Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy

Farmers and ranchers are currently experiencing one of the biggest downturns in history with many parallels to the 1980s. Kansas Farm Management Association farms recorded a substantial drop in accrual net farm income for 2015 with the average net income at $4,568. This figure is down more than 95 percent from the net income level of $128,731 in 2014 and down from a five-year average of nearly $120,000. Commodity outlooks remain pessimistic, indicating tight financial conditions for farmers into the future.

K-State Research and Extension will address the issue by hosting the program “Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy” on January 19th at the Shawnee County Farm Bureau Office, 3801 SW Wanamaker Road in Topeka. The program will cover a host of topics to start participants thinking critically about how the farm operation might withstand these hard times. Each topic will provide the decision framework of how to evaluate what viable options or opportunities exist to become more efficient and to strengthen the farm business.

Thanks to our wonderful sponsors the program, including lunch and handouts, will be free to all participants. Sponsors include Landmark National Bank, Shawnee County Farm Bureau, First State Bank and Trust, Shawnee County Extension Education Foundation, Frontier Farm Credit, Frontier Extension District, Premier Farm and Home and Agriculture Resource Management.

Extension offices from several surrounding counties have been involved in planning the program, but participants from any county are encouraged to attend.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

8:30 AM Registration
9:00 AM Overview of the Farm Financial Situation
9:45 AM Cost of Production
10:30 AM Break
10:45 AM Maintaining Working Capital and Restructuring Debt
12:00 PM Lunch
1:00 PM How Long Can I Afford to Lose Money on Rented Ground?
1:45 PM Break
2:30 PM Is it Time to Retire?
3:45 PM Wrap-up: K-State Resources for Assistance
4:00 PM Adjourn

Registration is required and is limited to 100 participants. RSVP by calling Shawnee County Extension at 785-232-0062 ext. #0 or email Leroy Russell at lrussell@ksu.edu to reserve your handouts and lunch.
The Shawnee County Extension Office and the Shawnee County Conservation District with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service will host a series of four educational trainings in this winter’s Coffee, Cookies and Conversation series.

All programs start at 1:00 pm and end by 3 pm. Please RSVP by the day before the event to make sure we have plenty of handouts, cookies, coffee and chairs. Call 785-232-0062 or email lrussell@ksu.edu.

Each program will have a special emphasis for local crop and livestock producers.

This is a Free event open to interested land owners, crop and livestock producers.

Thanks to our sponsors:
Landmark National Bank, Shawnee County Farm Bureau, Shawnee County Extension Foundation, Frontier Farm Credit, and Premier Farm and Home.
Call Shawnee County Extension at 785-232-0062 or email Leroy Russell at lrussell@ksu.edu with questions.

Veterinary Feed Directive: How Does This Change Affect Your Livestock Business?
When: Thursday, January 26
Where: Shawnee County Farm Bureau
3801 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka
Speakers: Dr. A.J. Tarpoff, Beef Veterinarian, KSU
Dr. Dallas Caster, Auburn Animal Clinic
Chad Bullock, Premier Farm and Home

Stream Bank and Pond Care
When: Tuesday, January 31
Where: Sommerset Hall Café,
5701 SW Douglas Road, Dover
Speakers: Phil Balch, Wildhorse Riverworks, Inc.
Christy Ronse, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Pollinator Habitats
When: Thursday, February 2
Where: Shawnee County Extension Office,
1740 SW Western Ave., Topeka
Speakers: Sara Fredrickson, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Sue Ann Funk, Edu. & Outreach Coord
Douglas County Conservation District

Farm Income Tax Management In Low Income Years
When: Tuesday, February 21
Where: Shawnee County Farm Bureau
3801 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka
Speaker: Mark Dikemann, M-MAR-105 Association

January 10 through 12, 2017
Kansas Expocentre
Show Hours
Tuesday, January 10—9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 11—9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 12—9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For show information call 800-949-3976 or visit the website at www.tradexpos.com.

