

# River Valley District

## K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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

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## KSRE COVID-19 PROTOCOLS EXTENDED TO JULY 4

In alignment with K-State Research and Extension protocol, District programs, meetings, events, and activities regardless of group size **cannot** meet face-to-face through **July 4, 2020**. This includes, but is not limited to, 4-H Club meetings, council meetings, and committee correspondence, project-based learning, shows, events, and activities directed toward 4-H youth development. This also includes all Extension educational programming. Our team is committed to effectively conducting business through technology-based platforms or to reschedule programs to future dates.

Until further notice our River Valley Offices are closed to the public and our staff is working remotely. We are still available by phone as our phone system has been reprogrammed to allow your call to be forwarded directly to our respective cell phones. Here is an agent listing.

Clay Center Office: Deanna Turner- Aging; Sonia Cooper- Nutrition, Health, & Safety

Concordia Office: Brett Melton- Livestock; Rebecca Zach- Crops

Belleville Office: Jordan Schuette- 4-H & Youth; Monica Thayer- Resource Management

Washington Office: Kelsey Hatesohl- Horticulture; Sonia Cooper- Nutrition, Health, & Safety

If you do not know who you need to talk to, select John Forshee at any office and I will put you in touch with the appropriate staff member. We will do all we can to meet your needs within protocols and best practices from K-State and our state and local health professionals.

If your local organization needs to meet via distance technology, but you do not have the means to conduct such a meeting, then please do not hesitate to contact me for help.

We appreciate your help with protecting the health, wellness and safety of our communities and families. Please follow us on Facebook or refer to our website at <https://www.rivervalley.k-state.edu/> for future and current updates. Find information and activities to help individuals, businesses, and families during this difficult time. Everyone please observe the best practices we know to date to prevent the spread of this virus. John Forshee, Director

## SUDDENLY IN CHARGE

The closing of schools and preschools sent parents scrambling to find help in taking care of their young children. In some cases, that means older children are helping look after younger kiddos.

K-State Research and Extension has launched a new program, “Suddenly in Charge,” aimed at helping older children learn the best way to handle this new role taking care of younger children, whether in their own homes or those of a neighbor or friend.

Over the coming weeks, helpful information will be available on the Suddenly in Charge website; <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/families/suddenly-in-charge/index.html>. These resources are for teens, tweens and anyone charged with caring for younger children, whether it’s a new situation or they’ve been doing it for years.

Resources are being created and added frequently regarding safety, food, media, disaster safety, and mental health and wellness, just to name a few. One of the first resources available is a babysitter information sheet with spaces for parent contact information, other emergency contacts, doctor information and more.

The River Valley District also has great resources available to our individuals and families. Extension Agents Monica Thayer and Sonia Cooper were conducting “Building Blocks of Babysitting” workshops just prior to the outbreaks, so if you have any specific questions, please reach out to contact them. Monica covers family resources and child development. She can be reached at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu). Sonia covers food safety, nutrition, and health. She can be reached at 785-632-5335 or [srcooper@ksu.edu](mailto:srcooper@ksu.edu).

## USING THE STIMULUS CHECK

Stimulus checks for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, have started being distributed to eligible individuals and families. Whether you already have the money or are still waiting, it is important to use this stimulus check to better your financial situation.

First, cover your basic needs. Pay your living expenses, including your rent or mortgage and utilities, as well as groceries. If you can cover those expenses and have money remaining, here are some suggestions to consider.

Increase your savings. It is recommended to have three to six months of expenses in a savings account. Our current situation is a prime example of why this is important. Many have faced reduced income due to the novel coronavirus so having that savings can cover living expenses in times of need.

Pay off debt. Consider paying down credit card debt and high interest consumer loans to lower the amount of debt owed. Carrying large amounts of debt can be detrimental and stressful, especially in situations like we are currently facing with reduced income.

Save for a future goal, such as retirement, a home repair, or family vacation. While some of these things may be placed on hold for the time being, savings for the future is important to be able to financially support events and activities and avoiding debt.

Obtain education or training. If this event has made you realize that you would like to be more marketable or possess other skills, check out your options for online learning in the content area you are wanting to pursue.

Help locally. If you are financially stable, this may be an opportunity for you to assist those less fortunate in your community. It is also an opportunity to support local businesses as they are facing tough economic times as well.

