

Outstanding
Local Unit Award

presented to

Cowley County

October 2023



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Cowley County

**COWLEY COUNTY
EXTENSION**

Making A Difference

IN OUR COMMUNITY



COWLEY COUNTY EXTENSION NAMED OUTSTANDING LOCAL UNIT OF THE YEAR



Name, Title, Starting year

Becky Reid, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent - 2010
Cindy Stephens, Office Professional - 2012
Sarah LaGrone, 4-H Youth Development Agent - 2022
Sarah McAlister, SNAP-Ed Educator - 2023

2023 Part-time staff:

Jewell Falletti, Office Clerk
Harper Haynes, Intern
Diane Mettling, Program Coordinator
Audrie Bailey, Fair Assistant

August 5, 2023: Winfield, Kansas in the headlines because of significant tree damage and power outages that impacted the Cowley County Fair and the entire town.

The Cowley County Extension staff were on site, working with Fair Board members and city officials to ascertain safety considerations and next steps. We had three more days of the county fair, including shows for swine, dairy goats, and dairy cattle and static exhibit judging for fiber arts, visual arts, and photography. The community pitched in, power was restored to a few areas of the fairgrounds, and activities resumed with modified schedules. Throughout the process, Extension Agents Sarah LaGrone and Becky Reid communicated with partners to explore possibilities and identify solutions.

This situation is an example of the team approach that Sarah, Becky, and their office staff utilize for all programs and opportunities.

Sarah shares her philosophy that “we need people to love green (4-H) before they are willing to bleed green.” Basic changes have been made to create a family friendly environment, including adding beginner classes to the county fair for geology, entomology, rocketry, and architectural block construction. 4-H enrollment deadlines have been modified to allow youth to add projects up to the date of fair entry deadlines. Families now have extra resources, such as a fair family training night featuring activity stations and a printed “family fair guide” to help first time (and repeat) participants.

This award is presented by Kansas State Research and Extension administration to recognize excellence in programming, personnel, and budget management for one county or district in Kansas.

Cowley County 4-H received a \$50,000 financial gift from the Bill House Foundation in September 2022 for livestock programming for 2022-23. Sarah has organized a local “catch-a-calf” program and organized numerous trips, trainings, and hands-on experiences for community youth. She has utilized social media to generate interest and recognize youth for their efforts. She is identifying new volunteers and creating a vision to “make the best better.”

Cowley County Extension is coordinating logistics for a \$20,000 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant for the Cowley Farmers Market Association. Becky has coordinated numerous “Power of Produce” (aka POP Club) events to help youth learn about local food systems and try new produce. Relationships and processes have been refined to promote SNAP-EBT transactions, Double Up Food Bucks and Triple Match incentive programs to attract new customers to the market.

Cowley County’s Extension Master Gardeners are active with a variety of efforts, including a start-up gardening program at the Winfield Correction Facility. The onsite garden club has 23 members with 33 garden plots. Harvested produce is distributed by master gardener volunteers to the local food pantry, senior center, low-income housing, Community Health Center and a local thrift store. The local Council on Aging has coolers on the shuttle buses to share produce grown by the Winfield Correctional Facility garden project.

Family and Consumer Science programming is offered throughout the county. One of Becky’s favorite programs is Stay Strong Stay Healthy, a strength training program for older adults. She utilizes a rural church gym that attracts participants from multiple communities and provides a social opportunity with strength training. She also partners with Cowley College Golden Tigers, a community enrichment program for ages 50+, to offer Extension classes.

PERSONNEL

Sarah LaGrone grew up in Cowley County 4-H and worked as the local office summer helper in 2012 and 2013. In 2021, she rejoined the staff as a part-time 4-H Program Assistant and transitioned to the full time 4-H Extension Agent in April 2022. She shares her passion for youth and volunteer development using new methods and media.

Sarah has managed a unique work situation, being a breastfeeding mom of twin boys. Case and Caden LaGrone have been part of the Cowley County Extension team since April 2022 when they started coming to the office with their mom. Their confined area slowly grew as their activity level increased. The entire office team embraced this opportunity to support a professional colleague trying to find a balance between work and family. The team was transparent with the local Extension board and would challenge other local units to consider how they can support employees.

Becky Reid grew up in Republic County 4-H with Susan (Johnson) Farley as one of her local agents. She also worked as a summer Extension Office helper and accepted a 4-H Agent position for Colorado State University after college. She has been part of the Cowley County Extension team since 2010 and loves helping families and consumers with their health and wealth. She also coordinates the local Extension Master Gardener program with 15 volunteers.