Please stop by the K-State Research and Extension booth at the Topeka Farm Show with your questions.
Congratulations to Berni OKonek and Jeanne Cohorst for receiving the Master Gardener Emeritus award at the annual Holiday Recognition Dinner on December 6. Emeritus is awarded to active members in good standing who demonstrate superior involvement, leadership and outstanding participation in one or more aspects of the Master Gardener program.

The Master Gardener class of 2015 has completed a full year of training and volunteerism. We look forward to your future years of service.

Each year we honor Master Gardeners for their years of service in 5 year increments. Congratulations to all.

Left to right: Bruce Woolpert, Theresa Grennan, Judy Ashbaugh, Dick Dickinson, Charles Ashbaugh, Layne Hunley, Pam Hess, Florence Deeter, Sherry Reed, Mary Kerle, Sharon Rangel, Joan Scott (Some recipients are not pictured.)

New Master Gardeners - Class 2015

Gary Sims, Kathleen Bahner, Dee Barrow, Fran McAdoo, Debbie Domingo, Kathy Wade, Debbie Dunkin

10 Years
Joy Moser, Gale Beal, Jeanne Cohorst

15 Years
Shelly Miller

20 Years
Lynn Weaver
A new way to look at small business

Entrepreneurs are discovering successful small business ventures in cottage industries with agricultural roots. You've seen them in your communities: U-pick berry farms, pumpkin patches, vineyards and wineries, meat goats, alpacas, barns with stall rentals and barns marketed as wedding venues. The only limit is your own creativity!

Workshop benefits

This workshop is packed with information to help entrepreneurs advance their ideas for their agriculture-based business and turn it into a reality. Whether you're pursuing a part- or full-time opportunity, workshop attendees will explore:

- Tips to finding regional success from Travel Kansas’ Sue Stringer.
- Developing a business plan from the Washburn Small Business Development Center.
- Zoning requirements of various industries.
- Special concerns of hobby farms.
- Available funding sources.
- Marketing and grant resources from the Kansas Department of Agriculture.
- Registering your business with Travel Kansas and From the Land of Kansas.
- Real success stories, including Ken Corbet, Ravenwood Lodge; Tim Gerhardt, CALCA Enterprises; Nikol Lohr, The Harveyville Project; and Gary Starr, Gary's Berries.

Next Step

Download an agenda at Shawnee.ksu.edu or visit the Shawnee County Extension Office in Topeka. Register for the workshop by mailing the registration form below with your payment. Register early for a discount. For questions, contact Cindy Evans, Shawnee County Extension Director, at cevans@ksu.edu or 785.232.0062 ext 110.

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From Llamas to Lodging
The possibilities of an agriculture-based business

Name ___________________________ Address ___________________________

City _______________ Zip _______________

Phone ________________

Email __________________________

___ $25 (early registration until Feb 10)
___ $40 (Feb 11-24)
Checks payable to Shawnee County Extension Council. We are unable to accept credit cards. Return registration and payment to:

Shawnee County Extension
1740 SW Western Ave.
Topeka, KS 66604

For registrations after February 24, contact Cindy Evans, cevans@ksu.edu to see if space is available. Registration is non-refundable after February 24.
Junk Science

Recently someone tagged me in a Facebook post asking if tequila was the new miracle food. Hmmm, supposedly, it will help you lose weight, aid in digestion, help the immune system, and prevent diabetes. If only this were true.

We’ve heard a lot about fake news recently but junk science and bogus health claims in the diet and nutrition world have been around for years. Consumers spend millions of dollars every year on products and diets that don’t work.

If you have made a New Year’s resolution to get in shape and eat better, here are some tips for spotting junk science:

**The Quick Fix**
A pill or supplement that promises fast weight loss without changes in diet and exercise will leave your wallet thinner but not your hips. Often these products are marketed through flashy websites, infomercials and magazines. The spokesperson may spout quite a bit of medical jargon so that it sounds real and truthful, but keep in mind they are selling something.

