



November 2024

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

There are so many things to be thankful for, especially in Extension! I am thankful for a great team of co-workers, a county that feels more like a community rather than a big city, amazing, dedicated volunteers and of course you! Happy Thanksgiving!

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4-H Youth Development

48 HOURS OF 4-H SERVICE PROJECT

48 Hours of 4-H was created as a way to challenge 4-H youth to explore their service capabilities — “To Make the Best Better” in their communities, Extension units, and across the state. 4-H members are encouraged to work together on a community service project to help those in need. For this year’s 48 Hours of 4-H service project, Wyandotte County 4-H members made cat and dog toys to donate to the KCK Animal Services facility. The Nearman, Piper, and Wolcott Wanderers 4-H clubs participated by making the pet toys at their October club meetings. Additionally, 4-H members brought new toys and treats to donate to KCK Animal Services along with the handmade toys. Over 200 pet toys were made by the 4-H members and an additional 25 pet toys were donated.



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DECLUTTERING IN NOVEMBER – 7 THINGS TO CLEAR OUT FOR A NEW START

When November comes around, there are the seven things you could do to assist in clearing out your home, garages, basements, or storage units. Fresh starts can happen at any time of the year – it doesn't have to be the new year. New months, for instance, are a great time to have a clear-out. When November rolls around and fall transitions slowly into winter, it is the perfect time to edit the things you didn't use last season and the items you are getting out for the upcoming holidays. Early November is the best time to get your home storage and organizing ideas in order before the end of the year. With Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's all coming in quick succession, the start of the month is your chance to get everything ready so the remainder of the year is less stressful. Sharing the seven things you should declutter in November for a fresh start to the month to make the upcoming season run more smoothly.

1. Holiday decor you are putting away – or didn't use
2. Clear out the kitchen before holiday hosting
3. Remaining summer and spring clothing
4. Games and toys that can't be used in cold weather
5. Unused school supplies left over from September
6. Reassess your outdoor clothing collections
7. Gifting essentials

It can be a great idea to have one big declutter at the end or beginning of a year. These transitional periods are usually when your motivation is at its highest as you look for a fresh start. During that time of the year, you have a sudden influx of new things you need to make room for, and you have a good idea of what you didn't use over the last year and what you are unlikely to use again. Before you start decluttering in November, it is best to write out a decluttering checklist first, using these expert recommendations. Starting with a list will help to avoid decision fatigue when completing a monthly cutback and prevent you from launching into a full-blown house clear-out, which tends to end in overwhelm.



Nutrition and Food Safety

NOVEMBER IS AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH; WORLD DIABETES DAY- NOVEMBER 14

Blood sugar (glucose) refers to the amount of simple sugar moving through your body at any given time. Your body breaks down most of the food you eat into glucose and releases it into your bloodstream for fuel. When your blood sugar goes up, your pancreas releases the hormone insulin. Think of insulin as a key to let the blood sugar into the cells of your body for energy.

Diabetes, is a chronic health condition, in which your body doesn't make enough insulin, or can't use it as well as it should, and too much blood sugar stays in your bloodstream. Over time, serious health problems can develop such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease.

You're likely familiar with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Those who have type 1 diabetes need to take insulin every day to survive. Type 2 diabetes is the most common and is usually diagnosed in adults, although now more and more in children, teens, and young adults. With type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels. The key message about type 2 diabetes, is that it can be delayed, or even prevented, with a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and physical activity.

The benefits of physical activity can't be overstated. Exercise can help you lose weight and maintain a healthy weight. Added benefits for those with diabetes...it lowers blood sugar levels and boosts your sensitivity to insulin, which helps keep blood sugar within a normal range.

Here are specific recommendations for those with, and at risk for, diabetes:

Aerobic exercise. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate/vigorous exercise (brisk walking or running, swimming, biking) most days for a minimum of 150 minutes/week.

Resistance exercises (at least 2 times a week) increase strength, balance, and the ability to maintain an active life. Examples are lifting weights, yoga, resistance bands, and bodyweight exercises.

Limit inactivity. Breaking up bouts of inactivity can help control blood sugar levels. Be sure to stand, walk, or do some light activity every 30 minutes during the day. Take frequent stretch breaks when driving long distances or traveling.

Learn more about diabetes at www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html; <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html>; <https://diabetes.org/>

(Source: Walk Kansas Newsletter, 2023 Week Four)



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Nutrition and Food Safety

GETTING AHEAD OF THE HOLIDAY MEAL COST

It's beginning to feel like the holidays! We've prepared our kitchen and pulled out our favorite recipes (Part 1 [hyperlink](#)), stocked our shelves with canned goods (Part # [hyperlink](#)), purchased dry ingredients (Part # [hyperlink](#)), secured our favorite spices (Part # [hyperlink](#)), and filled the freezer (Part # [hyperlink](#)), it's now time to purchase the perishable items. Fresh fruits and vegetables are perishable items, and as indicated by their name, do not have a long shelf life. Dairy is also considered perishable. You will want to purchase fresh ingredients close to the time of meal preparation. Carefully select your produce to avoid over ripe or badly bruised items. This will reduce food waste and ensure optimal freshness on your holiday table.

