We are excited to announce that Emily Bennigsdorf has been hired as the new Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent for Thomas County! She has experience with livestock, leadership, and event organization. She will start working at the Extension Office in late February. We will announce more information about Emily and how to welcome her in our March newsletter.

**Beef Weigh-In**

Beef weigh-in will be held this Saturday, February 1st from 9:00am to 11:30am at Colby Livestock Auction. Tags are $3.00 each, and we will be collecting $5.00 per animal to be sold to pay for post-Fair advertising. Please bring cash or check to pay for your tags and advertising.

**Walk Kansas is Almost Here!**

Get your teams together now! The KSRE Walk Kansas health initiative will be held March 15—May 19, 2020.

The goal of Walk Kansas is to help teams of six people be more active, make better nutrition choices, and walk away stress. For many, it’s a great way to get motivated to lead a healthier life.

Also, mark your calendars for the 5th Annual Walk Kansas 5K for the Fight and 1.5-Mile Fun Walk to be held May 2, 2020 on the K-State campus in Manhattan, KS. Proceeds will be donated to the Johnson Cancer Research Center.

Sign up and Walk Kansas!
**Upcoming Events**

**Corn Management School**
When/Where: February 3rd in Oakley, KS
This corn school is designed to provide corn producers with in-depth training targeted for corn producers. The school is free to attend, but please pre-register online. We will work to ensure that CCA credits are available. Lunch will be provided thanks to the sponsors—Pioneer & John Deere.

**Winter Ranch Management Workshop**
When/Where: Feb. 11th in Plainville, KS
Dr. Bob Weaber, a cow-calf specialist with K-State Research and Extension will be on hand to answer producers’ questions on beef cattle issues including animal health, nutrition, management, genetics and reproduction.

**Women Managing the Farm Conference**
When/Where: Feb. 13th & 14th in Manhattan, KS
Designed to keep women up-to-date on the latest advancements in agriculture and thriving within their rural communities. Attendees select from presentations covering many topics, including farm finances, relationships and health, agriculture and estate law, and many more. Register online.

**Cattlemen’s Day**
When/Where: March 6th in Manhattan, KS
The 107th annual Cattlemen’s Day will take place in Manhattan, KS on March 6, 2020. The day will begin with a trade show followed by trends and opportunities in the beef industry. Participants will attend breakout sessions in the afternoon and will end the day with the Legacy Bull and Heifer Sale. Registration is available online now.

**2018 Farm Bill**
Farm Bill programs have been essential to managing risk on farming operations since they were created. They address both yield and price risk, two primary sources of farm risk. The current programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), give producers very different options, which they are locked into for a set time-frame. ARC offers a revenue guarantee based on a national price and county yield or individual yield. PLC offers price protection only, but can be paired with a Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) on the producer’s crop insurance to increase coverage levels. These options can be terribly confusing to a producer who simply wants to manage risk in order to survive these volatile times.

The Department of Agricultural Economics at KSU, as well as the Farm Service Agency, have put together some tools for farmers to aid their decision-making process. One tool is the “Tradeoff Between 2019/2020 ARC and PLC” spreadsheet. This spreadsheet shows the tradeoff between ARC-CO and PLC payments at various Marketing Year Average prices and county yield levels. There is also a video by Robin Reid, Agricultural Economist, to help explain this tool. These tools can be found on the AgManager website. More information including program data, program payment maps and FAQs can be found on the USDA-FSA website.

The deadline to complete the election and enrollment process for 2019 is March 15, 2020. The deadline to complete the 2020 enrollment is June 30, 2020.
Are Added Fibers Good for Our Health?

Isolated and synthetic fibers are frequently added to processed foods. Some may not provide the health benefits associated with natural fibers.

It is recommended that adults consume between 25 and 30 grams of dietary fiber a day. The average American currently gets about half that amount. According to the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans, dietary fiber is a “nutrient of public health concern,” meaning this low level of intake could actually be detrimental to our health. So, it’s potentially good news that food manufacturers are adding fiber to processed foods. But is that fiber as good for our health as fiber found naturally in fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grains?

The various types of dietary fiber found naturally in fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and grains are strongly associated with numerous health benefits. Added fibers may not have the same physiological effects.

Try to get most of that fiber by eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts/seeds, and whole grains.

Be aware that some or all of the fibers in processed foods may be added, and that these fibers may not have the same health benefits as intrinsic fibers in whole foods.

Do not choose processed foods on the basis of fiber content alone; also consider the content of refined carbohydrates, added sugars, and sodium, which have negative health effects.

Health Benefits of Fiber. According to a research review co-authored by Nicola McKeown, PhD, a scientist with Tufts’ Nutritional Epidemiology program and an associate professor at the Friedman School, there is reproducible evidence that dietary fiber found naturally in foods has a role in lowering cholesterol, improving glycemic control, and preventing constipation. And fiber may have more health benefits as well. “Research in this field is continually expanding,” says McKeown. “We’ve only begun to consider things like how the gut microbiota utilize different types of dietary fibers to potentially impact health.”

Additional Considerations.

Even if the natural and added fibers in processed foods have been shown to have health benefits, the Dietary Fiber number on the label is not enough of a reason to choose a particular processed food. “Consumers need to consider not only the dietary fiber content of the food, but also how much added sugar or sodium may be in the product,” says McKeown. “In many foods, such as cookies or ice cream, these fibers are added as bulking agents, stabilizers, or thickeners. These sweet treats and other processed foods are not equivalent to naturally fiber-rich foods like fruit, not only in fiber content, but also with respect to other nutrients.”

