

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION  
WALNUT CREEK EXTENSION DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 2025

**February Dates**

- 3- Lane County 4-H Council
- 4- 4-H on the 4th - Love of Ag Activities
- 5- Using Household Products Safely  
Dighton Joy Center - 11:30 am
- 7- Dighton Grade School Early Dismissal
- 10- Rush Junior Leaders and 4-H Council
- 10- Register for Weed Management School
- 12- FCE Lesson Series- Air Fryers  
Dighton Comm. Room - 2 pm
- 13- Weed Management School - Ness City
- 14- Happy Valentine's Day
- 15- 4-H Club Days - Lacrosse High School
- 17- President's Day - Office Closed
- 18- Ness County 4-H Council
- 19- Advanced Health Care Planning  
Ransom Go Getters Sr. Center - 11:30 am
- 20- Advanced Health Care Planning  
Ness City Leisure Years - 12 pm
- 20- Program at Wheatview Apts - 1 pm
- 22- Virtual 4-H Volunteer Training
- 28- Local Food Producer Workshop - Hays

**Looking ahead to March**

- 6 - Estate Planning - Rush Center - 6- 8 pm

**Walnut Creek  
District Offices**

**LANE COUNTY OFFICE**  
144 S. LANE, COURTHOUSE  
P O BOX 487  
DIGHTON, KS 67839  
620-397-2806

- Lacey Noterman, Director and Agriculture Ext. Agent - [Inote@ksu.edu](mailto:Inote@ksu.edu)
- Chelsey Shapland, 4-H Program Assistant - [cshapland@ksu.edu](mailto:cshapland@ksu.edu)
- Donnis Maughlin, Office Professional - [dmaughli@ksu.edu](mailto:dmaughli@ksu.edu)

**NESS COUNTY OFFICE**  
503 S PENNSYLVANIA AVE  
NESS CITY, KS 67560  
785-798-3921

- Robyn Trussel, 4-H and Youth Agent [rdeines@ksu.edu](mailto:rdeines@ksu.edu)
- Kristen Schmidt, Family Community Wellness - [kbschmidt@ksu.edu](mailto:kbschmidt@ksu.edu)
- Randae Rufenacht, Office Professional [rrufenac@ksu.edu](mailto:rrufenac@ksu.edu)

**RUSH COUNTY OFFICE**  
702 MAIN, P O BOX 70  
LACROSSE, KS 67548  
785-222-2710

- Jared Petersilie, Agriculture Extension Agent - [jaredp11@ksu.edu](mailto:jaredp11@ksu.edu)
- Berny Unruh, Office Professional [bunruh@ksu.edu](mailto:bunruh@ksu.edu)

Thank you to all those who are serving on the 2025 Walnut Creek Extension District board and on the PDC (Program Development Committees) for Ag and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community vitality. Thank You for your time and your service.

**Walk Kansas**

**Mark these dates on your calendar:  
Walk Kansas: March 30th - May 24th  
Registration opens March 4th**



# CLOVER CONNECTION

## Family and Youth Development



### ***FAMILY COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: BUILDS STRONGER BONDS THROUGH SHARED GROWTH***

In today's fast-paced world, families often struggle to find meaningful ways to connect. Collaborative learning offers a unique opportunity for parents and children to grow together, fostering communication, teamwork, and lifelong learning. When families engage in learning experiences as a unit, they create lasting memories and strengthen bonds while also developing essential life skills.

Collaborative learning involves parents and children working together to explore, solve problems, and gain knowledge. Unlike traditional top-down teaching, this approach emphasizes equal participation, encouraging everyone to contribute their ideas and talents.

Examples of collaborative learning could include; learning a new skill together, such as gardening or cooking; engaging in hands-on STEM projects like building a model or coding a program; exploring creative outlets like art, writing, or music as a family, or investigating topics of mutual interest, such as history, science and culture.

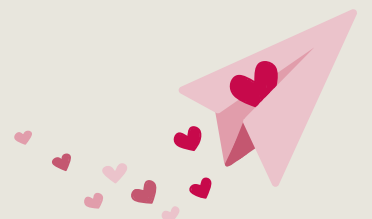
The benefits of family collaborative learning is that it helps build stronger relationships, improves critical thinking, allows for positive role modeling, increases confidence and creates lifelong memories.



