



River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

rivervalley.ksu.edu

March 2020 **Volume 15 #3**

BELLEVILLE OFFICE

1815 M Street
Belleville, KS
66935-2242
Phone: (785) 527-5084
rp@listserv.ksu.edu

CLAY CENTER OFFICE

322 Grant Avenue
Clay Center, KS
67432-2804
Phone (785) 632-5335
cy@listserv.ksu.edu

CONCORDIA OFFICE

811 Washington—Suite E
Concordia, KS
66901-3415
Phone: (785) 243-8185
cd@listserv.ksu.edu

WASHINGTON OFFICE

214 C Street—Courthouse
Washington, KS
66968-1928
Phone: (785) 325-2121
ws@listserv.ksu.edu

Check us out on the Web at:
www.rivervalley.ksu.edu
or on Facebook @ River Valley
Extension District

K-STATE
Research and Extension

K-State Research and Extension is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.

ksre.k-state.edu

JOIN WALK KANSAS 2020

Get your walking shoes ready. It's time for Walk Kansas March 15-May 9. Walk Kansas will challenge you to get up and get moving. Recruit a team of up to six people including yourself. Your team might be family members, coworkers, friends, neighbors, or part of a faith-based community. One person needs to serve as a captain. Teams log minutes of activity online or on paper for 8 weeks. A variety of activities count toward Walk Kansas goals. Anything you do for 10 consecutive minutes or more, at a moderate or vigorous intensity, can count, such as stretching and aerobic exercise. Each team decides on one of three challenges they want to work toward during the eight weeks. Here are the challenge options:

Challenge 1: Discover the 8 Wonders of Kansas! This journey requires each person to get 2-1/2 hours of moderate activity per week.

Challenge 2: Go Cross Country from Troy (northeast Kansas) to Elkhart (southwest Kansas), which requires 4 hours of activity per person/week.

Challenge 3: Little Balkans to Nicodemus – a trail that takes you through southeast Kansas and then up to Nicodemus with interesting stops along the way. This requires 6 hours of activity per person/week.

Each person logs minutes of moderate/vigorous activity and these are converted to Walk Kansas miles (15 minutes = 1 mile) on the website. Physical Activity – walking in particular – is part of the Walk Kansas initiative. This year the newsletters that you receive as a participant in Walk Kansas will introduce you to the Mediterranean eating style, share ways you can lower personal stress, and help you focus on your sense of purpose. Participants become more active with family and friends and the social connections provide support for healthy living. The benefits of physical activity include a boost of your mood, help sharpen your focus, reduce your stress and improve your sleep.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women. Regular exercise strengthens your heart muscle, helps the lungs function, and reduces the risk for coronary heart disease. Overtime, physical activity can help you live a longer, healthier life. Take the first step with purpose for your health and family! Get a little more active each day!

There is a minimal cost of \$10.00 for registration. An optional t-shirt or long sleeve shirt is an additional cost. Paper registration in the River Valley Extension District for Walk Kansas will begin March 1 and will conclude March 11th. On-line registration for Walk Kansas will begin March 1 also and close March 13th.

During Walk Kansas, the River Valley Extension District will be encouraging our staff to take morning and afternoon breaks to walk or do stretching exercises. If you see a note on our door and our office is closed for a short exercise break, understand that we are participating in our WALK break. Contact your local River Valley District Extension Office in Belleville 785-527-5084, Clay Center 785-632-5335, Concordia 785-243-8185, or Washington 785-325-2121 for more information about Walk Kansas. Get ready, get set, and register for Walk Kansas.



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

I encourage everyone to focus on the importance of making informed food choices, developing sound eating and physical activity habits. I want to share with you four key messages. Along with the key messages I included ideas that will help you to make informed decisions that will benefit your health and wellness.