Whether it is a stimulus check or otherwise, be smart with your money. We are in unprecedented times financially so try to make the best financial situation for you and your family. If you have any questions on money management, contact Monica Thayer at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu).

## NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?

While there has been lots of talk around the reduction of income, there is another resource that individuals and families may be losing because of this novel coronavirus – health insurance. There may be a couple of options for individuals, families, and children.

The Marketplace, created by the Affordable Care Act, is a shopping and enrollment service for medical insurance. Individuals and families may qualify for lower monthly premiums or savings on out-of-pocket costs based on household income. Another option may be Medicaid (KanCare) or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Monica Thayer is knowledgeable about health insurance programs, including the Marketplace, KanCare, and CHIP. She can assist with completing applications and answer questions that may arise. If you have any questions or need assistance with health insurance, please contact Monica at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu).

## BONDING THRU BOARD GAMES

During this pandemic, most of us have been given the gift of time with our families. Typically, we are running between activities and events, so for many this time of slowdown might be uncharted territory. Use this time to create or strengthen the relationships within your family by Bonding Thru Board Games.

In his book titled "Family Treasures: Creating Strong Families", Dr. John DeFrain identifies six major qualities that strong, successful families exhibit around the world. These six qualities include:

- Enjoyable Time Together
- Appreciation and Affection
- Positive Communication
- Spiritual Well-Being
- Successful Stress and Crisis Management
- Commitment to Each Other

Playing board games together can help build and strengthen the qualities listed above, so the next time someone in your family complains about being bored, break out those board games and build some memories. Try to find games that focus more on strategy and less on conflict between players to encourage bonding.

For more information on Bonding Thru Board Games, check out <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3401.pdf> or contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu)

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER? SHOP YOUR CUPBOARD!

All of us may be looking into our cupboards and thinking about what we can make from food items we have on hand. I want to give you some simple tips to help you invent a casserole.

Think of MyPlate, and focus on the grain, vegetable, and protein food groups. First, choose 1 to 1 ½ cups of an ingredient from the grain food group, such as noodles, macaroni, penne, spiral, twist, bow tie, or spaghetti.

Next, select 1 ½ cups of an ingredient from the vegetable food group like frozen mixed vegetables, corn, green beans, peas, or broccoli. One can of vegetables can be used. Make sure to drain well before adding.

Then, choose a 1 ½ to 2 cups of a protein-based ingredient. Some examples are cooked ground beef, cooked cubed chicken or ham, cooked lean ground sausage, canned beans (i.e. red, kidney, black, pinto), cooked dry beans, canned chicken, tuna fish.

Also, be sure to have 1 cup of sauce or 1 can of cream soup (i.e. mushroom, celery, cheese, tomato), as well as 1/3 cup milk or water.

After you've gathered an ingredient from the grain, vegetable and protein food group, layer or mix all foods in a casserole dish. Add chopped celery or onion to taste. Add seasoning; basil, thyme, marjoram and pepper to taste.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes. Make sure to remember the food safety recommendations and test for an internal temperature of 165 degrees.

If desired a topping can be added after heating. Topping suggestions include 2 Tablespoons grated parmesan cheese, ¼ cup shredded cheese such as Swiss, cheddar, or Monterey jack, ¼ cup breadcrumbs, ¼ cup canned fried onion rings.

It does not make a difference if the measurements of the food ingredients are varied some. The idea to invent a casserole could be prepared in an electric skillet or on your stove top in a large fry pan. Be creative and use what you have on hand. If you have questions, contact Sonia Cooper at 785-632-5335.

## A GUIDE FOR STRESSFUL TIMES

Simple at-home activities can help you stay healthy during stressful times. Guidelines for healthy living that are important in normal times are especially valuable in this challenging time.

We are used to being constantly on the go taking little time for reflection and enjoying the present. Now is the time to think of yourself first and take care of yourself. Take care of your physical, mental, and emotional/spiritual health and wellness. It is important to maintain your own health and wellness in order that you can care for others.

Physical activity, eating healthfully, not smoking and getting enough sleep are a few factors that contribute to good health. Following is a list of common-sense steps that anyone can do to remain healthy.