Some ideas for Collaborative Learning Activities for Families

- Build a birdhouse
- Create a scrapbook,
- Plant a garden.
- Conduct simple science experiments
- Build a robot kit
- Take an online cooking class .
- Go on a photography scavenger hunt
- Dive into a culture through food, language, and traditions.
- Learn about a country's history together.
- Choose a book to read together .
- Let each family member take turns choosing the next book.
- Find a cause you're passionate about and dedicate time to it as a family.

Family collaborative learning is a powerful tool for nurturing relationships and fostering personal growth. By working together, families can develop stronger connections, encourage creativity, and instill a lifelong love of learning. Whether it's exploring new hobbies, solving problems, or giving back to the community, these shared experiences will leave a lasting impact on every member of the family. Take the first step today by choosing an activity that excites your family and dive in together!



## Book suggestions for Family Bonding and Big Conversations

A Winkle in Time ~ Madeleine L'Engle

Charlotte's Web ~ E.B. White

The Wind in the Willows ~ Kenneth Grahame

The Chronicles of Narnia ~ C. S. Lewis

Little House on the Prairie ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Secret Garden ~ Frances Hodgson Burnett

The BFG ~ by Roald Dahl

James & the Giant Peach ~ Roald Dahl

The Cay by Theodore Taylor

The Mouse and the Motorcycle ~ Beverly Cleary

The Boxcar Children ~ Gertrude Chandler Warner



## Help Youth Thrive

Young People are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements -- expressed in 20 specific actions, that make relationships powerful in young people's lives.

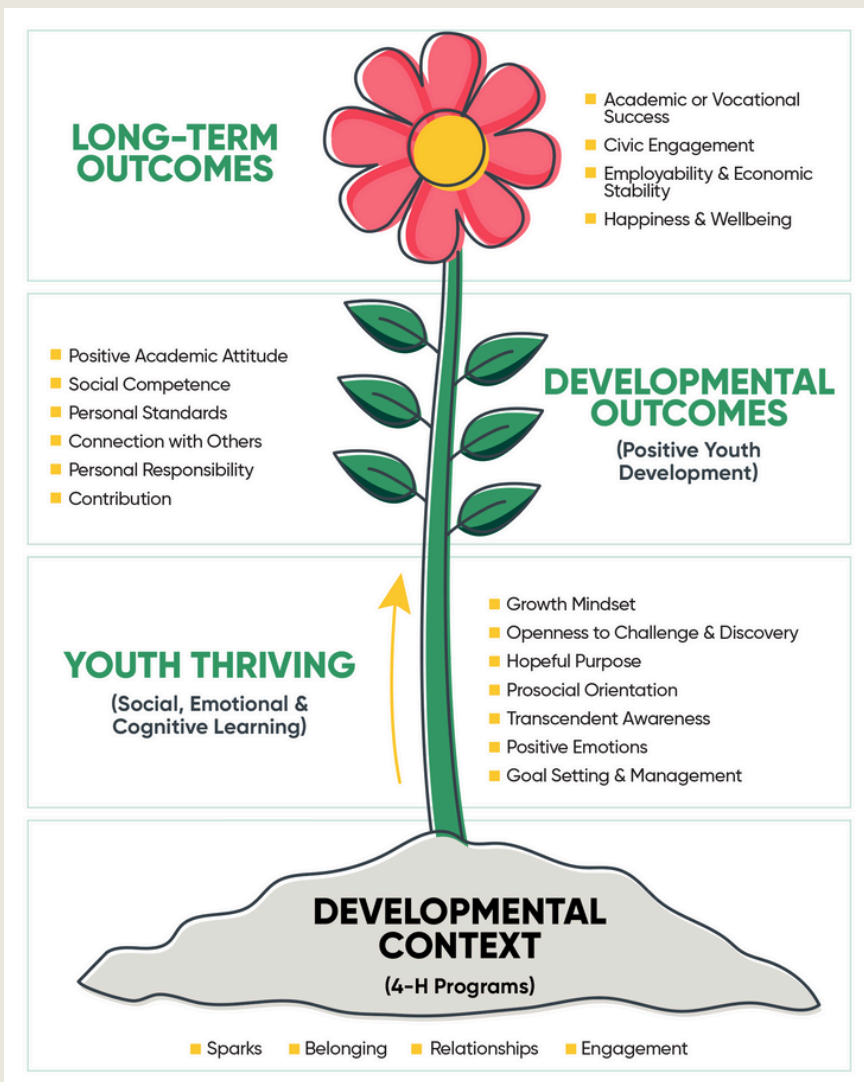
### Elements:

- Express Care
- Challenge Growth
- Provide Support
- Share Power
- Expand Possibilities



### Actions:

- Be Dependable
- Listen
- Believe in Me
- Be warm
- Encourage
- Expect my best
- Stretch
- Hold me accountable
- Reflect on failure
- Navigate
- Empower
- Advocate
- Set boundaries
- Respect Me
- Include Me
- Collaborate
- Let me lead
- Inspire
- Broaden my horizons
- Connect





# Hay Feeder Designs

Emma Briggs, Beef Production Systems, Hays

Jared Petersilie, WCED Ag Agent



**Jared Petersilie**

Extension Agent  
Animal Sciences  
Farm Management  
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Reducing hay waste is one of the simplest ways to improve the efficiency and profitability of cattle operations. Every operation is different, but the type of hay feeder you choose can significantly impact how much forage is wasted during feeding. Some feeders are designed to hold hay securely and keep it clean, while others allow for more spillage and contamination. By understanding how feeder design influences hay loss, you can make the best choice for your operation and see the benefits in your bottom line.

## Open-bottom Design Feeders: A Common Source of Waste

Open-bottom feeders like the open-bottom steel ring and polyethylene pipe open-bottom ring (Figure 1) are widely used, but their open designs often lead to high levels of waste. These feeders lack sheeted bottoms, individual feeding stations, or barriers to limit access to the bale. This design makes it easy for cattle to pull hay from the bale and drop it outside the feeder, especially during the first 24 hours (Figure 2) after a new bale is introduced.

Research has shown waste levels of 16% to 21% of the original bale weight with these feeders, much of it due to hay being trampled. While open-design feeders may seem convenient, lightweight, or cost-effective upfront, the hay wasted can quickly add up, making them a less economical choice in the long run.

These feeders are light weight and easy to move, so spreading out the waste and manure is easier, but with the droughty growing conditions and marginal feed quality, the feed waste is a bigger concern than the manure/nutrient management.

Figure 1. Types of round bale feeders. Adapted from Sexten et al 2021



**Open-bottom steel ring**  
Total bale waste = 19.7%



**Polyethylene pipe open-bottom ring**  
Total bale waste = 21.1%



**Sheeted-bottom ring with a basket**  
Total bale waste = 5.5%



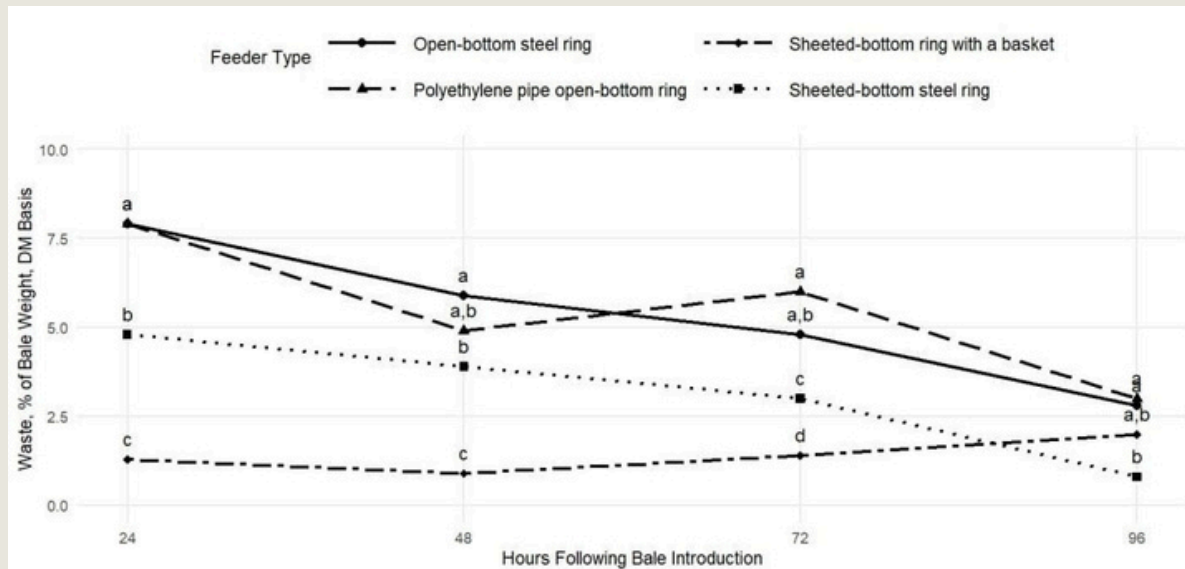
**Sheeted-bottom steel ring**  
Total bale waste = 12.4%

