyed that.”

These designs are remarkably detailed and intricate. “A lot of people believe this is done by a laser, but a laser burns the edges of the wood,” Curtis said. His items are entirely hand-cut using a narrow-bladed scroll saw.

Curtis does the cutting and Lori does the finish work: “She has the lighter touch,” Curtis said. Lori does the sanding, staining, and varnishing, plus the final assembly or attaching a hanger. She also categorizes and stores the items. “We’re a team,” Curtis said.

“We do lots of custom work,” Curtis said. Lori adds: “If you’re looking for something in particular, just ask.”

“We will donate items for schools or groups to sell as fundraisers,” Lori said. Curtis has donated military designs to veterans and given crosses to the elderly ladies at nursing homes. “If you can do something with it that cheers somebody up, that’s all that matters,” Curtis said. “We like to see people happy.”

That personal touch is why he prefers craft shows to selling over the Internet. “I like to visit with people,” Curtis said. The Swensons use more than 6,500 patterns for signs, toys, wildlife designs, and Christmas ornaments. “We do 20,000-plus ornaments in a year, easy,” Curtis said. C&L Craft items have gone from coast to coast, to Alaska, Hawaii, and as far away as Africa and Australia.

For more information, contact Curtis and Lori at 785-427-6353.

The design in the wood is intricate and beautiful – and entirely created by hand. We commend Curtis and Lori Swenson of C&L Crafts, Miltonvale, for making a difference with creative craftsmanship. They are truly accomplished artisans, hands-down.

## KEEP SMELLING THE ROSES

For everyone who receives vases of flowers on Valentine's Day, or anytime of the year, here are a couple of tips and tricks to get the most out of your flowers. Follow these helpful guidelines to extend the life of your flowers.

To help keep floral arrangements longer follow these easy three steps:

1. Keep the vase filled or the floral foam soaked with warm water. Add fresh, warm water daily. If the water in the vase turns cloudy, replace the water immediately. If possible, recut stems by removing one to two inches with a sharp knife. When cutting the stems, cut them under water, as this will allow the stem to draw in water instead of air.
2. Keep flowers in a cool spot (65 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit), keep away from direct sunlight, heating or cooling vents, near radiators, and directly under ceiling fans.
3. If a rose begins to wilt in your arrangement, remove it and recut the stem under water.

For loose stems that don't come in a vase follow these easy steps:

1. If you can't get your flowers in a flower food solution right away, keep flowers in a cool place.
2. Fill a clean, deep vase with water and add the flower food obtained from your florist. Be sure to follow the mixing directions on the package.
3. Remove leaves that will be below the waterline. Leaves that are in the water will promote bacterial growth.
4. Recut stems under water with a sharp knife and place the flowers in the vase solution you've prepared.
5. If a rose begins to wilt, remove it and recut the stem under water.

For those of you who receive planted tulip bulbs for Valentine's Day instead of roses, here is what you can do with them after they are finished blooming. Once the bulbs have stopped blooming, discontinue watering and allow the foliage to die back. Don't try and remove any foliage while it is still green, but once the foliage is dried and brown, remove it from the pot by gently tugging on the leaves until they break away from the bulb and come out of the ground. If the leaves don't pull away from the bulbs easily you haven't waited quite long enough for the foliage to die. Once you have removed all the leaves allow the soil in the pot to dry out. Gently brush off any excess dirt from the bulb. Do not wash the bulb, because this can add excess water to the bulb and cause it to rot. Store your bulbs in a cool dry place until the ground has warmed up in the spring.

Plant your tulips in an area that gets afternoon to full sun exposures. Plant tulips 6 to 8 inches deep and make sure you plant them pointy side up, otherwise the bulb will be upside down, and might not grow next spring. Once you have planted the bulbs your job is done until next spring, then all you have to do is enjoy the beautiful color. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

## PRUNING FRUIT TREES

Fruit trees can be pruned from now through March as long as the wood isn't frozen. Following some general recommendations on pruning mature fruit trees followed by more specific instructions on each species.

### General Recommendations-

- Take out broken, damaged or diseased branches.
- If two branches form a narrow angle, prune one out. Narrow angles are weak and tend to break during wind or ice storms.
- Take out all suckers. Suckers are branches that grow straight up. They may originate from the trunk or from major branches.
- If two branches cross and rub against one another, one should be taken out.
- Cut back or remove branches that are so low they interfere with harvest or pruning. If cutting back a branch, always cut back to another branch or bud, Don't leave a stub.
- Cut back branches to reduce the total size of the tree, if necessary.
- Thin branches on the interior of the tree.

Here are some specific pruning instructions for different types of fruit trees.:

Peach and nectarine trees require more pruning than any other fruit trees because they bear fruit on growth from the previous year. Not pruning results in fruit being borne further and further from the center of the tree allowing a heavy fruit crop to break major branches due to the weight of the fruit.

Apple trees tend to become overgrown if not pruned regularly. Wind storms and ice storms will then cause more damage. Also, trees that are not pruned often become biennial bearers. In other words, they bear a huge crop one year and none the next. Biennial bearing is caused by too many fruit on the tree. Though pruning helps, fruit often needs to be thinned as well. The goal is an apple about every 4 inches. Spacing can vary as long as the average is about every 4 inches.

For Cherry, Pear, and Plum trees a light pruning is usually all that is needed. Simply remove branches that are causing or will cause a problem. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).

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PERMIT NO. 3****Address Service Requested****RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT****“2023 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Feb. 7	6pm	Medicare Basics	Belleville- 4-H Building at NCK Fairgrounds, 901 O Street
Feb. 17 & 24	12:10-12:50 pm	Landscape Design Workshop	Concordia- Cloud County Co-op Conf. Rm, 1401 E 6th Street
Feb. 21	7pm	Agriculture Land Leasing Survey Meeting	Clifton- Clifton-Clyde Grade School, 120 Cloud Street
Mar. 1	5:30-6:30pm	Hypertension Program Kick-Off Meeting	Concordia- Large Meeting Room, Basement of Courthouse
Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23	5:30-7:30pm	Dining With Diabetes	Hanover- Kloppenberg Senior Center, 512 East North Street
Mar. 3	9:30am	Cattlemen's Day	K-State Campus- Weber Arena, 1424 Claflin Road
Mar. 7-Apr. 11	2-3:30 pm	Powerful Tools for Caregivers	6 Week Virtual Series
Mar. 8	5:30-6:30pm	Hypertension Education Workshop	Concordia- Large Meeting Room, Basement of Courthouse
Mar. 14	9am-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Clay Center- 4-H Building at the Fairgrounds, 205 South 12th St.
Mar. 15	9am-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Washington- FNB Basement, 101 C Street
Mar. 16	9am-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Concordia- Cloud County Co-op Conf. Rm, 1401 E 6th Street
Mar. 17	9am-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Belleville- 4-H Building at NCK Fairgrounds, 901 O Street
Mar.26-May 20		Walk Kansas	State Wide Program
Apr. 5	5:30-6:30pm	Hypertension Education Workshop	Concordia- Large Meeting Room, Basement of Courthouse
May 3	5:30-6:30pm	Hypertension Education Workshop	Concordia- Large Meeting Room, Basement of Courthouse
June 7	5:30-6:30pm	Hypertension Education Workshop	Concordia- Large Meeting Room, Basement of Courthouse