**Physical:** Eat a healthful breakfast. Exercise at least 20 minutes daily. If you already exercise at least 20 minutes daily, challenge yourself to 30 or 40 minutes daily, make a calendar and vary your workout ideas thru out the week. Take a relaxing bath or shower. Abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

**Mental:** Write down your thoughts in a journal or notebook. Listen to relaxing music. Look at pictures of puppies. Read a book you enjoy. Reach out to someone for support or help. Keep your mind mentally sharp? complete a puzzle, the more pieces the better. Feeling extra sharp? Take on a Rubik's cube or Sudoku. Maybe you are a word puzzle person, challenge yourself to a crossword puzzle. Enjoy coloring - it's not just for kids.

**Emotional/Spiritual:** Tell a loved one what you appreciate about him/her. Send him or her a text, write and mail the message thru email or the postal service. Pray or meditate. Do random acts of kindness. Keep a journal and daily, write down three things you are grateful for.

Make healthy food choices, move more, stress less, take time for yourself so that you can be supportive to others. Need more ideas, contact Sonia Cooper at 785-632-5335.

## TAKE CHARGE! PLAN AHEAD! WASTE NOT!

Purchase only the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables you believe you can use promptly. Buy frozen and canned vegetables and fruits. Produce is packed at its peak of nutritional value. Purchase vegetables canned with no added salt and fruit canned in 100% natural juice. Frozen and canned produce is convenient. Follow these tips to get the most out of the produce you bring home. Plan your meals and what you will use and leave items there for the next consumer.

## OLIVE OIL SHOPPING TIPS

Good quality olive oil can fit any food budget. Your local grocery store, discount stores, or online sources offer reasonable prices. Keep in mind three tips as you shop for olive oil. First, look for a dark bottle or a can. Light breaks down oil and decreases shelf life. Buy a size that fits your usage needs. If you store olive oil on the countertop, use a dark bottle to minimize exposure to light. Second, choose extra virgin olive oil for the highest quality. Third, look for a best-by date. Once the container is open, air will impact shelf life. Use within 30-60 days. Purchase only the amount you think you will use in this amount of storage time once the bottle is open. Source: <https://medinsteadofmeds.com/tips-and-tools/olive-oil-buying-guide/>

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING THE COVID -19 LOCKDOWN

We have all been following a strict stay at home order limiting us to activities that are essential. However, that order doesn't include a mandate to become sedentary. Why is physical activity important?

Because it: promotes muscle strength, increases endurance and stamina, increases flexibility, helps reduce fatigue, helps produce good-quality sleep, helps balance and coordination, reduces anxiety and depression, helps regain physical function, helps prevent constipation, improves ability to participate in family and social activities, helps prevent bone loss resulting in fewer fractures, increases life expectancy, strengthens the cardiovascular system (heart, lungs), and helps reduce weight or helps maintain a healthy weight.

We can significantly improve quality of life with a few minutes of physical activity each day. Plan your physical activity program: The best way to enjoy and stick with your exercise program is to suit yourself.

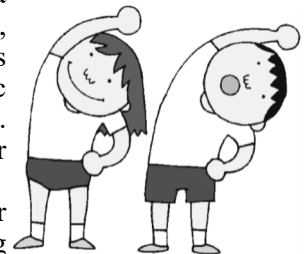
Choose what you like to do, find a place where you feel comfortable, and select an exercise time that fits your schedule. Exercising with music can add to your enjoyment. Have fun. Think of exercise as recreation rather than a chore.

Keep track. Make a calendar of your progress -walking farther, feeling better, sleeping better, having more energy.

Set specific measurable goals. Don't just say "I want to walk more." Set a goal such as, "I will walk for 30 minutes after lunch" for example.

Reward yourself for small successes by letting a friend know what you did and how long you exercised. Include warm up and cool down as part of your exercise. Gentle stretching and flexibility help reduce muscle soreness and stiffness that might come with vigorous exercise.

Move more. Sit less. Choose to put physical activity into your day, every day for fun and fitness. Check out K-State Research and Extension Publication "Let's Live a Little: Physical Activity for Fun and Fitness."





## SELL & SHOP SAFELY AT FARMERS' MARKET - COVID-19 CONCERNS

We are all looking forward to gardening. According to the calendar spring is here, we are just waiting for the final nudge to go ahead and plant.

Farmers' market vendors will also take steps in thinking about food safety amid COVID-19 concerns. I will share what Food Safety specialist Londa Nwadike says, "There is currently no evidence that the novel coronavirus, which causes COVID-19, can be transmitted through food or food packaging." said Londa. "That's good news for those hoping to sell their goods at local farmers' markets, it's good news for all of us."