- 1) Eat a variety of nutritious foods every day. Include healthful foods from all food groups. Keep hydrated healthfully. Learn how to read Nutrition Facts Labels. Practice portion control. Take time to enjoy the food you eat.
- 2) Plan your meals each week. Use a grocery list to shop for healthful foods. Be menu savvy when dining out. Choose healthful recipes to make during the week. Plan healthful eating while traveling.
- 3) Learn skills to create tasty meals. Keep healthful ingredients on hand. Practice proper home food safety. Share meals together as a family when possible. Reduce food waste. Try new flavors and foods.
- 4) Thrive thru gathering information about food and nutrition. See a registered dietitian nutritionist. Remember good nutrition doesn't have to be restrictive or overwhelming. Small goals and changes can have a cumulative healthful effect, and every little bit (or bite) of nutrition is a step in the right direction. Learn more at <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month> Sonia Cooper,-Nutrition, Food, & Safety Agent



STAY STRONG STAY HEALTHY CLASS TO BE HELD IN WAKEFIELD

Improve your health and quality of life plus have fun. Sign up for this strength building program designed for older men and women age 60 and over regardless how active or inactive they have been. Participants will meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for 8 weeks from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., March 24-May 14 at the handicapped accessible Senior Citizen Building, 705 Elm Street in Wakefield.

Our bodies are made to move. Physical inactivity can place our health at risk for many chronic diseases. Here's the good news! The Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program is built on simple, strength-building exercises that will improve your balance, health, and state of mind. The classes build muscle strength which, in turn, improves balance, reduces fractures, decreases arthritis pain, heart disease and depression. Other benefits may include better stress management and improved sleep quality. There is no strenuous weight lifting.

Activities in the classes include warm-up exercises, strengthening exercises with and without weights, and a cool-down period. There is a \$20 cost to participate. Inquire about a scholarship, if you have limited income. Weights will be furnished. Participants only need to bring a heavy bath towel and a bottle of water. No special clothes or equipment are needed.

The classes will be led by District Agents, Sonia Cooper and Deanna Turner. Stop by the Extension Office, 322 Grant Avenue in Clay Center or call 785-632-5335 to pre-register and to pick-up a packet. In addition, the Wakefield City Hall, 609 Grove, has member packets available to pick up. Some of the forms need to be returned before the first class on March 24th. For more information, please contact Sonia Cooper at srcooper@ksu.edu or Deanna Turner at dturner@ksu.edu or call 785-632-5335. Sign up today!

HEALTHY LIVING FOR YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

Discover ways to make lifestyle choices that may help you keep your brain and body healthy as you age. Plan to attend the upcoming program, "Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body" on Tuesday, March 3, 10 a.m. at the Belleville Public Library, 1327 19th Street. Cannot make it to Belleville? Hayley will present the program at 2 p.m. that day at the Concordia Courthouse Basement Meeting Room, 811 Washington Street. Enter on the west side of the Courthouse and take the elevator to the basement floor.

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body will provide information about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity and social engagement. Hands-on tools will help you use these recommendations for healthy aging presented by Hayley Young, Outreach Specialist for the Alzheimer's Association.

Please pre-register for the Belleville meeting by calling the K-State Research & Extension District Office at 785-527-5084. Call the Concordia Extension Office at 785-243-8185 to pre-register for the Concordia meeting. K-State Research & Extension-River Valley District is sponsoring this informative program. For more information, contact Deanna Turner, District Extension Agent, at 785-632-5335. Bring your friends and relatives to this free program

STOCK YOUR PANTRY THE 'MED' WAY

The Mediterranean way of eating emphasizes a lot of fruits and vegetables. There are a variety of options to achieve this goal. Fresh fruit and vegetable choices change throughout the year based on growing season. Many of these same foods are available in frozen, canned or dried forms year around. Look for plain frozen fruits and vegetables without added flavors or sauces. Choose canned products without added salt for vegetables or canned in their own juice for fruit. Dried fruits can be eaten as is or can be rehydrated. Fresh or frozen fish options are few in some locations, but canned tuna or salmon, packed in water or olive oil, are good choices.

Don't have fresh herbs? There are many dried herbs available to use instead. A general rule for substitution is :

¼ teaspoon dried ground =
1 teaspoon dried whole/
crumbled = 1 tablespoon
fresh chopped.

If certain foods are not available in your local grocery store, ask the manager to order the item. You may not be the only person looking for it and it could become a regular item on the shelf. Check the following site to learn more about eating the Mediterranean way. <https://medinsteadofmeds.com/tips-and-tools/med-way-kitchen-staples/>



ALZHEIMER'S COMMUNITY FORUM

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. Having a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or memory loss can be a challenge to seek the help needed. Join the Alzheimer's Association and other community partners at this town hall style meeting to learn about resources, share your experiences, engage in the cause and ask questions about the disease. The Forum may discover needs from the audience for future programs and activities.

Plan to Attend:

Thursday, March 5th
6-7:30 p.m.

