Frontier Extension District # 11

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4-H CWF Program Builds Citizenship:
Thirteen 4-H delegates and two adult sponsors from the Frontier Extension District participated in the 2012 Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) workshop in Washington DC this summer. The week long workshop was about understanding the democratic process and civic responsibilities. Rather than learning about citizenship, leadership, and community involvement from a textbook, the 4-H members had an experiential classroom in Washington DC. Time was spent visiting legislators on Capitol Hill, as well as studying history by visiting monuments, memorials, and government buildings. About half of the workshop time was spent at the National 4-H Center. The 4-H members served on committees that focused on healthy living, communication, government, talent, and responsibility. They learned how a bill becomes a law, debated current issues in a mock congressional session, and developed an action plan.

4-H delegate comments following the CWF trip included:

"I learned from this trip that you can do anything and go anywhere. It may just take time for things you want to do."

"We didn't just learn about all the great people before us, we learned leadership and other skills when we were there. We will take these skills back home and put them to use."

"We have learned a lot over the past ten days. Before we came, we had nooo idea how to even begin writing a bill or doing an action plan. We also got to do a lot of things that people usually don't get to do."

"I learned a lot during this trip like becoming a leader, standing up for what is right, and being a good citizen."

"Every second of this trip I treasured and learned something. I learned a lot about our government and was able to meet our Senator and Representative. I learned more about bills and action plans and about the history of our country. The other thing that I was able to learn was to be even more open-minded and have a more worldly view."

"My favorite part was the Holocaust Museum. It was breathtaking. There was so much that happened that I never knew."

"I think anyone who has the opportunity to go on the CWF trip should go, because it's a once in a lifetime trip!"
**Frontier Extension District**

**Walk Kansas Healthy Fitness Program:**

Approximately 300 participants in the Frontier Extension District formed teams of six people to participate in the 2012 Walk Kansas healthy lifestyles program. When each member of the team reached the minimum goal for physical activity during the eight weeks of the program, the team would collectively walk 423 miles, which is the distance across the state of Kansas.

Participants logged minutes of activity and the amount of fruits and vegetables they ate each week. Team progress was reported weekly by captains and recorded at [www.walkkansas.org](http://www.walkkansas.org). Each participant received a weekly newsletter and the Walk Kansas website provided information on healthy lifestyle habits including “how to” videos for selecting and preparing nutritious foods, walk techniques, strengthening exercises and more.

Participants in Walk Kansas are challenged to lead a healthier life by being more physically active, making better nutrition choices and dealing with stress more effectively. The public value of this program is realized when Frontier Extension District residents adopt healthy lifestyle habits which will lead to fewer weight-related chronic and acute diseases and improved quality of life. This benefits the community members by lowering the public cost of health care and health insurance and increasing the number of productive contributing citizens.

**Summer Drought Leads To More Fall Problems for Livestock Producers:**

This year’s drought has caused pastures to burn up and ponds to go dry. Some that didn’t go dry were poisoned by blue-green algae. This fall, a public meeting “Winter Feeding Strategies – What Can I Do?” was held to help producers find answers to questions. Extension Specialists discussed ways to stretch forage resources for cow herds, talked about planting fall forages, and pasture management.

As a result of the meeting, well over 100 samples were sent to K-State to be tested for nitrates. The tests included samples of corn stalk hay, corn for silage, soybean hay, wheat, rye and barley pasture, turnips and radishes. Of the samples sent in for nitrate testing, 46% were relatively safe for utilization by all classes of livestock, and 17% were moderately safe, which meant limiting use for stressed animals such as newly weaned calves, pregnant cows, or lactating cows. Moderately safe samples should comprise only 50% of the total diet. In addition, 14% of the samples tested were potentially toxic to cattle, which meant that it should not be the only feed source, and 23% of the samples were dangerous to cattle and often would cause death. Because turnips, radishes, rye, wheat, and barley seem to be very high in nitrates this fall, producers are encouraged to recheck any forages before turning cattle out to graze.

Since nitrates affect progesterone levels, bred cows should be limited to 3000 ppm nitrates or less in the total diet or abortions could occur. Stocker calves can tolerate higher levels and can adapt to increasing amounts of nitrates over time. Thus, 54% of the samples tested should not be fed to pregnant or lactating cows without blending feedstuffs to reduce nitrate levels below the 3000 ppm mark.

Combined, all the nitrate tests sent in for analysis through the Frontier Extension District have cost area producers approximately $500. This cost is less than the value of one stocker calf that could have died from grazing on high nitrate forages, or the value of a calf that may have been aborted had the cow consumed high nitrate feeds.

Alfatoxins were found in the grain of many corn fields this fall. Alfatoxins can be blended down with other feedstuffs to levels livestock can use. K-State Research and Extension is recommending producers feeding corn to add ten pounds of bentonite clay per ton of feed. The bentonite clay will absorb about 50% of the alfatoxins in the diet inside the cattle’s rumen. By reducing the alfatoxins in the grain, producers will have less liver damage and will see increased rates of gain.

Blue green algae is also a concern going into this Fall, but, as water temperatures fall below 55 degrees, the algae will die. Toxins are released upon the death of the blue green algae and generally two weeks after a clean water test, producers can use the ponds, assuming they have water. Nearly half of the ponds in the area are dry or nearly dry. Even those that do contain water can be death traps for livestock as mud is preventing many ponds from being used this fall. Many ponds will freeze dry this winter.