**It Sounds Too Good to Be True**
This goes along with the Quick Fix. It would be nice to eat the way we would like to and still be able to lose weight but this IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

**Good Food, Bad Food**
First, fat was the cause of all our poor health, then it was carbs and now it is high fructose corn syrup and white sugar. There are no good and bad foods--only good and bad diets. Moderation is the key. If you are drinking several regular sodas each day, you may want to cut back.

At the same time, diets that recommend that you eliminate complete food groups will leave your diet lacking in some of the nutrients that you need. Each food group supplies specific nutrients, so eating from all of the food groups means you will consume the nutrients you need for good health.

**Simple or Incorrect Conclusions from Scientific Studies**
A former colleague of mine did her research on the effects of caffeine on bowel movements. She found that the people in her experimental group who ingested caffeine did have more bowel movements than the control group who did not consume any caffeine. My colleague was interviewed by a tabloid and when they ran the article, the headline stated that coffee cures constipation. The study had nothing to do with coffee or constipation.

**Lack of Scientific Study**
Scientific nutrition and diet recommendations are backed up by research that takes time, can be replicated and takes into account the differences between people and populations. Don’t trust products or diets that are refuted by reputable scientific organizations, are based on one study, ignore differences between groups of people, are studies that are not peer-reviewed, or the company is using its own “research” to sell a product.

Save your money or better yet, invest it in buying and eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein.

For more information:
- [http://now.tufts.edu/articles/debunk-junk](http://now.tufts.edu/articles/debunk-junk)
New Year, New You - Myth Vs. Truth

With the beginning of the new year many people are thinking of improving their eating habits or starting an exercise routine. Often times a person’s self-limiting thoughts keep them from reaching their goals. Below are some common myths (self-limiting thoughts) related to healthful eating and physical activity and their corresponding truths.

Myth: In order to stay healthy, I am going to have to starve myself.

The Truth: Practicing proper nutrition can help you achieve a higher level of satisfaction. Healthy fats and lean protein energize your body and give you a sense of fullness. Nutritious snacks play an important role in any healthy eating plan because they can help stabilize your body’s glucose levels. Eating healthfully does not mean restricting your intake; it means making the best choices within your daily calorie needs.

Myth: If it’s healthy, it probably doesn’t taste good.

The Truth: Did you know that all food preferences are acquired tastes? If your diet is high in fat and sugar, you have trained yourself to believe that these foods taste the best. The opposite is also true. If you are accustomed to eating whole grains, you might find yourself strongly opposed to the taste of white bread. Start making small changes to incorporate healthful foods into your diet. Over time, your taste buds will actually prefer them.

Myth: I can’t afford to eat nutritious foods. They are too expensive.

The Truth: Candy, chips, pastries, and fast food items seem cheap and convenient. But will they really be worth the price five or ten years from now when you are facing medical bills that are related to illnesses that could have been prevented or controlled by better eating habits? Eating a balanced diet that includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy may require a little preparation on your part, but the amount of money you will save over time by maintaining your health can be used to do what you want to do.

Myth: I can’t exercise because I don’t belong to a gym or health club.

The Truth: There are lots of ways to stay active outside the confines of a traditional exercise facility. Check out local trails and bike paths in your neighborhood. Purchase a few workout DVDs and some hand weights for home use. Even better, check out the video selections at your local library and practice lifting household objects. Be creative! Anything goes, as long as you’re moving.

Myth: The only way to get results is to spend hours working out.

The Truth: Studies have shown similar health benefits in those who split up their workouts. Squeeze in three 10–minute sessions instead of logging 30 minutes straight. This strategy is ideal for the busy individual. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk the dog, or get in on an active game with the neighborhood kids. Small changes make a big difference.

Myth: I have never been athletic. Being physically active is too hard.

The Truth: Physical activity is not limited to athletes. If you lead an inactive lifestyle, movement may seem challenging at first. Staying physically active gets easier the more you do it. Instead of focusing on the big picture, consciously make small changes daily. Over time, you will see the benefits of your efforts.