Clay Center Community High School
1630 9th St.

Clay Center, Ks

Light Refreshments & Snacks Provided

Please pre-register by calling 1-800-272-3900.

Everyone is Invited!

DOWNSIZING

Make your life easier by decluttering. Clutter has negative effects on your mental and physical health, too. We will discuss some different methods of downsizing to enjoy the space you are living in without the clutter.

March 12

10am Clay Center, District Office Meeting Rm.,
322 Grant Avenue

2pm Washington, Good Shepherd Lutheran
Church, 200 West 4th Street

March 13

10am Belleville, Public Library, 1327 19th Street

2pm Concordia, Courthouse Meeting Room
811 Washington Street

Please pre-register at your local K-State Research & Extension River Valley District Office by calling: Clay Center at 785-632-2121; Belleville Office at 785-527-5084; Concordia Office at 785-243-8185; Washington Office at 785-325-2121. For more information call Deanna Turner at 785-632-5335. Everyone is invited to this free program.

MAKING CHOICES DISCUSS. DECIDE. DOCUMENT.

We do a really good job of planning for our babies, weddings and even retirement. But we seldom plan for our end-of-life care.

It is important to think about and document care treatment preferences before a crisis. Begin with thinking about your values and what matters most to you. Who would be able to help make decisions on your behalf if you were unable to speak for yourself?

Share your wishes for end-of-life with your family and primary physician. What does quality of life look like for you, what do you want or not want?

According to surveys Americans would actually be relieved if their loved ones initiated the conversation. For more information contact Meadowlark Hospice at 785-632-2225 or visit www.theconversationproject.org.

Advance Directive forms are available at <http://www.ccmcks.org/meadowlarkhospice/resources.php>

River Valley Extension District has been a partner with Meadowlark Hospice in the Alzheimer's program. Meadowlark Hospice serves all the counties in the District- Clay, Cloud, Republic and Washington County plus Marshall and western Riley County.



APPLY FOR EXTRA HELP WITH YOUR MEDICARE PART D EXPENSES

Are you eligible to save on your Medicare Part D premiums, co-payments, and deductibles? The 2020 qualification guidelines were released in January. The gross monthly income is your monthly income before your Medicare Part B premium and/or Medicare Part D premium is deducted from your Social Security check. If your income is less than or the same as monthly income guidelines and resources in checking and savings, you may be eligible.

They do not count as resources, the home you own and one vehicle. Unfortunately, if you own farm land or other property you would not qualify in most situations.

One Person Household

Gross Monthly Income for an Individual- \$1,595 or less

Resources in Checking or Savings- \$14,610 or less

Two Person Married Household

Gross Monthly Income for Married Couple- \$2,155 or less

Resources in Checking or Savings- \$29,160 or less

An individual or married couple has to meet both the gross monthly income guidelines and the resource qualifications to be eligible for Extra Help.

Contact Deanna Turner, SHICK Counselor, if you qualify and you can apply for Extra Help. Call her at 785-632-5335.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF BABYSITTING

Whether it's just for one evening or the entire summer, being a babysitter is a great opportunity, but caring for a child is also a very big responsibility. Attend "Building Blocks of Babysitting" so you can build 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, healthy snacks and meals, and more!

Monica Thayer and Sonia Cooper, Extension Agents for the River Valley District, will offer Building Blocks of Babysitting in four locations to youth that are in 5th – 8th grade.

- Monday, March 9th – FNB Bank – Washington – 9am-3pm. (Enter through WEST door, the alley side of building.)
- Thursday, March 12th – Resource Center – Concordia – 9am-3pm
- Friday, March 13th – 4-H Building – Belleville – 9am-3pm
- Wednesday, March 18th – 4-H Conference Center – Clay Center – 9am-3pm

Cost to attend is \$10 per youth. Payment can be made on the day of the event. Make checks payable to River Valley Extension District.

RSVP online at <http://bit.ly/RVDbabysitting> by Wednesday, March 4th.

If you have any questions, please contact Monica at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

TAX REFUND-TO BE OR NOT TO BE- THAT IS THE QUESTION

I'm pretty sure William Shakespeare wasn't referencing taxes when penning this famous line from Hamlet, but it is a good question, right? Getting a large tax refund may feel like a bonus but should you get a tax refund?

Are you living paycheck to paycheck, struggling to make ends meet each month, or paying late fees or interest because money was so tight? If you are in any of these situations and getting a large tax refund, you may want to consider having less tax withheld from your paychecks.

