



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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June/July 2019

Ask the Agent

Q: I make braided rugs from old blue jeans... is there a place for it at the fair?

A: Absolutely! In fact, there is a rug division in the Open Class Textiles Department where you will find a Braided Rug class.

You can enter nearly anything in the fair as long as it is made or grown by your own hands. Open Class is open to any adult or non-4-H youth age 4 and up.

There are 8 Open Class departments with a wide variety of options for entering something you have made—baked, sewn, grown, painted, welded, carved, and so much more.

Stop by the Geary County Extension office at 119 E. 9th in Junction City to pick up a free Open Class Fair book to check out your options.

For more information call the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at: **785-238-4161**

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Fresh and Tasty—Now *AND* Later...

June/July 2019

We picked our first bounty of garden vegetables this weekend—zucchini. Our sweet corn tasseled and has the silks on the end of each ear making our mouths water with anticipation.

We enjoy the fresh and tasty produce from our garden. We add something from our garden to nearly every meal.

Right now, we can keep up with what we are producing but as the season continues, we will have surplus. The surplus is always part of our plan.

Even though eating fresh vegetables is one of the best things about a Kansas garden, summer is not the only time you can enjoy them. When you pick vegetables at their prime, with careful handling you can prepare and store them so they hold their fresh qualities all year long. You can also maintain the flavor, texture and nutritional values doesn't change.

Here are some tips on how you can enjoy fresh vegetables from the garden or farmer's market throughout the year:

- 1) **Prepare Vegetables**—Begin by washing the vegetables thoroughly. Lift the vegetable up and down under running water using your hand or a vegetable brush to clear the dirt from the skin. As you are washing, look for inferior vegetables or overly mature ones and lay them aside to consume with your next meal or the next day. Blanch the vegetables in hot water to stop the natural enzymes from destroying the fresh flavor and remove any bacteria from the surface. Cool the vegetables quickly by submerging the vegetables into cold water (60°F or below.) Blanching and cooling should take about the same amount of time—it's a very quick process.
- 2) **Pack Vegetables**—Choose a food grade freezer container to pack the vegetables into meal-size portions proportionate to the size of your family. Pack the vegetables firmly to avoid air space—which can lead to freezer burn. When packing butterbeans, peas or snap beans, you should cover the vegetable with water. Leave about 3/4" to 1" space at the top of the container to allow for expansion while freezing. Immediately place the vegetables in the coldest part of your freezer and store at zero degrees or below.



Now you have it—fresh tasting vegetables that can be enjoyed throughout the year—even in the cold of winter. For a more complete list of garden vegetables and how to prepare them for the freezer, check out the Health, Home and Family page on the Geary County K-State Research and Extension website at:

<https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>



Eating Healthy on a Budget

There are many ways that a limited food budget can include items that are both delicious and nutritious. Here are a couple timely tips that families and adults can use to help save money while eating a variety of healthy foods.

Shop In-Season

Many of us are used to eating our favorite fruits and veggies all year round, but you'll often save money buying produce when it's in season. Not only are the base prices lower, but these foods often go on sale during their peak growing months. For instance, at my local supermarket, berries of all kinds are on sale throughout the summer. I regularly save \$1-2 per box compared to winter, when these foods are not in season. In the cooler months, you can find deals on apples, oranges, winter squashes, and clementines, which are great for snacks and lunchboxes. The USDA's **Seasonal Produce Guide** can help you plan your shopping trip around what is in season.

Families and Food

Grow Your Own

You can grow your own food for fresh and budget-friendly additions to your meals...in your yard, on your porch, or even on your windowsill. According to the USDA, \$1 dollar spent on seeds and fertilizer can grow an average of \$25 worth of produce! Plus, kids love to garden! Many studies have found that children are more likely to eat their veggies if they helped grow them.

If you are a SNAP recipient, you can use your SNAP benefits to buy food-producing seeds and plants! To find a retailer near you that accepts SNAP, use the SNAP Retailer Locator. If your favorite store does not sell plants or seeds, consider asking them to place a special order. If you have a seed or plant catalog, bring it to your store manager and show them exactly what you would like them to order for you. If you are new to gardening, call the Geary County Extension office to get free resources on gardening basics at 785-238-4161.

Source: eXtension.org

Family Resources

It may feel like the summer is passing you by and you simply aren't ready for the new school year to start. Now is the best time ever to get your family ready for this approaching transition, though.

Getting organized now will help reduce the stress and tension that comes with any major change in family schedules and routines.

Here are some starting points for easing in to school next month:

- ◆ Make a list of what you already know your children will need to get the school year started off on the right foot. For example, picking up a pair of tennis shoes for school is a lot easier in July. Stores quickly lose their inventory after the first of August. Depending on the age of your children, you might need a second pair of shoes for sports or for their physical education class.
- ◆ If your child plays a musical instrument in the school band, it is better to get it in for repairs and/or cleaning now rather than wait until the week before school begins. It often takes the music store a few days to get an instrument back in good shape even when they aren't overloaded with back-to-school traffic.
- ◆ Begin now in developing a habit of creating a checklist of what needs accomplished and what is needed for the next day. This will help you avoid overlooking something when everyone is trying to

Pre-Planning for Family Transitions

hurry out the door to work or school next month.