Save the date for: March 19-May 13 2017
Stay tuned for more information next month!
January Jamboree

4-H Events Council invites all youth to our annual January Jamboree Craft Event. January Jamboree is where youth can come and make various crafts for a small fee ranging in price from free to $3. Examples of past crafts are birdfeeders, kaleidoscopes, greeting cards and painted tiles just to name a few! This is a great event to invite your friends to and they can learn about 4-H while making crafts.

January Jamboree is January 7th, 1pm to 4pm at Countryside United Methodist Church, 3221 SW Burlingame Rd. (South entrance). Concessions will also be available at the event. Come enjoy an afternoon of friends and craft at Shawnee County 4-H January Jamboree!

4-H Jr. Sr. Lock-In

The weather might be getting colder, but our 4-H spirit isn't! For any 4-H’er who is looking to help spread the word of 4-H, learn easy ways to help the community, and participate in several fun games and activities, Jr/Sr Lock-in is for them! The theme for the Lock-in this year will be Beach Party, and youth are invited to dress up in appropriate beach attire. Pizza will be provided for participants, as well as several snack items brought in by 4-Hers that night. Basketball, swimming, dancing, board games, and ping-pong, are some of the many activities which will be available for 4-Hers to play during the event.

You can also invite your friends to attend by having them complete a registration and health form. Both are available at the Extension office or on the Extension website. Registration is due January 5th.

Lock-In will start at 7 p.m. at the SW YMCA on Saturday, January 14th. Junior 4-Hers (5th-7th grade) will need to be picked up at 10:30 pm, while senior 4-Hers (grades 8th-12th) stay until midnight. Jr/Sr Lock-in is a great way to be able to beat the cold weather, learn something new, and have a fun time with friends! Hope to see you there!

Kansas 4-H Scholarships

The 2017 Kansas 4-H Scholarship application for high School seniors and current college students in now available. This one application will get a youth considered for more than two dozen Kansas 4-H Scholarships. Scholarships are scored on leadership, citizenship and 4-H participation.

The Scholarship requires transcripts and letters of recommendation so don’t delay on filling it out. All the materials are due to the Shawnee County Extension office on January 25th. You can find the application on the Shawnee County 4-H website at http://www.shawnee.ksstate.edu/4-h/scholarships/.
DECEMBER 2016
Dec. 23 & 26 Office closed for Christmas Day holiday

JANUARY 2017
Jan. 2 Office closed for New Year’s holiday
Jan. 7 4-H January Jamboree, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Countryside United Methodist Church
Jan. 10 Executive Board Mtg., 5:30 p.m., EMR
Jan. 10-12 Topeka Farm Show, Expocentre
Jan. 14 4-H Junior/Senior Lock-In, Southwest YMCA, registration required
Jan. 16 Office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s holiday
Jan. 19 Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy, Shawnee County Farm Bureau, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Jan. 19 Starting Seeds From Home, 10:00 a.m., TSCPL
Jan. 19 Starting Seeds From Home, 7:00 p.m., TSCPL
Jan. 26 Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation Series Veterinary Feed Directive: How Does This Change Affect Your Livestock Business?, Shawnee County Farm Bureau, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Jan. 31 Landscaping With a Common Language, 9:00 a.m. to Noon, EMR, call to register
Jan. 31 Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation Series Stream Bank and Pond Care, Dover Sommerset Hall Café, 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2017
Feb. 2 Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation Series Pollinator Habitats, Shawnee County Extension Office, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Feb. 9 & 10 Women Managing the Farm, Manhattan, Kansas
Feb. 10-12 Kansas Garden Show, Expocentre
Feb. 14 Executive Board Mtg., 5:30 p.m., EMR
Feb. 17 Ag Stewardship, 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., Overbrook
Feb. 21 Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation Series Farm Income Tax Management In Low Income Years, Shawnee County Farm Bureau, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its 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 our office at 785-232-0062.

EMR—Extension Meeting Room (upper southwest corner of 1740 SW Western Avenue)
Vegetable Garden—Expocentre parking lot by old locomotive
TSCPL—Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th
Downtown Topeka Farmers Market—12th and Harrison, south of the Judicial Building