In Kansas, Governor, Laura Kelly issued a statewide stay home order on March 28, limiting residents to those activities that are essential. Farmers' markets supply food and services that are considered essential functions and, thus, are exempt from the order.

Even so, growers are thinking of new ways to sell foods at farmers' markets while maintaining social distancing and other safety measures. The safety steps Londa is suggesting for farmers' markets and produce growers selling food include:

\*Place vendor tables further apart to allow more space for social distancing.

\*Do not serve unpackaged food as samples or for purchase. It is recommended that you (the vendor) either package the produce in a bag on a table in front of the customer or the vendor keeps their produce behind them and bags it for the customer.

\*Do not allow customers to touch produce before buying.

\*Provide hand washing and hand sanitizing stations.

\*Frequently clean and disinfect high touch surfaces.

\*Keep in contact with the local health department about other recommendations.

It is important to communicate with customers. Customers with any COVID-19 symptoms or if a person is exposed to someone with a known COVID-19 case is asked to please stay at home.

A roadside farm stand should follow similar safety measures. Farm stand operators should avoid taking back non-cleanable cartons or containers from customers (such as egg cartons). A roadside vendor should pre-portion packages before selling items to reduce customer contact with produce.

A customer should follow food safety guidelines when they arrive home. Always wash produce when you get home. That includes washing the whole produce, even if you don't eat the peel, wash such items as cantaloupe and potatoes with a produce brush. Londa indicates "all research shows that **clean, running** water is the best way for consumers to wash produce, produce washes have not been shown to be more effective than clean, running water."

Londa Nwadike, and Karen Blakeslee, K-State Research and Extension Food Safety specialists are maintaining a web page to communicate food safety concerns related to COVID-19. Check out [information that produce growers should always have in place](#) Produce Safety and COVID-19 Update: KS and MO Produce Growers - PowerPoint presentation from April 3,

2020. The Kansas Department of Agriculture has published: [guidance for farmers' markets regarding COVID-19](#). Information taken from a news release from Londa Nwadike, who has dual extension appointments with K-State and the University of Missouri and Karen Blakeslee Food Safety specialist with K-State Research and Extension. Call Sonia Cooper with questions at 785-632-5335.

## OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2020

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads our nation's observance of Older Americans Month. The 2020 theme is **Make Your Mark**. It encourages and celebrates the many contributions that older adults make to communities. Their experience, time and talents help neighbors, family members and friends every day. Individuals, organizations and communities are making their mark to improve the quality of life for Americans.

Right now with the COVID-19, volunteering outside the home may not be possible with physical distancing. You can make a couple phone calls each day to neighbors, family and people in your church and other organizations. If you have internet, e-mail people. There are many groups to join on-line according to your interests. Keep connected even though you may not be able to travel away from home.

Thank an older American for all they do to make the community a better place to live!

Older Kansans, age 65 and older, make up 15.9 % of the states population. In the River Valley Extension District, they comprise an average of 24.05% of the population. The lowest is Cloud County with 21.6%, Clay County has 23%, Washington County 23.9%, and Republic County 27.7%. In the United States 16% of Americans are age 65 & older .

## BE SAFE ON YOUR CELL PHONE

Leave your cell phone in your pocket when walking. Talking on or looking at your cell phone while walking could pose a risk for people of all ages. In a recent study, 13 percent of cell phone injuries were older adults who were walking. Some of the injuries included sprains, broken bones, concussions, cuts and bruises. Walking is great for exercise while you are physical distancing. Use caution when walking with a cell phone. Stop and move to the side to talk if your phone rings.



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## A NEW WAY TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE PART B

The Social Security office handles enrollment for Medicare Part A & B. Local Social Security offices were closed on March 17 to the public for in-person service due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some beneficiaries may have difficulties submitting their Medicare enrollment forms by mail.

To assist beneficiaries who have stopped working and are seeking immediate enrollment into Medicare Part B, Social Security has developed a method for beneficiaries to fax their enrollment forms.