Cindy Stephens is in her 11th year as Office Professional. She goes above and beyond using a professional and positive approach. She has helped mentor new agents and part time staff with efficiency and accuracy.

Sarah McAlister started as the Southeast SNAP-Ed Nutrition educator on August 7. She is an excellent addition to our local team and will serve the community with enthusiasm.

BUDGET

Within the past 10 years, Cowley County had three agents with a county appropriation of \$186,000. When that appropriation was reduced to \$180,000, our local County Commissioners challenged our local Extension Board to be creative. In response, the Friends of Cowley County Extension was formed and coordinated a dinner with live and silent auctions and raffle drawing in 2017. That first event raised ~\$20,000 but also gathered 200+ Extension supporters in a room for fellowship and fun. The annual “Fall for Extension” event now raises over \$30,000 to support educational programs of Cowley County Extension.

In late 2020, Cowley County Extension’s appropriation was again reduced. for the upcoming fiscal year. At \$153,000, the local board could not financially afford filling the third agent position. Thus, a program assistant was hired and the two-agent team split duties to serve the Cowley County community.

Our local Extension Council Executive Board strives to be good stewards with our resources. Earlier this year, the board worked with K-State Research and Extension administration and accounting personnel to determine logistics for investing in short term Certificates of Deposit for six and twelve months. These financial efforts may not provide enough resources for our local unit to return to a three-agent team. However, the Cowley County Extension team, local Extension board and volunteers are committed to serving our community.

SUMMARY

Across Kansas, there are great people and programs being coordinated by K-State Research and Extension. Cowley County Extension makes the best better for our community youth but also connects people with the resources they need. We hope to “raise the bar” for other Extension units to serve their communities with creative programs and excellence.



FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES



2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**\$25,000
in grants**



Becky received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. She was a workshop presenter at the national session in Providence, RI.

Angels in the Attic
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas
Central of Burden Schools
City-Cowley County Health Department
Communities Organizing to Promote Equity (COPE project)
Community Health Center of Cowley County
Cowley County Council on Aging
Cowley County Fair Association & Auxiliary
Cowley County Farm Bureau
Cowley College- Golden Tigers
Cowley County Head Start
Cowley Farmers Market Association
Eagle Nest, Inc.
KSOK/ BOB FM
Legacy Regional Community Foundation
RISE Cowley
School districts
Udall Public Library
Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute
William Newton Hospital
Winfield Correctional Facility
Winfield Food Pantry
Winfield Public Library

PARTNERS



View video at
[risecowley.org](https://www.risecowley.org) highlighting
local food efforts:



HEALTH & WELLNESS



2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Walk with Ease (12 classes)

9 participants

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

(16 classes/session)

Level 1 - 3 sessions, 44 participants

Level 2 - 1 session, 10 participants

Dining with Diabetes (4 classes)

19 participants

Hypertension Awareness & Prevention Project

9 participants (pilot project)

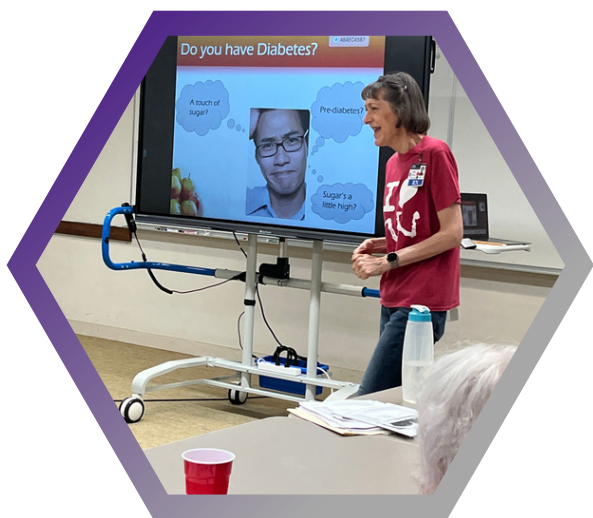
Nutrition seminars - 13 participants

Med Instead of Meds (6 classes)

23 participants

Sitter Solutions (1 class)

5 participants



Community partners and volunteers assist with Dining with Diabetes.



Participants explore types of cooking oil in Dining with Diabetes and Med instead of Meds.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Early Childhood Partnerships

Soup Sampler
Veggies & Wheels

Community Events

Celebrate Ag
Cowley County Fair
Winfield 150th Time Capsule (5th graders)
Downtown Doc Walk
Health & Safety Fair
Health & Housing Event
Herb Road Show (3 destinations)
Juneteenth
Senior Expo
Winterization Event



Cowley County Extension was a partner with William Newton Hospital's Downtown Doc Walks and served as a snack/gathering destination.