By having less tax withheld, you won't get that large refund, but your take-home pay will increase. You may be better able to utilize that money to reduce your financial stress over the course of the year by paying bills on time and avoiding late fees, not having interest charges, or even start or increase your savings.

Before you change any tax withholdings, take into consideration of any changes in your tax situation. Will your filing status (married, single, married filing separate), income, and dependents be about the same as the last tax year? Will you be eligible for the same deductions and credits? Ask a tax adviser if you are not sure.

If you do get that big tax refund, make sure you have a plan on how to spend it. Whether paying off debts, purchasing something, going on vacation, or saving, having a goal and action plan is beneficial to utilizing that tax refund to your advantage! Contact Monica Thayer at 785-527-5084.

'SMART' FINANCIAL GOALS

This article about SMART financial goals isn't going to tell you exactly how much to save, what bill to pay off, or the action plan to do any of it. Instead, this will lay the foundation for you to create your own SMART financial goals to fit your income and ability.

Several studies have shown that people with goals and an action plan are more likely to obtain those goals, including financial aspirations, no matter their income level. Want to increase your likelihood of reaching that financial goal even more? Share it with someone, possibly a friend or family member, and check in regularly.

SMART is an acronym to use when creating your financial goals: S – Specific, M – Measurable, A – Action Plan, R – Realistic, T – Time Frame.

- *Specific* – *What will you achieve?* Not just that you would like to be debt-free, but which debt you will start to pay off first.
- *Measurable* – *How will you know if the goal has been reached?* What will you measure your success against? How much will you save or pay off?
- *Action Plan* – *Which actions will you take to achieve the goals?* What steps are necessary to fulfill that goal?
- *Realistic* – *Is this achievable?* You don't want to set a goal that you can't achieve. A small financial victory can give you confidence to continue on your financial wellness journey.
- *Time Frame* – *By when?* Set a date so you can push to meet that deadline.

Without having all of these qualities, that goal is more of a dream. "I want to pay off all my debt." "I want to help pay for my child's college." "I would like to live comfortably when I retire." All great dreams but how will you get it all done? This is where the SMART goals are beneficial.

One example of a SMART financial goal would be: "By the time my child is 18, I will have \$10,000 to pay part of her college tuition by starting a 529 education fund and putting aside \$1,500 annually."

Of course, coming up with the action plan is going to take some time and thought.

Also, goals change. So do

the action plans. Life happens. Expenses occur, income fluctuates. If you have a hiccup on a goal, don't give up. Address the bump in the road and go forward.

You can get a template to start creating SMART financial goals online at https://www.rivervalley.k-state.edu/family_resources/FinancialManagement.html. If you have any questions regarding financial matters or setting SMART financial goals, contact Monica at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu



BONDING THRU BOARD GAMES

Unplug and engage. Families live in a busy world in which time together is often lost in the buzz of activity. Family bonding time is important to maintain close relationships among family members. Bonding thru Board Games is a tool to strengthen family relationships.

Attend “Bonding thru Board Games” with your family to increase family time, belonging, and interacting in a fun way! Try new games and get inspired to have a game night of your own. There is no cost to attend.



Thursday, April 16th **Resource Center, 107 W. 7th,
Concordia (Time TBD)**

Contact Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu with any questions!

FREE MEDICATION DISPOSAL BAGS AVAILABLE

Over 115 Americans die daily from opioid overdose. With the opioid epidemic growing, properly disposing of unused and expired medications is important.

All four offices in the River Valley Extension District have medication disposal bags available for free to the public. The medication disposal bags can hold 15 pills, 2 ounce of liquid, or 2 patches. The disposal is as easy as 1 – 2 – 3.

1. Open the pouch and place unused medication inside.
2. Fill the pouch halfway with warm water and wait 30 seconds.
3. Seal the pouch tightly, gently shake, and dispose of the pouch in the trash.

Help stop the opioid epidemic and dispose of your unused and expired medications today. Stop by a River Valley Extension District office to start cleaning out your medicine cabinet.

For more information on the opioid epidemic and medication disposal bags, please visit our website at <https://www.rivervalley.k-state.edu/foods-health-nutrition/health.html> or call your local River Valley Extension District Office.

National Ag Day is March 24

Recognize the abundance provided by American agriculture.