## Sheeted-Bottom Feeders: A Step in the Right Direction

Feeders with sheeted bottoms, such as the sheeted-bottom steel ring design (Figure 1), offer a practical way to reduce hay waste. A sheeted bottom, extending at least 18 inches from the ground, helps contain loose hay and minimizes the amount cattle can pull out.

Sheeted-bottom feeders are particularly effective during the later stages of feeding when the bale collapses. They help maintain a clean feeding area and keep loose hay within reach of the cattle. Research indicates that these feeders can reduce hay waste by about 39% compared to open-design feeders, with waste levels dropping to around 12% of the original bale weight.

Figure 2  
Hay Waste,  
expressed as a  
percent of  
original bale  
weight, by  
hours after bale  
introduction to  
the pen.  
Adapted from  
Sexten et. al  
2021



### Cone or Basket Feeders: Minimal Waste

If you're looking for the most efficient option, feeder designs that have either a basket or cone adaptation are hard to beat (Figure 1). These feeders incorporate innovative features that drastically reduce hay waste, such as suspending the bale or restricting access to the top third of the bale. By keeping the hay centrally located and contained, these designs make it harder for cattle to waste hay by pulling it outside the feeder. Studies have shown that advanced feeders like these can reduce waste by 60% to 73% compared to open designs, with reported losses as low as 2% to 5% in some cases. In these studies, these feeders also incorporate sheeted bottoms, which reduce waste as the bale collapses, and provide ample feeding space. Sheeted bale feeders can often be adapted to reduce waste. By either welding bars in the feeder or using chains, the bale can be suspended. Old tires or bent rims can also be placed in the feeder to keep the bale 'up'. If using a cone or other means of bale suspension, you will need to 'hold' the bale going into the feeder so it doesn't drop as many feeders are pretty light and many bales are getting really heavy.

### Knowing the quality of your hay

If you can, test your hay. Knowing its nutritional value allows you to tailor feeding amounts to meet the needs of your cattle based on their stage of production. This ensures your cows get the nutrition they need without overfeeding, which reduces waste and saves money. Studies also show that feeding later in the evening will push many cows to calve early morning or during daylight. This needs to be done consistently to make it work.

### Other Feeding Strategies

**Unrolling Hay:** If you choose to unroll hay, be sure to feed only what your cattle can consume within 12 to 24 hours. Waste increases dramatically beyond this window, often exceeding 25% of the original bale weight, as cattle start using uneaten hay for bedding. Some bales will not unroll evenly, so distributing an even window for access by all animals is the key to getting even consumption without trampling on the waste. In some cases, unrolling half a bale and putting the core in a feeder also works as most bale bed can easily reach over a feeder with a partial bale. Or if time allows, unroll the same bale in two separate feedings to match the needs of the herd.