By now you have your menu fully planned and you know exactly what items remain. You've already purchased shelf-stable and frozen food items, now all that remains are the perishable fresh items. Don't forget to check your local Farmer's Market to see what is in-season. Some local farmer's markets offer Double Bucks on their produce allowing you to save more SNAP dollars. Purchasing at your local Farmer's Market also supports local Farmer's in your area!

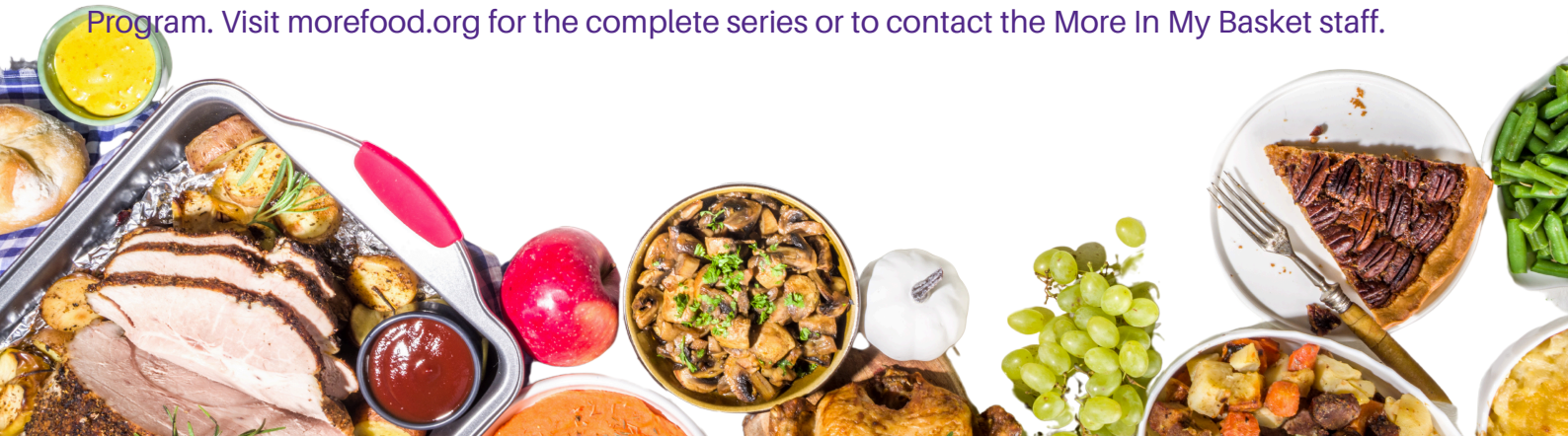
If you're unable to purchase at the Farmer's Market, you can still utilize SNAP benefits at a local grocery store.

Some of the most popular perishable items include:

- Dairy products (milk, cheese, etc)
- Fresh Breads
- Fresh Fruits
- Fresh Herbs
- Fresh Pastries
- Fresh Vegetables
- Meat (that you don't plan to freeze)

Preparing now, saves headache and money later. Try not to get caught in the holiday grocery shopping rush! Happy Holidays!

The Getting Ahead of Holiday Meal Cost series is sponsored by the More In My Basket (MIMB) Program. Visit morefood.org for the complete series or to contact the More In My Basket staff.



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NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO TEST YOUR SOIL

Soil is the foundation of any garden. It supports plant life, holds essential nutrients, and regulates water supply. For home gardeners, understanding the soil's health and composition is crucial for growing vibrant plants and achieving a bountiful harvest. This is where soil testing comes into play.

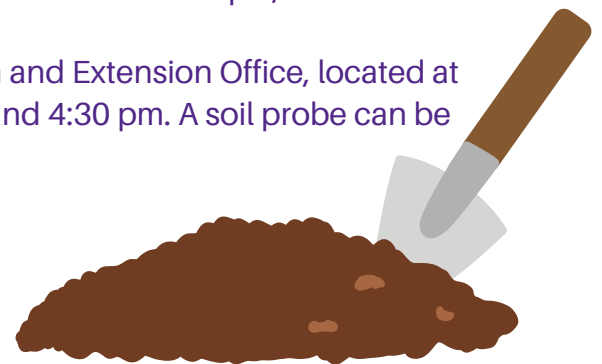
Soil is a complex mixture of minerals, organic matter, water, and air. The specific composition can greatly influence plant growth. Key components include:

- **Nutrients:** Essential elements like nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) play a significant role in plant health.
- **pH Levels:** The acidity or alkalinity of the soil affects nutrient availability. Most plants thrive in a pH range of 6.0 to 7.5.
- **Organic Matter:** This improves soil structure, moisture retention, and nutrient availability.