Given that a majority of Americans fail to meet dietary fiber intake recommendations, incorporating products supplemented with beneficial added fibers can help increase fiber intake. But consumers should be aware that no amount of added fiber can make up for the potentially low content of beneficial nutrients and the possible negative health effects of things like added sugars and high levels of sodium that come with many processed foods.
SHOOTING SPORTS - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED -

Do you or someone you know have a love and knowledge of firearms, shooting sports and youth? If so, boy do we have a place for you!

We are looking for volunteers to assist our current 4-H shooting sports coaches, especially in the area of BB gun and air pistol/rifle. We are also looking for a 4-H shooting sports coordinator for Thomas County 4-H. Our current coordinator is wanting to direct and focus her time, energy, enthusiasm and skills as an archery coach. Both coach and coordinator positions require certification. Certification involves a 3-day training March 27-29. You do not need to be a coach to be a coordinator.

To be a viable program, 4-H shooting sports requires certified coaches and a certified coordinator. No coaches, no coordinator, no program. Have coordinator but no coaches = no program. Have coaches but no coordinator = no program.

Please, contact the Thomas County Extension office for more information, (785) 460-4582; 350 S. Range Ave., Ste. 16 in Colby.

Dog Club Meetings

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

Junior Producer Days

Junior producer days are held to provide educational material and hands-on experiences for youth, parents, and leaders. Junior Beef Producer Day will be held Saturday, February 29th with early registration due February 7th. Junior Sheep Producer Day will be held Saturday, March 14th with early registration due February 21st. An optional YQCA training will be held at the end of these events as well. Visit the Youth Livestock website for more information and to register.

County Club Days

County Club Day will be held on March 6th at Sacred Heart School. Now is the time to start thinking about how you and your club might like to participate. Activities include demonstrations, project talks, dancing, music and dramas, reading, etc. In order to participate, sign-up with your club leader or contact the Office. Sign-up is due Thursday, February 27th. Group events will be given a scheduled time by the office in advance while individuals will sign-up for specific times on the evening of Club Day.

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

Ambassador Training

The 2020 Kansas 4-H Ambassador Training will be February 21-22 at Rock Springs 4-H Center. It is open to all county 4-H ambassadors, interested teens in the 8th-12th grades and Extension staff. The theme is “4-H Ambassadors—Under Construction.” There will be six youth workshops and a keynote speaker. Registration is due February 7th, 2020 on the CVent system.

Kansas 4-H Day with Wildcat Women’s Basketball

The annual Kansas 4-H Day with Wildcat Women’s Basketball game vs. University of Kansas will be held on Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. Registration is due on February 18th and can be found here.

Scholarships

High School seniors may apply for a scholarship through the Thomas County 4-H Council. The application and guidelines are the new this year. Please contact the Office for more information. Please submit the necessary document to the Extension Office by 5pm on March 16th.
Spring Shows

Many counties are starting to think about their annual spring shows. Check with the Extension Office periodically to learn about upcoming Livestock, Horse and Dog shows.

Get your Creative Hats On

The Pesticide Safety and Integrated Pest Management Program is hosting an insect-themed art contest for Kansas 4-Her’s and art students. The artwork created by Kansas youth will be used to create an “Old Maid” style card game and distributed to Kansas schools. The program encourages youth to get your creative hats on and create an entry before the April 3, 2020 deadline. Entries must feature an insect as the central focus of the art. More information on the rules and how to submit an entry can be found at: https://www.ksre.ks-state.edu/pesticides-ipm/ or you can e-mail fmiller@ksu.edu to have the rules e-mailed to you.

Discovery Days

Discovery Days offers classes and tours about 4-H projects, careers, hobbies, community service and more! It will be held May 27-29 on the K-State Campus. Registration opens March 1st online.

Save the Date

The Great Northwest Rock Springs Camp will be held from June 1st - June 4th, 2020. This camp is for ages 7-12. Counselor applications are due April 1st and camper registrations are due April 7th. Start planning your summer now by saving the date!

Camp Lakeside

Camp Lakeside is around the corner! It will be held June 10th-11th in Scott City. The theme this year is “Wild West.” Registration information is coming soon.

Campference

This event is focused on “betweenagers,” youth ages 12-14 and will be held June 22-25, 2020 at Rock Springs 4-H Center. Participants will experience the feel of a conference, while enjoying the “camp” activities Rock Springs 4-H Center has to offer. If you are interested in being part of Campference, please register early! Space is limited and fills quickly. Keep an eye out for more information.

Horse Papers

Horse Identification papers are due to the Extension Office on May 1st. The form must be front and back only, not two separate pages and must have a standard-sized photo attached with all markings visible.

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.

Club Attendance

For the 2019-2020 year, 4-Her’s wishing to participate in the livestock auction are required to attend 6 club meetings between the months of August 2019 and July 2020. Members must attend meetings for the club they are enrolled in on 4HOnline. Business must be conducted at the meeting in order for the meeting to qualify for attendance.

Club members and leaders can check their attendance record by going to the Thomas County Extension website. Click on “4-H Youth Development”, followed by “Record Keeping.”
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SS = Shooting Sports
AH = Abilene Hustlers
BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem
Gem = Gem 4-H
CC = Colby Comets
SV = Solomon Valley
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 & Twitter:
K-State Research and Extension Thomas County 4-H

K-State Research and Extension and Thomas County Extension are committed to making their services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact Sheryl Carson at 785-460-4582.