

Thomas County

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K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge
for Life*

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Put on your walking shoes and start your journey toward a healthier life! It's time for Walk Kansas! Packets are available at the Extension office and registration can also be completed online. More information can be found on the Family and Consumer Science News page.

This news issue also includes information regarding soils in Colby and Ulysses as well as a homemade play dough recipe.

Plus, don't forget to check out the 4-H Tidbits pages for upcoming deadlines, events, and camps.



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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Kansas Soil of the Month

Did you know that according to Jeff Hellerich, State Soil Scientist with the NRCS, there are more than 430 different soil series (species if you will) in Kansas? The soils that make up Kansas, a “breadbasket” state, are some of the most fertile soils in the world. In fact, many consider soil as Kansas’ most valuable natural resource. The rich soil is the medium for our state’s incredible capacity to grow crops and provide grazing land. The rate of soil formation is so slow as to consider soil a non-renewable resource in terms of our life span.

January and February Soils of the Month: Colby and Ulysses – Sister soils of western Kansas

Each soil in Kansas is unique and distinctive from one another in different ways. Soils are classified into several different categories and the narrowest one is called the ‘soil series’ or name. No two soils have the same soil series name. How do soils get their names? Soil series are usually named after a geographic place near where they occur, like a town or landmark.

Since we are highlighting two soils for this issue, let’s compare and contrast their similarities and differences:

How are these soils similar to each other?

Colby and Ulysses are two very common soil series in western Kansas, encompassing over 5 million acres between them (Figure 1). These soils have a lot of similarities. They both formed under short-grass prairie vegetation. Today they are excellent for producing crops and are commonly irrigated, as these soils occur in the part of western Kansas that receives 18 inches or less annual precipitation. These soils might be [flatter than a pancake](#), as they have slopes of only 0.5 to 1%.

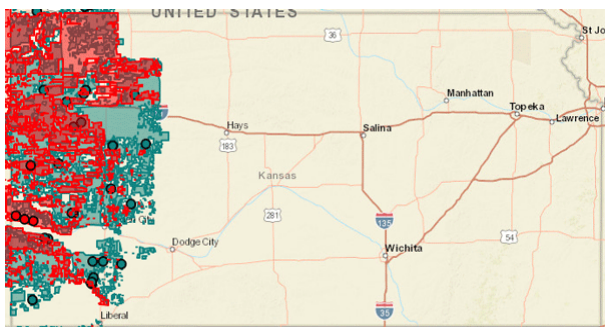


Figure 1. Soil series extent map in Kansas for Colby (red) and Ulysses (green). Map created using [USDA-NRCS Official Soil Series Description](#) website.

Windblown silty deposits, called “loess”, is the parent material of the soil. The word “loess” is of Swiss-German origin and means “loose.” The commonly accepted way to pronounce this in the U.S. is “luss,” rhyming with fuss or muss. As the word implies, loess-derived soils are not dense, but instead are very porous. Loess soils are high in silt, and silty soils are excellent for growing crops because silt can hold a lot of water at a tension that plants can use. Soils high in clay hold a lot of water but at a tension that plant roots have trouble using. Sandy soils drain and dry out quickly, but silty soils drain well and plant roots can take up the water easily.

Another important feature these two soil series have in common is the presence of calcium carbonate, or lime, which is common in dry parts of the world. Sometimes when these loess-derived soils in Kansas erode, they can result in high-pH soils very near the soil surface, which can cause problems with the availability of certain plant nutrients. Many plant nutrients are most available around a pH of 6.5, which is slightly acidic. However, the pH of the Colby or Ulysses soils can easily be about pH 8. Phosphorus and iron are the plant nutrients most affected by high-pH soils, as these elements are less available for plant uptake at a high soil pH.

Funny thing about loose, wind-deposited sediments: They erode. Silt particles are not as sticky as clay particles, so they can easily detach and become airborne. Silty soils are very erodible when left exposed to the wind or rain. It’s very important to keep these soils protected during the windiest months, which are November through April in Kansas. Conservation practices and structures are very necessary, including windbreaks and practices that maximize residue coverage. For more information on controlling wind erosion, see the KSRE publication [“Principles of Wind Erosion and its Control.”](#)

How are these soils different from each other?

One thing that really sets the Colby and Ulysses soils apart from each other is the organic matter content in the topsoil. The Ulysses series has about 9 inches of dark, organic matter rich soil on the surface, while the Colby series is a lighter brown color at the surface (Figure 2). Therefore, the Ulysses series classifies as a “Mollisol”, while the Colby soil is an “Entisol.” Just like you can classify plants, animals, etc., you can classify soils. The word “mollisol” comes from the Latin word “mollis” for soft, because it is rich in humus, which is decomposed organic materials from plants and microbes. For an Entisol, think “infant” and you’ll be close—the Colby soil only has A and C horizons, so it is a young soil with no development other than formation of the A horizon.