PILOT PROGRAM: HYPERTENSION AWARENESS & PREVENTION PROJECT



SITUATION - As of 2019, about 37% of adults in Cowley County were diagnosed with high blood pressure (140/90 mm Hg or higher).

Cowley County was one of 11 pilot sites in Kansas to implement the 4-month Hypertension Awareness & Prevention Project.

PARTNERSHIPS - Clinical and community partners were essential throughout the pilot.

Cowley County's Local Health Equity Action Team was formed as part of Communities to Promote Equity (COPE). The project activates a network of public health and community-based organizations, community health workers, and partners in counties throughout Kansas. Cowley County was one of the host sites for Community Health Workers, so it was a natural partnership to pilot the Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Project.



RESULTS - Participants enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about hypertension and the importance of reducing sodium. At each nutrition workshop, participants reviewed menus or food labels to consider simple changes. The workshops attracted 11-13 participants each month and 9 participants were part of the pilot project.

“Creating environments to help make healthy choices easier takes time. As consumers, we can choose healthier options. It does take time and practice to learn about food labels and food preparation methods that support health.” - Becky Reid

Participants received market dollars that could be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the local farmers markets. This reinforcement was well received by participants.

Participants received a blood pressure monitor and had monthly check-in opportunities to self-monitor their blood



The Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Project will be offered again in 2024. Contact the Extension Office if you are interested in participating.



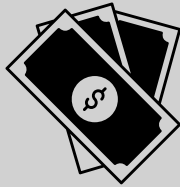
6 events



207 youth

Special thanks to our financial partners:

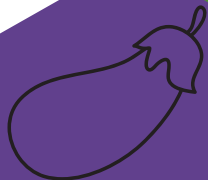
- Cowley County Farm Bureau
- Local Health Equity Action Team
- Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant



\$1,162
distributed



\$806 spent at
markets



87 tried veggies
and would eat
again



123 learned
something new



POP Club (aka Power of Produce)
features special events at the Ark City
Farm and Ark Market and Walnut Valley
Farmers Market in Winfield.



SNAP-ED PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

SNAP-Ed pairs with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to provide education and support to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyle.

Sarah McAlister is the SNAP-Ed educator serving Southeast Kansas and is based in the Winfield office. She provides educational programs in Cowley and surrounding counties.

Classes within a series include physical activity, a nutrition lesson, taste-tests of healthy recipes, and are evaluated with a pre and post test.

Approximately 11% of households in Cowley County receive SNAP benefits.

SNAP and SNAP-Ed are both funded federally through the Farm Bill. In Kansas, both programs are coordinated through the Department of Children and Families (DCF).



The SNAP-Ed educator is 100% grant funded



Direct Education Classes

- Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness at Winfield Middle School
- Six-session class series each quarter
- Fresh Conversations at Friendship Meal Sites in Eureka, Cedar Vale, Howard, and Windsor Court Apartments (Arkansas City)
- 11-session class series
- Create Better Health at Angels in the Attic Outreach Center (Arkansas City) and Sumner Co. Extension Office (Wellington)
- Six-session class series each quarter

How can SNAP-Ed partners help?

Local community organizations, coalitions, and groups can:

- Advertise and promote SNAP-Ed classes
- Be a host site for classes
- Refer, recruit, and remind potential class participants

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS



2023 ACTIVITIES

Cowley County Extension Master Gardeners

Janet Anderson-Heller
Michelle Boyts
Jenna Dunn
Donna Jackson
Joy Kennedy
Jody Lawrence
Carol Mackey
Bob McGregor
Nancy McGregor
Amy Jo McWhirt
Kent Miller
Becky Reid
Deborah Schwyhart
Dora Trammel
Kathy Wohlgemuth
+ 23 gardeners at Winfield
Correctional Facility

- Central of Burden Schools presentations & garden
- Prairie Pollinators workshop at Celebrate Ag & Cowley College Golden Tigers
- Herb Road Show at Winfield Public Library, Cowley College Golden Tigers & Winfield Correctional Facility
- Worm Team- vermicomposting experience
- Cowley County Fair - 4-H plant science assistance
- Celebrate Ag, Cowley County Health & Safety Fair, Cowley Farmers Market Association
- Winfield Correctional Facility Garden - over 4,500 pounds donated to these sites:
 - Winfield Thrift Store
 - Community Health Center of Cowley County
 - Rehwinkel Hall
 - Mundinger Halls 1 & 2
 - Baden Square Senior Center
 - Winfield Housing
 - Walnut Towers
 - Cowley County Council on Aging (shuttle bus)
 - Canterbury Village
 - Winfield Food Pantry
 - Winfield Friendship Meals