Now Medicare beneficiaries can fax Medicare Part B form, [CMS-40B](#) and [CMS L564- Request for Employment Information](#), along with proof of employment, Group Health Plan (GHP), or Large Group Health Plan (LGHP) to **1-833-914-2016**, if unable to mail the forms directly to your local Social Security office. The mailing address and phone numbers for local offices are:

**Manhattan Social Security Office**  
1121 Hudson Avenue #A  
Manhattan, Kansas 66503  
Phone-877-840-5741 9am to 4pm

**Salina Social Security Office**  
1410 East Iron Suite 7  
Salina, Ks 67401  
Phone-877-405-3494 9am to 4pm

The forms are available on the Social Security web site on [ssa.gov](#) At the bottom of the home page, click on forms. On that page, type the letter & number of the forms listed above.

## DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP ON FACEBOOK

Do you care for a loved one in your home or in a facility/assisted living who has dementia? Plan to join the Dementia Caregiver Support Group- Kansas in Facebook. Right now with physical and social distancing no support groups can meet face to face. Hayley Young, Outreach and Dementia Care Specialist with the Alzheimer's Association, is the facilitator for this Caregiver Support Group. She has presented several programs in the River Valley District.

The Alzheimer's Association caregiver support group is a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to:

- Develop a support system.
- Exchange practical information on caregiving challenges and possible solutions.
- Talk through issues and ways of coping.
- Share feelings, needs and concerns.
- Learn about community resources.

**Link to Facebook Group:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/825920621236119/>

## SLEEP WELL

Do you sleep like a log or do you have trouble sleeping? Sleep has a major impact on your overall health and quality of life, including the way you look, feel, and perform on a daily basis. Your body needs sleep to repair muscles, consolidate memories and regulate hormones and appetite.

Sufficient sleep positively affects:

- Learning & memory. Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation.
- Metabolism and weight. Adequate sleep helps with weight control.
- Safety. A good night's sleep reduces accidents.
- Mood. Sufficient sleep reduces irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate, and moodiness.
- Cardiovascular health. Getting enough sleep improves heart health.
- Disease. Enough sleep helps fight infectious diseases.

A good night's sleep is important for quality of life. Try one or more of these suggestions to get the sleep your body needs:

1. Use your bed for sleep. Avoid reading, conversation or television watching in bed.
2. Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation before you go to sleep.
3. Restrict time in bed if time spent in bed is lying awake. Once awake in the morning get up!
4. Exercise in the afternoon or early evening not within a few hours of bedtime.
5. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol at least 3 to 4 hours before going to bed.
6. Try to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning.
7. Keep in mind that daytime naps affect nighttime sleep.
8. If you cannot fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed and participate in a quiet, relaxing activity. Go back to bed when you are sleepy.
9. Eat a balanced diet and try to avoid heavy meals before bedtime. If you have trouble sleeping after a big meal, you might want to eat a lighter evening meal.
10. Keep a steady room temperature in your bedroom (not too warm).
11. If you have chronic sleeping problems you might want to keep a sleep journal to keep track of activities, food and drink, emotional circumstances or other factors that might influence how well you sleep. Therapy might be the answer to help modify your attitudes and beliefs that contribute to poor sleep.
12. Make the bedroom a safe place, with locks on the door, a telephone and good lighting within reach of the bed.
13. If you snore, avoid sleeping on your back and try elevating your head.
14. Wake up to the sun or use bright lights in the morning to reset the body's biological clock.

Happy sleeping! Keys to Embracing Aging Sleep MF3266

## TIPS FOR EMBRACING AGING

- Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference. - Winston Churchill
- Start your day on a positive note.
- Focus on the good.
- Embrace life's challenges
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Choose to be happy.
- Be gracious, helpful, and kind.
- Have fun.
- Laugh at yourself. It will perk you up.
- Watch a funny movie or YouTube Video.
- Listen to a fun song from your childhood.
- Reminisce with an old friend by phone, e-mail or other social media. It will make you laugh.
- Spend time with children or grandchildren.
- Try a hobby or a fun task you have been putting off.
- Write about a stressful situation with a funny angle.
- Start a "Blessing Journal". Write down everything you are thankful for.
- Go outside and walk. Look at the birds and flowers.
- Listen to music and dance.



## DEANNA TURNER RETIRES FROM RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT

It has been a pleasure working with the people in the River Valley Extension District counties of Clay, Cloud, Republic and Washington. I have worked for K-State Research and Extension almost 46 years. I will be retiring May 30 but will always bleed purple.