Figure 2. Side by side comparison of Colby and Ulysses soil monoliths. The Ulysses profile has a distinctively darker surface horizon that extends deeper in the profile compared to the Colby series. Photo by DeAnn Presley, K-State Research and Extension.



New K-State Chemical Weed Control guide now available

The new 2018 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland guide, SRP 1139, is now available. Hard copies are available at the Thomas County Extension Office. You can stop by during business hours to pick up your copy.



Walk Kansas 2018

How Walk Kansas Works

Teams of 6, with a captain, log minutes of activity for 8 weeks. Each team selects one of three challenges they will collectively work toward. In addition to physical activity, participants will report the amount of fruits/vegetables they eat.

Program participants will receive weekly newsletters and motivational messages that focus on healthful lifestyle habits.

Team members can live in another town or even another state.

Team Challenges

Each team will select one of three challenges. As your team moves across or around the state, you will learn about points of interest in Kansas by viewing progress of your team on the online map. The challenges are different this year, but teams will travel distances similar to last year.

Challenge 1—8 Wonders Each person reaches the minimum goal for physical activity – 150 minutes of moderate/vigorous activity per week. Collectively, the team would walk 435 miles as they discover the 8 Wonders of Kansas.

Challenge 2—Cross Country Take a meandering trek diagonally across the state from Troy to Elkhart requiring each person to log 4 hours of activity per week, traveling 764 miles total.

Challenge 3—Little Balkans to Nicodemus Walk the SE part of the state known as the Little Balkans and then wind up and around to Nicodemus. This team will go 1200 miles with each person logging 6 hours of moderate/vigorous activity per week.

Pick Up Your Team Packet

Team packets are available at the Extension office. Be sure to register by March 18! There are 3 payment options this year: Program only: \$8 per person, or Program plus short sleeved t-shirt (Heather Purple or Heather Irish Green): \$17 per person, or Program plus Baseball tee: \$22 per person.

The option the captain selects for the team, reflects all team members- so, if the captain selects program plus t-shirt at \$17, the system will register all six team members at that price and they will be required to order (or pay for) a t-shirt. Individuals will also have access to purchase a shirt or other apparel separately in the Walk Kansas shop.

Homemade Play Dough Safety

If you or someone you know makes homemade play dough, it is important to remember that flour is a raw food and has been linked to serious food safety problems.

Iowa State University Extension offers this recipe that is cooked to heat the dough.

Homemade Play Dough

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 cups cold water



Mix all of the ingredients together and cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes stirring constantly. When finished, it will be the consistency of mashed potatoes. Divide it into 3-4 equal portions and add a few drops of different colors of food coloring to each. Kneading the dough will distribute the color and make it smooth. Store it in a freezer bag or air tight container and it will keep for a long time.

You can also find a recipe for homemade sidewalk chalk from the same Iowa State Extension [blog](#).

Keep the Beat™ Recipes

Looking for recipe ideas for you and your busy family? The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute can help.

These recipes were developed in partnership with the National Institute of Health *We Can!*® program for children. The book gives ideas to involve kids in meal preparation. It also includes tips on meal planning, cooking, and nutrition for all. Recipes categories include main dish, pasta, lunch/brunch, vegetable side dishes, grain side dishes, and snacks.

Download the publication from the National Institute of Health [website](#).



Club Days

County Club Day will be held on Friday, March 9th at Sacred Heart School. Regional Club Day will be held Friday, April 6th at Brewster School. Activities include demonstrations, project talks, dancing, music, reading, etc. Sign-up sheets have been given to club leaders and will need to be returned to the office by Friday, March 2nd. Group events will be scheduled by the office in advance while individuals will sign-up for specific times at the door.

Tip sheets for demonstrations, project talks, speeches and other presentations are available on the Kansas 4-H [website](#).

Producer Days

Junior Sheep Producer Day will be held on March 17th, 2018 and Junior Beef Producer Day will be held on March 24th, 2018. Market Swine and Meat Goat Producer days will be in 2019. Registration information is listed on the [Animal Sciences & Industry page](#).

Scholarships

High School seniors may apply for a scholarship through the Thomas County 4-H Council. The application and guidelines are the same as those for the 4-H State Scholarship. Please submit the necessary documents to the Extension Office by 5pm on March 20th.

Dog Club Meetings

Pawsome Paws, the Thomas County 4-H Dog Club, is starting their spring practices. Meetings will be held on Tuesdays at 7pm at the 4-H Building. For more information, please contact Angie Harris at 785-443-2797.



Horse Papers



There are new rules regarding horse papers this year. There is a **NEW** form that must be completed, not the same form that was used in years past.