Search YouTube for: WCFGardenPgm video

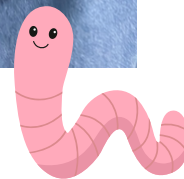


Micro green planting
at Herb Road Show
Container Gardening
Vermicomposting



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Master Gardener





COMMUNITY CLUBS

Burden
Cameron
Country View
Dexter/Otto
Floral
Martha Washington
Muddy Creek
Sunrise
Tisdale
Udall
Walnut Valley

PROJECT CLUB

Shooting Sports



APPROVED
TO DATE
GROWING DAILY
2023-2024

Volunteers-49
Club Members-249
Cloverbuds-32



COWLEY COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

4-H was seen in 5 public schools and 1 public library with multiple different programs like Willie and the Beanstalk(2 school classrooms), Chick Embryology, Goat Birthing, Swine Production, History of Dairy Production in Cowley County and Wheat Production.



WILLIE AND THE BEAN STALK

3 4-H K-8th Willie and the Beanstalk teams- Jasper Tatum was 1st in the state in Largest Leaf and Most Trifoliates and 2nd in Plant height and biomass. Caleb Krepps ranked 3rd in overall placing in the state with Plant Height and Documentation ranking 3rd.



LIVESTOCK JUDGING

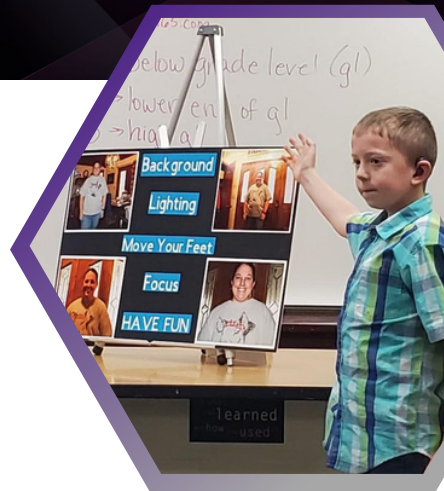
6 Livestock Judging Contests including State Sweepstakes. 10 youth participating with various practices



COWLEY COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

COUNTY 4-H DAY

40 youth participated in contests like impromptu speaking, demonstrations, illustrated talks, piano solos, gavel games, favorite foods and more.



DISCOVERY DAYS

2 youth attended Discovery Days in Manhattan, Kansas exploring opportunities.

4-H DAY WITH WILDCATS

4 youth enjoyed a wildcat women's basketball game with 4-Hers around the state.

JR. LEADERS AND AMBASSADORS

Cowley County has 10 active Jr. Leaders members and 3 4-H Ambassadors that have been busy in our county this year.

48 HOURS OF 4-H

The 4-H Council county-wide community service project was collecting 184 pairs of shoes to be donated to support the theme "100 years of walking in Cowley 4-H." Local clubs completed other service projects.



COWLEY COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



HANDS ON LIVESTOCK EXPERIENCES

50+ youth explored 17 booths to learn from local vets and professionals about bovine AI, tagging, ultrasound, animal body parts, bio security, injections, chick embryology, dairy production, roping and more.



RCB BANK TOUR

10 4-H youth attended the RCB Bank tour to meet our local bankers and learn about the banking system.

K-STATE UNIVERSITY TOUR

9 youth were able to tour the Ag Department at K-State, including meeting the rodeo coach.

LIVESTOCK WORKSHOPS AND SPRING SHOWS

Almost 15 workshops were held from May-July for all species and multiple different project areas led by professionals covering nutrition, daily care, showmanship and fitting. Two spring livestock shows were also held.

OFFICER TRAINING

over 60 youth from 12 Cowley clubs and 4 youth from Butler County attended the Officer Training to learn how to lead their clubs in the new year.



COWLEY COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

YQCA TRAINING

16 youth participated in YQCA Training to better their knowledge and skills in animal husbandry and skills.