It has been fun working with 4-Hers and later their children. I have enjoyed working with adults in the many programs from microwave cooking, to kitchen planning, to nutrition programs at the Senior Centers, to Medicare counseling as a SHICK Counselor. The District has provided me an opportunity to work with many people in the area. I will cherish the friendships made. The work has been very rewarding.



Thank you to the Office Professionals who helped me organize and make the Medicare Part D Open Enrollment a success in the District counties. Also a big thanks to the volunteer SHICK Counselors who have spent hours sharing their time and talent counseling Medicare beneficiaries. Appreciation is a small word for all you did. There was no way I could counsel that many people.

Thanks to the many other Extension volunteers in the Homemaker Units, Aging Program Development Committee, 4-H Volunteers, and the Fair Boards. Extension and Fair events would not happen without you sharing your time and talent to improve the quality of life for all people.

Thanks to all the River Valley District staff. You have been a joy to work with. I will miss the work, the people and my co-workers but will volunteer as a SHICK Counselor during Medicare Part D Fall Enrollment in the Clay Center office.

It is time for another chapter in my life, spending more time with family and friends and volunteering in my church and other activities. Thank you for your support throughout the years.

Deanna Turner

## BLACKSPOT OF ROSES

A common disease of roses is blackspot, a fungus disease that can cause defoliation of susceptible plants. When trying to decide if you have blackspot look for dark, circular lesions with feathery edges on the top surface of the leaves and raised purple spots on young canes. Infected leaves will often yellow between spots and eventually drop.

The infection usually starts on the lower leaves and works its way up the plant. Blackspot is most severe under conditions of high relative humidity (>85%), warm temperatures (75 to 85°F) and six or more hours of leaf wetness. Newly expanding leaves are most vulnerable to infection. The fungus can survive on fallen leaves or canes and is spread primarily by splashing water.

Cultural practices are the first line of defense against blackspot. Here are a couple ways to reduce the chance of spreading blackspot.

1. Don't plant susceptible roses unless you are willing to use fungicide sprays. There are lists available of blackspot resistant varieties.
2. Keep irrigation water off the foliage. Drip irrigation works well with roses.
3. Plant roses in sunny areas with good air movement to limit the amount of time the foliage is wet.
4. Remove diseased leaves that have fallen and prune out infected rose canes to minimize inoculum.

If needed, protect foliage with a regular spray program (10 to 14 day schedule) of effective fungicides. Recommended fungicides include tebuconazole (Bayer Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs), myclobutanil (Immunox, Immunox Plus), triticonazole (Ortho Rose & Flower Disease Control) and Chlorothalonil (Broad Spectrum Fungicide, Garden Disease Control, plus others.) Kelsey Hatesohl

## NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## CONTROLLING YELLOW NUTSEDGE IN LAWNS

Yellow nutsedge is a relatively common problem in lawns, especially in wet years or in lawns with irrigation. Although it looks much like a grass, it is a sedge. Unlike grasses, sedges have triangular stems. The leaves are three-ranked instead of two-ranked, which means the leaves come off the stem in three different directions. Yellow nutsedge is pale green to yellow and grows rapidly in the spring and early summer. Because of this rapid shoot growth, it sticks up above the rest of the lawn only a few days after mowing. This weed is a good indicator of poor drainage, but it can be introduced into well-drained sites through contaminated topsoil or nursery stock. As with many weeds, nutsedge is less competitive in a dense, healthy lawn.

Nutsedge is difficult to control culturally because it produces numerous tubers that give rise to new plants. Pulling nutsedge will increase the number of plants growing in your yard because the dormant tubers are activated. However, it is possible to control nutsedge by pulling, but you must be persistent. Eventually the nutsedge will die out.

If you were going to treat with an herbicide, it would be better to leave the nutsedge plants undisturbed so the herbicide can be maximally translocated to the roots, rhizomes, and tubers. Several herbicides are available for nutsedge control. Sedge Hammer, which used to be called Manage, is the most effective and safe for most turfgrasses. It is also the most expensive, but if an infestation is not too severe, one application should take care of the problem. The Sedge Hammer label says to apply it after nutsedge has reached the three-to-eight-leaf stage. Waiting until this growth stage apparently results in improved translocation of the active ingredient to the underground tubers and rhizomes. However, research has shown that the application should be down by June 21. If the initial spray is after June 21, mature daughter tubers may be stimulated to grow, so not all of the nutsedge would be killed with one spraying. Kelsey Hatesohl

