Behind the scenes but leading the way

Reaching new audiences and sharing education requires a partnership between our Extension staff, volunteers and community.

Extension Master Gardener trainees are close to completing their 40 hour volunteer commitment in exchange for the 45 hours of education they received last fall. 4-H Volunteers and parents spend numerous hours each month supporting 13 community clubs and 1 project club.

Sarah LaGrone is a part time program assistant providing support to 4-H ongoing activities. Ruth Bumgarner is working to connect SNAP eligible audiences with helpful food resources and education through her grant funded position.

Extension Agents - Becky Reid and Kelsey Nordyke - are community educators who strive to connect University resources and education with our community through practical programs and outreach efforts. We all are working together to make an impact.

Making it happen...

Ruth Bumgarner
SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator

Sarah LaGrone
4-H Program Assistant

Becky Reid
Family and Consumer Sciences

Cindy Stephens
Office Professional

Kelsey Nordyke
Agriculture and Natural Resources

2021 Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board

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ANR - Ag & Natural Resources
CD- Community Development
FCS- Family & Consumer Sciences
4-H - Youth Development

Knowledge for Life
Agriculture and Natural Resources

**Wheat Variety Test Plot and Pre-Plant Meeting**
**Partner:** Sumner, Sedgwick and Harvey Counties; KSRE Department of Agronomy; American Ag Credit; Bryant’s Ag Services
**Participants:** 60

For every $1 invested in varietal improvements, nearly $12 is earned by Kansas wheat producers. Public research in wheat breeding has resulted in higher yields for Kansas producers. On-farm and local research is critical to assist our local producers in making sound cropping decisions.

**Celebrate Ag Day**
**Participants:** 150
**Partners:** Cowley County Conservation District

The inaugural event included hands-on educational programming promoting agricultural literacy to consumers and producer meetings to aid in production. The event helps bridge the gap between rural and urban living, teaching consumers the importance of the agriculture industry, and where their food comes from.

**Supporting Producers and Landowners**

**Pond Management Workshop and Consultations**
**Participants:** 20
**Partners:** KSRE Fisheries and Aquatic Extension

Dr. Joe Gerken, KSRE Fisheries and Aquatic Extension Agent provided consultation and insight into proper pond care and maintenance. Dr. Gerken visited 6 producers to evaluate their ponds, take samples and provide tools to reach their management goals. Twenty landowners attended a workshop resulting in 5 additional pond visits scheduled for September.

**Connecting Ag Producers to Consumers**
SNAP card users are doubling their benefits up to $25 per market visit in extra tokens for locally-grown fruits and vegetables. DUFB goes along with the market’s regular SNAP (EBT) card program. When customers swipe their EBT card at the market, they get a dollar-for-dollar match in DUFB tokens, up to $25 per market day. Funding for this program is from a USDA grant to the Mid-America Regional Council.

K-State Research and Extension staff and volunteers have assisted the Cowley Farmers Market Association leadership to establish and organize the program. Vendors, customers and the market benefit from the program. Additional special events like Power of Produce (POP) Club engage youth to learn about local food and food systems.

SNAP-Ed partners with Pre-K families to promote family gardening

The Ark City Pre-K Program with Cowley County Head Start partnered with K-State Research and Extension to host family events. Families received information about community resources and the Ark City Farm and Art Market along with supplies (and a demonstration) to make guacamole, including tomato and cilantro plants.

Approximately 50 families signed up and all received a coupon to spend at the farmers markets in Arkansas City or Winfield.

SNAP-Ed and SNAP are funded by USDA’s Farm Bill. Cowley County has 1960 households receiving food assistance, the 10th highest in Kansas.
4-H Youth Entrepreneurs Breckin Campbell and Abigail Reid greet Walnut Valley Farmers Market customers with a smile.

Youth Entrepreneurs share and sell projects

4-H youth utilized their project skills at the Walnut Valley Farmers Market at the 4-H Entrepreneur Club Booth. Four members staffed the booth on 8 market dates and sold baked goods, jams and jellies, macrame creations, bowl buddies and custom wall decorations. This opportunity allowed youth to utilize marketing and customer service skills while making money!

Interactive Exhibits at Cowley County Fair

A new addition was the use of QR codes that directed Fair visitors to see “behind the scenes” of project activities. A total of 35 videos were available for static and animal exhibits with 260 views.

Lifeskills:
Public Speaking
Project Management
Organization

4-H youth have an opportunity to showcase project learning at Spring Livestock Shows, Regional and State Judging Contests and the Cowley County Fair.

Fun Facts:
- The 2021 Spring Livestock Shows had a record number of participants from Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri.
- Twenty youth have participated in Regional and State Judging Contests.