Frontier Extension District # 11

Retirement Announcement
Nancy Schuster, District Agent, Nutrition, Health and Food Safety, retired from the Frontier Extension District in October, 2016, after 44 years of service to K-State Research and Extension and the Frontier Extension District.

Nancy managed the district’s Family Nutrition Program (FNP) grant and was responsible for supervising two FNP Program Assistants. Grant goals are to provide nutrition education to individuals and families eligible for food assistance by collaborating with community agencies in the Frontier District. Nancy also gave leadership to the Walk Kansas program, a team-based fitness program that helps individuals lead a healthier life. Her Master Food Volunteer program provided approximately 40 hours of training in food science, food preparation, food preservation and food safety to participants. After completing the training, class members contributed a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service back to the community. Nancy also presented numerous classes for individuals interested in food preservation, food safety, and food preparation. Dozens of youth learned culinary skills from her youth cooking camps. K-State Research and Extension is “dedicated to a safe, sustainable, competitive food and fiber system and to strong, healthy communities, families and youth through integrated research, analysis and education.” Nancy exemplified the university’s mission statement and made a positive difference for residents in the Frontier Extension District.

National 4-H Week
Nearly six million 4-Hers from across the nation celebrated America’s largest youth development organization during National 4-H Week, October 2-8. This year’s theme was “#4-HGrown,” highlighting that in 4-H, we believe in the power of youth and that 4-H empowers young people with skills to lead for a lifetime. In the Frontier Extension District, 4-H projects have often sparked interests in 4-H club members that later led to a career.

Kurtis Wilk, a 12-year member of the Willing Workers 4-H Club in Osage City, is one of many such examples. Kurtis participated in the rocketry project for seven years creating and launching rockets he built. Today, he is well on his way to becoming a professional pilot. A sophomore professional pilot major at Kansas State University Polytechnic, Kurtis has earned his stripes in private pilot and is working on his commercial pilot rating. Kurtis credits 4-H with helping to spark this interest, as well as helping to develop his public speaking, leadership, and self-confidence skills.
Wheelchair Accessible Garden Planters
By growing vegetables in raised, wheelchair accessible garden planters, residents at two senior residential living sites learned that gardening is an activity that can be adapted to all sorts of special needs. Under the direction of the Frontier Extension District Horticulture Agent, twelve residents and two staff members at the Anderson County Hospital Long-Term Care Unit in Garnett learned about and planted sweet potatoes in a raised garden planter. Likewise, the Vintage Park Retirement Community in Osage City had twelve residents and one staff member participate in growing fall garden vegetables including radishes, lettuce and carrots. Materials to construct the raised planters included treated lumber, deck boards, wheels, fasteners and half of a 30-gallon plastic barrel. Research has found that gardening can produce emotional benefits for older or disabled individuals, relieve stress and improve motor skills.

Low Stress Cattle Handling Workshop
Two hundred cattle producers that own/manage over 44,000 head of cattle, gathered in Williamsburg this fall to learn about Low Stress Cattle Handling (LSCH) in a workshop sponsored by the Frontier Extension District. Dr. Tom Noffsinger, was the featured speaker, along with Dr. Dave Rethorst. Stockmanship, an under-appreciated and under-utilized component of operating a sustainable livestock operation, is one of the elements of low stress livestock handling, according to Dr. Noffsinger. When Low Stress Cattle Handling practices are incorporated, producers can work the same number of livestock with less people, in less time, and with less stress on both the animal and the workers. Additional benefits include performance, efficiency, safety, animal welfare, weight gain, conception rates, milk yield, immune function and carcass quality.

Today's consumer is becoming more and more concerned with the welfare of animals used for food consumption, along all phases of the food production chain. Stress on an animal at any point along the journey from pasture to plate decreases productivity of the animal, profitability to the producer and quality of product to the consumer. Low Stress Cattle Handling practices, according to Dr. Rethorst, help producers provide a safe, wholesome beef product and also assure consumers that cattle have been properly cared for from conception to consumption.

Evaluations from the workshop showed that attendees greatly raised their level of understanding of the Low Stress Cattle Handling concepts. Participants increased their knowledge of how such practices can enhance the safety of the producer and the cattle, and how calm handling can improve performance, as well as produce higher quality meat products.