## RABBITS IN THE GARDEN

When you think problems in a garden the first thing most people think of is insects, but one of the biggest problems is rabbits. Rabbits in gardens are a perennial problem because of the wide variety of plants they can feed on. This time of year, they gravitate to young vegetable and flowers. There are some vegetables that are rarely bothered including potatoes, tomatoes, corn, squash, cucumbers, and some peppers. The question is how do you protect plants that are more susceptible? Fencing provides a quick and effective control method. The fence does not need to be tall; 2 feet is sufficient for cottontail rabbits. The mesh must be sufficiently fine (1 inch or less) so young rabbits will not be able to go crawl through it. When building your fence be sure to secure the fence into the ground so the rabbits can't push the fence up and crawl under. Fence is one way to keep rabbits out of your garden.

Often fencing is not an acceptable choice because it affects the attractiveness of the garden.

A couple other ways to control rabbits including repellents or trapping. Repellents are often suggested for control but often do not last long and require frequent reapplication. Also, many are poisonous and cannot be used on plants or plant parts destined for human consumption. Live traps can be used to collect and move the rabbits to a rural area several miles away from where they were trapped. A number of baits can be used to entice the rabbit to enter the trap including a tightly rolled cabbage leaf held together with a toothpick. However, rabbits often avoid baits if other attractive food is available. Repellents and traps work but are not 100% effective.

Another possibility to help control rabbits is to use a motion-activated sprinkler. These are attached to a garden hose and release a short burst of water when motion is detected. Contech, Orbit, and Havahart each have a motion-activated sprinkler and each is advertised as protecting up to at least 1,000 square feet. Just remember to shut it off before you go to work in your garden or you might get a little wet!

## DICK & DENISE SWENSON MF/MFH CLASS OF 2019

Six couples were honored as the 2019 class of Kansas Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers at a banquet held March 13 in Manhattan.

The program, now in its 93rd year, recognizes Kansas farm families for their leadership in agriculture, environmental stewardship and service to their communities. The award is co-sponsored by K-State Research and Extension and Kansas Farmer magazine.

Nominated by the River Valley Extension District, Dick and Denise Swenson join the class of 2019 and a long list of MF/MFH members from the River Valley District.

Richard and Denise Swenson operate a combined crop operation and Hereford herd north



of Concordia. They also have recently purchased two meat processing facilities and created Swenson Meat Processing.

The couple say that rotating crops and livestock has improved their land's overall health and created multiple marketing avenues. In addition to selling commodity crops, their beef is sold through stores in Concordia and Salina. They market grass-finished and grain-finished beef to meet their customer's varying preferences.

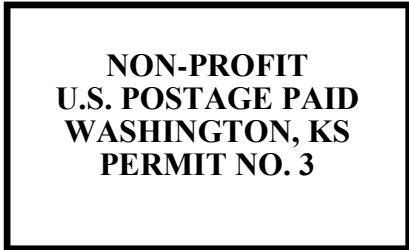
Richard is a long-time member of the American Hereford Association, Kansas Hereford Association and Kansas Farm Bureau. He tested and championed his stock by participating in regional bull tests and exhibiting at the Kansas State Fair.

Denise is a program manager for the Cloud County 4-H program. She has been closely involved with the Kansas Hereford Women's group and Concordia Lutheran Church. She is also a member of the Concordia Public Schools Council, and volunteers her time judging 4-H events.

They have also hosted the World Hereford Tour with visitors from 11 countries. Among their honors, they have won awards for Kansas Hereford Breeder of the Year, and Golden Breeder Award (American Hereford Association); and have been recognized as a Farm Bureau Century Farm.

They have three sons: Ryan, Kevin and Benjamin.

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Washington, KS 66968-1928



**Address Service Requested**

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT

“2020 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”

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DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
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**River Valley District:** face-to-face contacts,  
programs and meetings are postponed/cancelled through July 4;  
offices are closed to public access at this time.

Please contact us by phone with questions or to make special arrangements.

Check us out on the Web at: [www.rivervalley.ksu.edu](http://www.rivervalley.ksu.edu)

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**Check our webpage for COVID-19 Information and Resources for:**

- \*Financial Management
- \*Parenting Resources
- \*Work from Home
- \*Small Business
- \*Youth Activities
- \*Preventative Measures