**Agriculture is not just about farming and ranching.
Some aspect of agriculture touches us every day.**

**When you have the opportunity,
“Thank a Farmer”.**

**Thanks to our Farmers...
Food Brings Everyone to the Table.**

LANGVARDT TO RETIRE AS 4-H PROGRAM MANAGER

After 37 years with Clay County Extension and the River Valley Extension District, Karen Langvardt has announced her retirement effective April 3, 2020.

Karen began her career with K-State Research and Extension as a part-time secretary in February 1983. She transitioned into a part-time 4-H Program Assistant with the beginning of the River Valley District in July of 2005 and was promoted to full-time 4-H Program Manager in January of 2010. Her last full day in the office was February 10, 2020.

The River Valley District invites you to join us for a celebration as we recognize Karen for her years of dedicated service and her many accomplishments. There will be a come-and-go reception on Monday, March 2, 2020 from 3:00 pm-6:00 pm in the Family Life Center of the Clay Center United Methodist Church.

Congratulatory cards and letters may be addressed to: Karen Langvardt, River Valley Extension District, 322 Grant Avenue, Clay Center, KS

SWENSON TO RETIRE AS 4-H PROGRAM MANAGER

Denise Swenson has announced her retirement effective April 3, 2020, after 15 years with Cloud County Extension and the River Valley Extension District.

Denise began her career with K-State Research and Extension as a part-time 4-H Assistant in May of 2005 with Cloud County Extension. She transitioned into a part-time 4-H Program Assistant with the beginning of the River Valley District in July of 2005 and was promoted to full-time 4-H Program Manager in January of 2010.

There will be a come-and-go reception on Monday, March 30, 2020 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall of the Zion Lutheran Church, 117 W. 8th Street, Concordia, KS. The River Valley District invites you to join us for this celebration as we recognize Denise for her years of dedicated service and her many accomplishments.

Congratulatory cards and letters may be addressed to: Denise Swenson, River Valley Extension District, 811 Washington Street, Suite E, Concordia, KS 66901.

KANSAS PRIDE TURNS 50

This year marks the 50th Year of the Kansas PRIDE Program! Established in 1970, the Kansas Programming Resources with Initiative for Development Effectiveness (or the Kansas PRIDE Program) was created by Governor Docking to help boost and promote community improvement efforts across the state of Kansas. K-State Cooperative Extension (now K-State Research and Extension) and the Kansas Department of Economic Development (now the Kansas Department of Commerce) were tasked to co-administer the program. Much has changed over the years as the Kansas PRIDE, Inc. Board of Directors was created as a steering committee for the program, and in 2017 the Kansas Masons joined the partnership to support the efforts of communities. See <https://kansasprideprogram.k-state.edu> for more information or for your community to enroll in Kansas PRIDE.

HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS TRAINING 2020

National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program
April 11th at 9:00am – PrairieLand Partners –
1441 Union Rd., Concordia

April 18th at 9:00am – Bruna’s – Washington Fairgrounds
South Exhibit Building

River Valley Extension District will be conducting the Hazardous Occupations Training/ tractor and machinery safety training. The Training provides trainees with knowledge of tractor, machinery, and other farm hazards to reduce the farm accident rate. It also provides sufficient information to pass a written examination and an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to pass a safe tractor driving examination. Participants must be 14 or older to receive certification, though 12 and 13 year olds may take the course for education purposes only.

Federal Law requires youth to participate in a Hazardous Occupations Training and become certified in order to work for hire for anyone other than their parents.

Event Details:

There is a \$5 fee, due at the class. This will cover lunch/snacks and your book.

Half of the day will go over a written test, and the second half of the day will cover the driving portion.

Registration deadline is April 3rd.

Register at any River Valley District Extension Office.

2018 FARM BILL CONSULTATIONS

The deadline for producers to make their ARC-PLC decision and complete their sign-up with a Farm Service Agency appointment is fast approaching.

To help prepare producers for this decision, Brett Melton, John Forshee, and Rebecca Zach will be available for consultations on a scheduled basis. Call John Forshee at 785-632-5335 to set an appointment in the Clay Center office. Call Rebecca Zach at 785-243-8185 to set an appointment for the Washington Office. Call Brett or Rebecca at 785-243-8185 to set an appointment in the Belleville or Concordia Office.