The form must be front and back only, not two separate pages and must have a standard-sized photo attached with all markings visible. The new form is still due to the Extension Office by May 1st.

Horse Level Testing

4-H Horse Project members who would like to compete at the District or State level, must complete the Level 1 workbook, do some community service work, attend an educational seminar, take & pass the Level 1 written exam, as well as take & pass the Level 1 riding exam. More information can be found on the [4-H Horse page](#).

Super 4-H Saturday

Mark your calendar for March 10th and plan to attend a fun-filled day of learning opportunities for all ages. This event includes judging contests and workshops in the areas of horticulture, life skills, photography, crops, livestock, and entomology. It will be held in Hays and pre-registration is due March 2nd.

Small Animal Weigh-In

Small animal weigh-in will be held on Thursday, May 3rd from 4-7pm at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. If you want to show your goats, sheep, swine or bucket calves, please remember they must be weighed in at this time. Ear tags are \$3.50 each and we ask that you bring cash or check that day to pay for tags.



Discovery Days



Discovery Days offers classes and tours about 4-H projects, careers, hobbies, community service and more! The

theme this year is “Tell Your Story” and will be held from May 30th through June 2nd. The registration deadline is April 15th and is for youth who are 13 to 18 years old.

Camp Lakeside

“Rock Out” at 4-H Camp Lakeside! It will be held June 7-8. Stay tuned for more information in next months newsletter.

Rock Springs

The Great Northwest Rock Springs Camp will be held from June 19th - June 22nd, 2018. This camp is for ages 7-12. Start planning your summer now by saving the date!

Campference

This camp is open to 4-H members between the ages of 12 and 14 (before January 1). It will be held June 26-29 at Rock Springs. Registration will open mid-March and is due May 15th or earlier if the camp is full.

4-H Alien Adventure Experience

The Kansas 4-H SpaceTech Program and the Kansas Cosmosphere located in Hutchinson are again teaming up to provide fun, hands-on and science-based programming for Kansas 4-H Youth Development. This third program will feature “The Alien Adventure.” The experience will begin Friday, April 6 and will end on Saturday, April 7. Registration will close on March 22nd or earlier if full. For more information, visit the 4-H [website](#).

4-H Events & Spring Shows

Many counties are starting to think about their annual spring livestock shows. There are also several other 4-H events being announced. We have a notebook of flyers available with more information.

Check with the Extension Office periodically to learn about upcoming events including:

- Livestock, Horse and Dog shows
- Judging contests
- Animal clinics for Poultry and Rabbits
- Hazardous Occupations Training sessions (formerly known as Tractor Safety)
- 4-H Insect Spectacular
- State Fair Bread Sculpture Contest
- Fiber Fun Day

Photo Workshops

Here are some upcoming photography events:

- Shutterbugs in Auburn, KS on April 14th
- Shutterbugs at Botanica in Wichita, KS on April 28th
- Shutterbugs at Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City, KS on May 5th




For more information, you can visit the Kansas 4-H Photography Action Team Events page on [Facebook](#) or go to the Photography Events page on the [4-H website](#).

Shooting Sports Certification

Training

If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a Shooting Sports Instructor, please let the office know. We are always looking for more help. Disciplines include: archery, pistol, rifle, muzzleloading, hunting skills, shotgun and western heritage. Instructors must attend the Certification Training that will be held April 6-8.

March 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 AH—Meeting @ 4-H Bldg. 7pm	6	7	8 Fairboard Mtg. @ 8pm	9 County Club Day @Sacred Heart School 5pm NW SpaceTech Day Reg. due	10 Super 4-H Day in Hays Tractor Safety in Syracuse, KS
11 Daylight Saving Time begins 	12 SV—Meeting @ 4-H Bldg. 7pm GEM—Meeting @ Comm. Bldg. 7:30pm BPG—Meeting @ Henry Hall 7:30pm	13	14	15	16	17 Jr. Sheep Producer Day in Manhattan Tractor Safety in Beloit, KS KWAH Horse Show Oakley Range Riders in Oakley, KS
18 Walk Kansas begins KWAH Horse Show G&G in Oakley, KS	19 Tractor Safety in Emporia, KS CC—Meeting @	20 Thomas County 4-H Council Scholarship due	21	22	23	24 Jr. Beef Producer Day in Manhattan Hunter Safety Class in Scott City, KS NW SpaceTech Day in Ness City, KS
25	26 4-H Council Mtg. @ 6:30pm 	27	28	29	30	31 Marion County Spring Beef Show
					SS = Shooting Sports AH = Abilene Hustlers	BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem Gem = Gem 4-H CC = Colby Comets SV = Solomon Valley



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Bookmark our website for quick reference to educational and informational resources as well as contact information for all of your questions:

<http://www.thomas.k-state.edu>

Check us out on Facebook:

K-State Research and Extension Thomas County 4-H