**Limiting Access:** Restricting access to hay for 5 to 12 hours a day can be a highly effective way to reduce waste. This practice decreases hay intake and lowers overall costs by reducing the amount of hay needed for the winter season. Despite the reduced access, cattle can maintain acceptable performance, making this a practical option for many operations. This is a 'cafeteria' approach-get in, eat, and get out. Consumption doesn't change as much, but cows don't have as much time to be picky, they aren't eating and rubbing out of boredom, and they aren't getting as much of a chance to over-consume. Yes, this takes more time, but with some creativity and shopping, gates can be set with timers and solar power to open automatically.

Sexten AJ, Moore MF, McMurphy CP, Mourer GL, Linneen SK, Brown MA, Richards CJ, Lalman DL. Effects of bale feeder design on hay waste, intake, and apparent diet digestibility in gestating beef cows. *Transl Anim Sci.* 2021 Jun 10;5(3):txab104. doi: 10.1093/tas/txab104

## Wheat Rx Seminar



A prescription for producing high-yielding and high-quality wheat is just what the doctor ordered for Kansas Wheat producers. Kansas Wheat Rx combines suggested management practices for the economical and sustainable production of high-quality winter wheat in Kansas.

Mark your calendar now for the upcoming seminar on February 12th at the Great Plains Corporate Office in Salina, KS. Speakers will discuss variety selection, weed control, disease management, soil fertility, and more. Attendees will learn more about Great Plains Ag, tour its Salina facility, and about a new project between K-State and the Kansas Wheat Commission to help growers benefit from ongoing government and private conservation programs.

For more information and to register go to: <https://kswheat.com/growers/kansas-wheat-rx>



**Lacey Noterman**

District Director  
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## Kansas Forest Service's Conservation Tree Program

The Kansas Forest Service's Conservation Tree Program offers tree and shrub seedlings, as well as other items for use in conservation plantings. Plantings may function as wildlife habitat, windbreaks, wood lots, timber plantations, or educational and riparian plantings.

The spring distribution offers both bare root and container-grown seedlings for sale. Orders are accepted January 5th through May 1st. Orders are shipped or picked up beginning in mid-March.

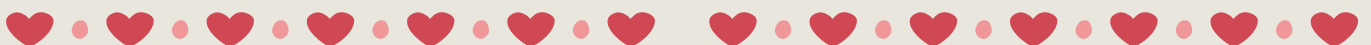
Orders can be made online at <https://kansas-forest-service-3749.myshopify.com/> or over the phone by calling 1-888-740-8733.

The Conservation Tree and Shrub Spring Sale continues to be a cost-effective avenue for landowners and organizations to establish windbreaks and such. For more information check out: <https://www.kansasforests.org>



## Starting Onions Indoors

If grown from seed, onions need to be started indoors 10 to 12 weeks prior to the transplant date. Onions are typically planted in mid-to late March to avoid the summer heat. Place seeds ½ to 1 inch apart in a tray filled with seed-starting media. Keep the tray in a warm location (60-65 degrees F). Provide adequate light and use a water-soluble, general-purpose fertilizer no more than once per week when seedlings reach two to three inches in height.







# Operation Red File

## Protect Your Critical Health Information

In partnership with the Kansas Senior Medicare Patrol, Operation Red File was designated to help seniors keep their critical health information protected and accessible if needed in an emergency. The folder attaches to the refrigerator for easy access by first responders.

Participants are encouraged to put copies of their medical information and other critical documents in the folder, such as a clear, current photograph of the participant; a medical form with all current medical information; a medication list that can be updated as needed; and medical coverage information.

First responders and emergency staff can use this information to:

- Intantly access medical history and medication records in an emergency.
- Avoid delays caused by trying to get information form a confused patient.
- Ensure that the family/responsible party will be notified quickly.
- Have a photograph available in the ase of a Silver Alert.



Operation Red File packets are available for pickup in all 3 K-State Research and Extension County Offices. (Ness City, Dighton, LaCrosse)



**Kristen Schmidt**

Family and Community Wellness Agent  
kbschmidt@ksu.edu



## Walk Kansas

Walk Kansas is celebrating 25 years as a state-wide program in 2025!

Walk Kansas is a team-based challenge that encourages people to walk, jog, run, roll, bike, swim or do whatever they enjoy doing to live more healthfully. The program routinely draws more than 5,000 participants.