Producers need to stop by the FSA Office and get a copy of their 156 Farm Records prior to the appointment. That is all that is needed for the ARC-PLC decision. If a producers also wishes to look at whether they want to update yields then a five-year (2013-2018) yield history will be needed from crop insurance records.

The District has chosen to use the Illinois Decision Tool for the producer consultations. It offers a nice mix of simplicity, accuracy, and ability to look at “what-if” scenarios. Local producers are free to use the tool as well. It can be found at:

<https://farmdoc.illinois.edu/fast-tools/arc-co-plc-model>

County Average Yields and Price Forecast support data is on the River Valley District Website.

FSA Decision Calendar

2019/20 PLC vs ARC-Co Deadline: Monday, March 16

2020 Yield Update Deadline: September 30, 2020

CUTTING BACK ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

March is a good time to remove dead foliage from ornamental grasses. Ornamental grasses will green up earlier if the old foliage is removed. They are also more attractive without a mixture of dead and live leaves. A number of tools can be used to cut back the previous years’ growth. You could use hand clippers, weed whips (if the foliage is of a small enough diameter), weed whips with a circular blade attachment, or even a chain saw. If you are going to use a chain saw, you will want to use the top of the chainsaw bar to cut so the saw doesn’t pull in debris and clog.

In addition, it is often helpful to tie foliage together before cutting so it doesn’t interfere and is easier to dispose of. Another option to removing the previous years’ growth is to burn it. You only want to burn the grass if it is safe and legal to do so. Burning works well on smaller ornamental grasses, as if it is too large, it could be hard to control the fire. Another tip is that these grasses may not burn for long, but they will burn extremely hot. So, you will want to check the surroundings of your grasses before you burn to make sure burning is a safe option.

After you have cut back your grasses, look at the center of your plant. If the center of the plant has started to die out, the plant would benefit from a division. The outer edge of the plant is the newest growth. As the plant gets larger, the middle will die out and the outer edges continue to grow causing the plant to expand out and get larger. If the grass is getting too large for the space it is in, you can dig up the entire clump and separate the plant. Then replant the vigorous growth found on the outer edge of the clump. By dividing the grass, you can plant the rest in other parts of your landscape or share the others with a friend!

TIME TO PLANT POTATOES

St. Patrick’s Day will be here before we know it, so it’s time to get seed potatoes in the ground. Actually, any time from mid-to-late March is fine for planting potatoes. Be sure to buy seed potatoes, not the ones bought for cooking. Seed potatoes are certified disease free and have plenty of starch to sprout quickly as the soil temperature gets warm enough. Most seed potatoes can be cut into four pieces; though large potatoes may yield more. Each seed piece should be between 1.5 and 2 ounces to insure there is enough energy for germination. Each pound of potatoes should yield 8 to 10 seed pieces.

Cut the seed potatoes 2 to 3 days before planting so the freshly cut surfaces have a chance to suberize, or toughen, and form a protective coating. Storing seed in a warm location during suberization will speed up the process. Plant each seed piece about 1 to 2 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches apart in rows. Though it is important to plant potatoes in March, emergence is slow. It is often mid to late April before new plants poke their way through the soil. As the potatoes grow, pull soil up to the base of the plants. New potatoes are borne above the planted seed piece, and we don’t want sunlight hitting the new potatoes. Potatoes exposed to sunlight will turn green and produce a poisonous substance called solanine. Keep the potatoes covered with soil to prevent this problem.

KANSAS AG STRESS RESOURCES

Farming and ranching brings many stresses along with the rewards. To help cope with those mental and emotional issues, the Kansas Department of Agriculture has a new website of resources to help with mental health, support, and services. This resource is a collaboration to support emotional and financial challenges. Suicide is at alarming levels and this can help reduce this trend. There is information for teens to aging adults. Learn more at:

www.kansasagstress.org

Kansas Suicide Prevention Line
1-785-841-2345

Crisis Text Line 24/7 Support
Text "HOME" to 741741



AgrAbility-CULTIVATING ACCESSIBLE AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a high-risk occupation with the incidence of work-related injury or death much above the general population. Hearing loss, disabling injuries, back problems, amputations, and chronic respiratory issues are just a few of the more obvious conditions that farmers may find themselves dealing with. In addition, we may not think of things such as stress and anxiety resulting in behavior health issues, an aging farm population dealing with joint health issues, disabling disease such as cancer or heart disease, stroke, visual impairment, traumatic brain injury, or those with arthritis.

