

# Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

## Central Kansas Extension District

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**October 2020**

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Management

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Nutrition, Food Safety  
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## Women in Ag: Farm Programs and Crop Insurance

The ***Farm Programs and Crop Insurance*** Women in Ag meeting originally scheduled in April, and postponed due to the Safer-at-Home order, has been rescheduled for Thursday, November 12 at 6:30 p.m.

Join us on Zoom and learn what FSA and NRCS have to offer, including farm programs, conservation programs, livestock disaster programs, acreage reporting and payment eligibility. Crop insurance as a risk management tool will also be discussed. Panelists include Amanda Ahrens and Kevin W Vondra with Farm Service Agency, Kristin Kuntz, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Jay Wisbey, K-State Research and Extension.

If you are a woman involved in agriculture, whether producer, spouse, landlord, or are interested in learning more, plan to attend this free Women in Ag program. The program will be live via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/Fall2020WIA>. The link to join the meeting will be sent via email after you register. Call the K-State Research & Extension office in Salina at 785-309-5850, or Amanda Ahrens at 785-825-8269 if you have questions.

This Women in Ag meeting is sponsored by K-State Research & Extension -Central Kansas District, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, American Ag Credit, Saline County Conservation District, and Saline County Farm Bureau.



## Medicare Update

The Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) was announced in October. Those receiving Social Security benefits of any kind should see a 1.3% increase in their gross amount for 2021. As of this writing, we do not have the Medicare Part B premium for 2021, nor the Part A and B deductibles and copays.

Drug plan information for 2021 was released mid-September. There are 29 plans available to beneficiaries. The lowest premium plan is a new plan from SilverScript with a premium of \$7.30. There are several area pharmacies that are out-of-network with this plan, so before enrolling in a new plan based solely on a cheap premium be sure to check out pharmacy access in addition to coverage of your medications.

Mutual of Omaha is eliminating their Value plan in 2021. Members are being automatically enrolled in their Plus plan which will have a \$74 premium. They are also adding a Premier plan with a \$23 premium. It will be important for any beneficiary currently enrolled in the Mutual of Omaha Value plan to compare plans this year as a cheaper option will almost certainly be available.

We do have a few plans available in Kansas with lower insulin copays. Medicare beneficiaries using Novolog, Humalog, Novolin, or Lantus or the generic options **may** be able to find cheaper copays on these medications with coverage in the gap. It will depend on which of these is used and what other medications are taken. Comparing plans will help you determine if a cheaper option is available to you.

## COVID-19 and Surfaces

When COVID-19 started in the U.S., there were concerns that the virus could be transmitted via surfaces and packaging. This caused consumers to buy cleaning supplies like never before and not using cleaners as directed.



Wash hands for 20 seconds

As time has passed, the evidence supports that transmission of COVID-19 is primarily through respiratory droplets in the air. Therefore, the use of masks, handwashing, and keeping at least six feet distance from each other is key.

For surfaces or packaging to be a problem, there has to be a unique set of events to occur. First, a large amount of the virus would have to be present. Then, it would need to survive long enough to result in spread. Finally, without washing your hands, you would have to touch your face.

The few studies done on this issue involved the use of high amounts of the virus, much more than what happens in a real world situation. And, while it proved the virus can stay alive on surfaces, it did not prove transmission.

Excess or incorrect usage of disinfectants can cause skin irritation and respiratory health issues, especially for those with asthma.

Bottom line, wear your mask, keep your distance, and wash your hands.

## **Spice Up Your Meals with Cooked Fruit!**

How do you usually include fruit with your meals? Most people would say they add it as a piece of fresh fruit or a side of canned fruit like applesauce or peaches. While there is nothing wrong with that, think about kicking it up a notch by serving cooked fruit! That does not mean stewed prunes, but rather trying some new and creative ways to add fruits to help meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendation of two cups serving per day.

### ***Why cooked fruit?***

Cooking intensifies the flavor of fruit and creates an appealing texture especially in unripe fruit. The two methods of cooking used are either moist or dry heat.

### ***Moist Heat Cooking***

- Poaching, stewing, sauces, or compotes (fruit cooked in a sugar syrup with spices) are examples of moist cooking.
- Fruits commonly cooked using these methods are pears, apples, peaches, nectarines, plums, and apricots.
- Figs, grapes, quinces, and bananas also lend themselves to moist heat preparation.
- If you are poaching or stewing, use just enough liquid to cover the fruit. Cut fruit into uniform sizes for even cooking. Once cooked let the fruit rest in the liquid for 20 minutes to help the fruit absorb the flavor of the liquid.
- For the liquid consider using wine, rum, whiskey, fruit brandies, or juices in combination with the water and sugar.
- Poaching liquid should have a ratio of 1/3 cup – 1/2 cup sugar to 1 cup liquid or for a

lighter liquid 1/4 cup sugar to 1 cup liquid. The sugar helps the fruit retain its shape. While you can go without adding sugar the result may be a much softer piece of fruit.

- Sugar substitutes, while providing sweetness, will not maintain the texture of the fruit.

### ***Dry Heat Cooking***

- Dry heat methods of cooking include grilling, broiling, roasting, baking, or sautéing.
- Quick cooking is needed otherwise you can end up with a mushy product as the cell walls break down and there is increased water loss.
- Popular fruits for dry heat cooking include apples, apricots, bananas, pineapple, peaches, plums, pears, cherries, and figs.
- With dry heat methods of cooking, sugar is added mainly for sweetness.

### ***Other Ingredients***

Think beyond the traditional use of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Consider star anise, ginger, cardamom, black pepper, vanilla, and saffron. Herbs such as mint, rosemary, sage, lemon verbena, lavender, and thyme add some unique flavors, especially when combining fruit with meat dishes. Examples may be oranges combined with thyme, peaches with rosemary, or strawberries with sage served with chicken, pork, or fish.



**Central Kansas Extension District**

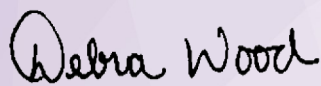
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Address Service Requested

The enclosed material is for your information. If we can be of further assistance, feel free to call or drop by the Extension Office.

Sincerely,



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