Online registration opens on March 4. Each team must assign a captain, in addition to a team name. The cost per team member is \$10, which must be paid at the time the captain registers the team.

More details to come in our next newsletter issue.

## Local Food Producer Workshops

Hays:

Friday, February 28, 2025; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hays Agricultural Research Center

These workshops are an opportunity for producers and small food businesses to learn more about selling their products through direct-to-consumers sales and other local market opportunities. Participants can connect with other producers and learn from their peers to improve their business success.

Learn more about the agenda, details for each location and the scale certification at this link: [Register for Hays workshop.](#)

# Estate Planning



**Thursday March 6th, 2025  
6p.m. - 8p.m.**

**Rush Center Township Hall  
220 Union Street  
Rush Center, KS 67575**

## **Need to start the estate planning process but don't know where to begin?**

Join us as we cover information about the fundamentals of estate planning so you will be better prepared to design and implement an effective estate plan.

Our panel will include:

- A CPA (Certified Public Accountant)
- An Attorney
- A CFP (Certified Financial Planner)
- Jason Murray, Golden Belt Community Foundation
- Kristen Schmidt, Family and Community Wellness Agent

RSVP to Kristen by March 5th by email to [kbschmidt@ksu.edu](mailto:kbschmidt@ksu.edu) or call 785-798-3921

  
**GOLDEN BELT**  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

  
**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension  
Walnut Creek District

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting the event contact, Kristen Schmidt two weeks prior to the start of the event at 785-798-3921. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# 2025 K-State NW Weed Management Schools



### Topics

- A systems approach to weed management
- Pre-emergent herbicides and climate
- Sorghum pre-emergence and weed size for post applications
- Strategic and Occasional Tillage

### Speakers

- Sarah Lancaster, K-State Extension Weed Specialist
- Jeremie Kouame, K-State Weed Scientist

There is no cost to attend. See specific location information at [www.northwest.ksu.edu/events](http://www.northwest.ksu.edu/events)

## Wednesday

February 12, 2025

5:30pm - 8:30pm

Cheyenne Co. 4-H  
Building  
North College St.  
St. Francis, KS

Sunflower District  
785-462-6281

## Thursday

February 13, 2025

9:30am - 12:30pm

Phillips County Fair  
Building  
1481 HWY 183  
Phillipsburg, KS

Phillips-Rooks District  
785-543-6845

## Thursday

February 13, 2025

5:30pm - 8:30pm

Ness County 4-H  
Building  
302 W. Nevada  
Ness City, KS

Walnut Creek District  
785-798-3921

## Monday

February 17, 2025

3:00pm - 6:00pm

Mankato Community  
Center 214 N. High  
Street  
Mankato, KS

Post Rock District  
785-282-6823

## Tuesday

February 18, 2025

9:30am - 12:30pm

St. Peter Lutheran  
Church Parish Hall  
209 S County Rd  
Holyrood, KS

Midway District  
785-472-4442  
Cottonwood District  
785-628-9430



**REGISTER NOW** >



Please register by Feb 10th  
[www.northwest.ksu.edu/events](http://www.northwest.ksu.edu/events)

# CropTalk



Webinar Series

**Broadcast Live from 12:00 –1:00 pm CT via Zoom and YouTube**

**February 11**

Weed Management in the Age of New Technology

*Sarah Lancaster, K-State Extension Weed Scientist*

**February 18**

Getting the Most Out of Your Irrigation Water

*Jonathan Aguilar, K-State Irrigation Engineer*

**February 25**

Leveraging Precision Ag Tools

*Deepak Joshi, K-State Extension Precision Ag Specialist*

**March 4**

Dryland Tillage and Rotations

*Lucas Haag, K-State Northwest Area Agronomist*



**March 11**

A New Corn Disease: Corn Stunt

*Anthony Zukoff, K-State Entomologist & Rodrigo Onofre, K-State Plant Pathologist*

**Register to attend at [www.northwest.ksu.edu/events](http://www.northwest.ksu.edu/events)**

Links for joining will be sent after registration. One Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) Credit per session has been applied for

If you have questions, please contact your local Extension agent or the K-State Northwest Research and Extension Center at 785-462-6281.

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