AgrAbility is a program sponsored by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides assistance to farmers, ranchers, other agricultural workers, and farm family members impacted by disability such as those outlined above. The vision of AgrAbility is to enable a high quality lifestyle for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. Through education and assistance, AgrAbility helps to eliminate or minimize the obstacles that block success in production agriculture or agriculture-related occupations.

AgrAbility offers the following services at no cost to the customers: on-site assessment of barriers on the farm and home; recommending appropriate assistive technologies; providing educational materials and trainings; referring customers to other service providers for assistance specific to the customer needs; arranging peer support; and assisting veterans seeking employment in agriculture-related occupations.

AgrAbility does not provide direct funding for equipment but does often work with other sources to help customers obtain the needed assistive technologies or modifications.

AgrAbility has some really high-quality informational brochures. "Arthritis and Gardening" is a guide for home gardeners and small-scale producers. "Arthritis and Agriculture" is a guide to understanding and living with arthritis in a agricultural setting.

If any of this column rings true for you then AgrAbility might be able to offer you some assistance or education that will allow you to work longer or more pain-free in agriculture. The Kansas AgrAbility Project is a partnership of K-State Research and Extension, Southeast Kansas Independent Living (SKIL), and Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK). Contact them by calling 800-526-3648 or 785-532-2976. The Kansas AgrAbility:

Website- <http://agrability.bae.ksu.edu/>.

The National AgrAbility Project:

Phone- 800-825-4264

Website- www.agrability.org

Email- agrability@agrability.org.

NURTURING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS DURING TIMES OF FARM STRESS

Family communication is important. It determines relationships with each other and sets the tone for family living and the family farm business. Family communication is not simple. Communication is more than what you say and do. Your messages depend on how you think the other person will react, so you may communicate differently with each member of the family. Each person has several different family communication patterns that develop over time, depending on who is being communicated with, the setting, the timing, and other factors. Recognizing those patterns, especially during tough times, builds awareness of how you can change your own pattern to make things better.

The following are a few tips to help you along the way:

- Share everyday happenings.
- Show fondness and admiration.
- Bring up tough issues "softly."
- Avoid using the word "you" to blame.
- Use "I" statements to talk about problems.
- Make messages short during disagreements.
- Be respectful even during conflict.
- Agree on rules for difficult discussions.
- Suggest a "time out" to cool down.
- Calm your body in times of conflict.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Honor each other's hopes and dreams.

For more information on this topic pick up "Family TALK: Farm and Ranch Families" at the Extension Office.

River Valley Extension DistrictWashington Office
214 C. Street, Courthouse
Washington, KS 66968-1928**NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WASHINGTON, KS
PERMIT NO. 3****Address Service Requested****RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT****“2020 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
Mar. 2	3-6pm	Retirement Reception for Karen Langvardt	Clay Center-United Meth. Family Life Cntr. 5th & Clarke
Mar. 3	10am	Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body	Belleville Public Library
Mar. 3	2pm	Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body	Concordia-Courthouse Basement Mtg.Room
Mar. 4		River Valley District Offices Closed for Training	
Mar. 5	6-7:30pm	Alzheimer’s Community Forum	Clay Center Community High School
Mar. 9	9-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Washington-FNB Basement
Mar. 12	9-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Concordia-Resource Center
Mar. 12	10am	Downsizing Program	Clay Center Office
Mar. 12	2pm	Downsizing Program	Washington– Good Shepherd Lutheran
Mar. 13	9-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Belleville-4-H Building
Mar. 13	10am	Downsizing Program	Belleville Public Library
Mar. 13	2pm	Downsizing Program	Concordia Courthouse Basement Mtg. Rm.
Mar 15-May 9		Walk Kansas	Statewide Program
Mar. 18	9-3pm	Building Blocks of Babysitting	Clay Center-4-H Conference Center
Mar 24-May 14	10-11am	Stay Strong Stay Healthy	Wakefield-Sr. Citizens Cntr., 705 Elm Street
Mar. 30	3-6pm	Retirement Reception for Denise Swenson	Concordia– Zion Lutheran Church, 117 W. 8th
Apr. 11	9am	Hazardous Occupations Training	Concordia-CTI, 1441 Union Road
Apr. 16	TBD	Bonding Thru Board Games	Concordia-Resource Cntr., 107 West 7th
Apr. 18	9am	Hazardous Occupations Training	Washington-Fairgrounds, South Exh. Bldg.