CARCASS EVALUATION

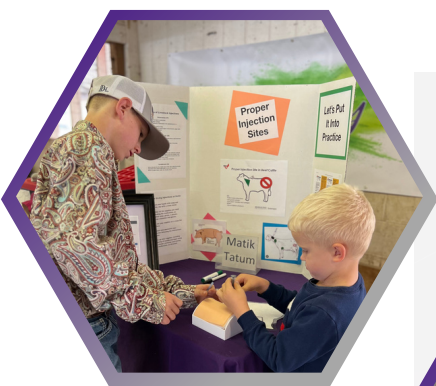
13 youth visited Walnut Valley Packing to review the Catch a Calf steer carcasses and learn from Greg Davis on carcass grading

SOUTH EAST AREA RESEARCH CENTER TOUR

3 youth traveled to Parsons to meet Dr. Jaymelyn Farney and learn about the Research Center. Several even put their arms in a rumen canal.

CELEBRATE AG

Youth talked to Celebrate Ag attendees about their projects, 4-H and Ag Skill-A-Thon.





HOUSE FOUNDATION DONATION IMPACT



◆◆◆◆ OPEN HOUSE DINNER



With more than 80 individuals in attendance we celebrated the year in review and impact of the House Foundation donation. We enjoyed a meal and heard from guest speaker Greg Davis on feeding your beef projects. 4 individuals were awarded gift cards for their great program attendance and 2 youth attendees were also drawn for a gift card. 4 individuals were awarded cash prizes for their



Production Essays submissions

◆◆◆◆ CATCH A CALF PROGRAM

At the Open House we heard from our 2022-2023 Catch a Calf Participants and cheered on the 2023-2024 participants. These outstanding youth have applied to take the next step in learning how to raise a beef project. These youth applied, interviewed and caught their steers. They will learn how to take care of their animals and compete at the 2024 County Fair. There is various steps these youth have to take to push them further with this opportunity.



◆◆◆◆ EDUCATION SIMULATOR INVESTMENTS

A portion of the foundation donation is invested in Educational Simulators that can be used for a wide variety of programs, opportunities and school enrichment. Large purchases in 2022-23 included Bovine Breeders, Calf Simulator, Pig Litter Processor, Bovine Mammary System Model, Bovine Stomach Model. We are excited to announce 2023-2024 Investments are a VR Welding Simulator, Swine Breeder and Cow Model.



BILL HOUSE FOUNDATION DONATION

\$50,000
2023-2024

COWLEY COUNTY 4-H LIVESTOCK PROGRAMMING



COWLEY COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



COWLEY COUNTY FAIR

286 exhibitors, 2,478 Entries and a surprise 6:00 a.m. storm on Saturday morning made the 2023 Fair memorable and great. This year there were many firsts that opens the door for more opportunities: 4-H Jr. Rodeo, Catch a Calf Show, Breeding Bull show, Fitting Contest, beginner static classes and more.



4-H ACHIEVEMENT NIGHT

We are so proud of our Cowley County Youth! 8 clubs received seals and 9 youth submitted Officer books. We recognized 20 junior project record books/ Achievement pin applications, 16 intermediates, 11 seniors, and 1 Key Award winner - Jacob Arnett. Youth were awarded \$3,000 in Scholarships. We enjoyed an evening of celebration, a potluck, and hearing from guest speaker Dr. Sarah Maass, our State 4-H Youth Development Program Director



2023 Leadership

Executive Board Members

Beau Bailey, CD, Chair
Kacey Preston, FCS, Vice Chair
Aimee Campbell, FCS, Secretary
Kent Miller, ANR, Treasurer
Angie Krepps, 4-H
Jessica Martin, CD
Jim McClung, ANR
Jamie McGee, CD
Will Tatum, ANR

Commissioners

Wayne Wilt, District 1
Bob Voegelé, District 2
Alan Groom, District 3

State of Kansas Legislators

14th District - Senator Michael Fagg
32nd District - Senator Larry Alley
12th District - Rep. Doug Blex
79th District - Rep. Webster Roth
80th District - Rep. Bill Rhiley

Central Region Extension Director

Aliesa Good, Colby, KS

Director for Extension

Gregg Hadley, Manhattan, KS

Dean of Agriculture, Director of Agriculture Experiment Station and Director of Extension

J. Ernest "Ernie" Minton, Manhattan, KS



In Memory Rick Meyer Friend of 4-H

Rick Meyer was selected by Cowley County 4-H to receive the 2023 Friend of 4-H Award. His name is engraved on a perpetual plaque that will be displayed at the Cowley County Extension Office and during events at the 4-H Food Stand.

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting Becky Reid two weeks prior to the start of the event at 620-221-5450 or bkreid@ksu.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.