A soil test provides valuable insights into these components, allowing gardeners to make informed decisions. Changing these components can take time though, and so getting your soil test done before the spring will allow you to make changes early and have the soil ready to grow come planting time.

To sample your soil:

1. Use a soil probe, spade or shovel to collect the soil samples to a depth of 4-8 inches (or as deep as the roots of the crop you are growing). It is important to obtain a representative sample of the soil in the root zone. NOTE: Samples for the lawn should be taken to a depth of 4 inches; root crops like potatoes 8 inches.
2. It is generally advisable to take several samples (at least 6-8) around your garden or lawn, then combine these in a clean bucket or pail. This gives a representative sample of the entire growing area.
3. From the bucket or pail, select 1 cup to 1 1/2 cups of soil. Put the samples in a plastic bag that can be sealed (example: 1qt Ziploc bag).
4. Make sure to label the bag with your name, and address and include information on the crops grown (i.e., fescue, potato, apple). If you send more than one sample, be sure to identify each clearly.
5. Bring sample(s) to Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension Office, located at 1216 N 79th St., Kansas City, KS 66112 between 8 am and 4:30 pm. A soil probe can be checked out from the office ahead of time at no cost.



Community Development

REVISITING BECOMING AN EXTENSION DISTRICT

Back in 2009, Leavenworth and Wyandotte Counties started the process to become an Extension District. At that time, only the Wyandotte County Commissioners were willing to proceed with this model. So the idea was abandoned and both counties maintained their current structure.

Where are we now?

Leavenworth County Extension has had a flat budget for the past four years, including fiscal year 2025. Without adequate funding to address increased costs, new programming is limited. County Commissioners have asked Extension staff to find solutions to solving their budget problems before the next budget cycle.

In the summer of 2024, Wyandotte County Extension received a budget cut of \$59,500 (10%). Wyandotte County Extension has received questions from the Unified Government's Chief Financial Officer and some Executive Board members asking if forming a district would benefit our organization and help stabilize future funding.

Both County Commissions chose to remain revenue-neutral for 2025. Extension staff have been encouraged to find suggestions for cost savings in the 2026 budget cycle. In an effort to explore budget solutions, the idea of forming an Extension District has been suggested.

County extension councils receive funds from their respective counties based on their approved budget each year. Even though the actual amount each county receives is different in Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties, both are funded at a similar property tax or mill levy between .247 and .297 mills making the formation of a District much more appealing since no county would have to increase their tax rate.

Districing Facts:

History: In 1991, the Kansas Extension District Law allowed local Extension Councils and county commissions to partner with one or more counties to form an Extension district. Once formed, the extension district becomes a taxing subdivision of the State of Kansas and has the power to contract, acquire, hold, and convey real and personal property. An extension district creates opportunities to structure an extension unit to serve the needs of the residents in those counties. This framework creates more efficient, relevant, effective, and sustainable programs. In the last 33 years, 59 Kansas counties have formed into 21 Extension Districts.

Community Development

REVISITING BECOMING AN EXTENSION DISTRICT

Some observed differences that have been noted by many districts that have formed are as follows:

- **Effectiveness:** District staff become more effective; Districting allows for agents to become specialized in program areas. Specializing, grant agents the ability to focus on specific program areas with additional resources and support from other staff members. It can also alleviate burnout and increase expertise on the subject matter. They experience less burnout and intentionally focus on expertise and subject matter.
- **Relevance:** Districting helps Extension establish itself as a relevant resource for Kansas residents. We must ensure we are on the cutting edge in dealing with contemporary issues for the residents we serve. Residents expect more in-depth knowledge beyond the basics, and this framework allows for that specialty knowledge edge. Each County continues to have program development committees to help guide and shape programs to fit local community needs.
- **Efficiency:** Merging operations can lead to financial efficiencies and free up more time for programming as both counties pool their resources.
- **Sustainability:** Addressing the financial aspect of operations assures the sustainability of having K-State Research & Extension Programs in both counties. By establishing a taxing authority, the Extension District gains more flexibility to meet the needs of its personnel and operating needs and ensures continued programming.
- **Location:** If a county becomes part of a district, the local office will not close. Decisions on locations or consolidation would have to come before the 8-member board and ultimately be approved by the voters. All districts (so far) have chosen to keep all their local county offices open.
- **County Fair:** The fair associations are responsible for hosting their individual County Fair. There will not be any changes to 4-H Fair Activities. The district will continue to provide staff to support the 4-H program.
- **Taxes:** The eight members of the district governing body are representatives elected by county residents (four from each County). They, too, are taxpayers and good stewards of taxpayer money. K-State Extension Administration found that financial efficiencies allowed the mill levies to drop in several districts after the first couple of years of a district's existence.
- **Staffing:** All staff will remain employed.

Residents can find these facts and more in-depth information on forming an Extension District [here](#).

As always, please feel free to contact Denise if you have concerns or questions.

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Upcoming Events



November 11: Office Closed

November 18: Annual Meeting

November 28 & 29: Office Closed

Connect with us!



K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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