- ◆ Ease into the new schedule by the end of July. Nightly routines such as setting out clothes for the next day or re-establishing school bedtimes will help everyone in the family have the energy to get through each, often hectic, day.
- ◆ Identify a staging area where everyone has a place for their stuff, such as lunchbags, instrument cases, bookbags, sports equipment, keys, cell phones, school IDs, and jackets. This will reduce the risk of the "I can't find it" chaos that can ensue on school mornings.
- ◆ Create a family calendar that is easily accessible. A dry-erase, wipe-off, or paper calendars can be color coded for each family member. Families with older youth might consider an electronic calendar more helpful. Include both the academic calendar events often found on the school's website as well as the sports and other extra-curricular events that are usually planned long before the school year starts.

As you focus on these tips, you will find it easier and easier to establish habits and routines that can help your family's transition to the school year with smooth sailing.



Family Relationships

No matter the situation, if a family is experiencing stress, it can strain relationships. During times of stress your behavior affects the people you live with—your partner, your children, and even yourself!

Stress is defined as the wear and tear on our bodies caused by living. It involves physical, mental, and chemical adjustments that our bodies make to the changes in our lives. Some stress adds motivation and challenge to our lives.

When the demands of your life exceed your resources, you can experience the damaging effects of bad stress or distress. You can help control stress through effective time management. It is helpful to identify periods when you feel “stressed out” or overwhelmed, then plan some strategies to manage these situations.

The stages of stress include alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. The alarm stage occurs when you begin to feel upset or nervous about something that is happening. During the resistance stage, your body tries to restore balance and repairs any damage from the stress reaction. If the stress continues, you may feel exhausted, unable to cope, and lose interest in your activities. Some symptoms of too much stress include rapid heartbeat, stomach upset, irritability, forgetfulness, making mistakes and feeling ill.

Express appreciation. Without words and actions, most people do not feel loved or appreciated. When couples regularly give each other compliments and praise, it is a real boost to the relationship. Work on your communication skills.

Work on communication skills. Listen to what your family member says. Likewise, speak up and

How Stress Effects the Family

clearly state what you feel and think. Good communication also includes the ability to accept temporary withdrawal or silence, as even silence can be informative to you and helpful to your family member.

Touch often. Physical contact improves emotional growth and strengthens a relationship. As time passes, the touching in a relationship often decreases. When a couple makes a decision to touch each other more, it has a positive effect on the relationship and will create feelings leading to more romance.

Grow individually. Couples need time apart as well as time together. Make a list of things you enjoy doing. Do those things you enjoy and you then will find you have more to contribute to the relationship with the one you love.

Accept each other. At some point in a relationship you realize there are some things about the other person you are never going to change. Once you understand this, the relationship can move to a deeper level. Spend energy strengthening the bond rather than trying to change a partner.

Understand influences. Recognize the influence that family, friends, co-workers, mass media and even society have on your relationship. Balance that influence with your need to be on your own as a couple.

Develop healthy humor skills. Healthy humor can be used in a relationship to maintain a positive outlook on life, for entertainment, to reduce tension, to express feelings of warmth, to put others at ease, to facilitate conversation, to lessen anxiety and to help cope with difficult situations. (Sarcasm, put-downs and teasing are not healthy forms of humor.)

Something for Everyone

The Geary County Free Fair runs July 22-25, 2019 at the fair grounds located at 1025 S. Spring Valley Rd in Junction City, Kansas. Here are just a few of the activities going on at this year's fair!

Monday 7/22: Activities include entries being accepted for 4-H food and Food Preservation followed by entries for Open Class Photography. The kids push the pedal to the medal at the annual Pedal Pull. New this year is the United Way Chili Contest that also begins this night.

Tuesday 7/22: 4-Hers bring in their livestock exhibits in the morning and judging begins for Open Class Horticulture, Floriculture, and Agriculture entries. The afternoon highlights a Dairy and Goat Show. Check out the display by the J.C. Fire Department then enter the arena for the 4-H Bucket Calf and Beef Show.

Wednesday 7/24: The Geary County Farm Bureau is

Geary County Free Fair

hosting a Youth Activity after lunch and the Geary County Rural Fire Department will have a display. The Special Baking Contest begins at 5:30 while 4-H youth get ready for the evening Swine Show.

Thursday 7/25: This day is full of activities and events. It starts with the 4-H Livestock Showmanship Contest in the morning. A PTO Demonstration sponsored by Farm Bureau in the afternoon provides a powerful lesson in farm safety. The evening 4-H BBQ & Watermelon feed leads to a highlight of the fair—the 4-H Project & Livestock Auction.

Friday 7/26: A Ranch Rodeo hosted by the Geary County Free Fair Board offers lots of family entertainment and fun.

Go to: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu> to learn more or stop by the Extension office for a printed schedule.

Geary County
P.O. Box 28
119 E. 9th Street
Junction City, KS 66441

Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

****Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register****

July

22-25 Geary County Free Fair— This FREE community event celebrates all that is Geary County! Enjoy walking through the food, crafts, photography, and woodworking exhibits, visiting with area businesses and vendors, and seeing our local youth demonstrate the skills they have learned through the 4-H Youth Development program. There is always lots to do and see at the Geary County Free Fair!

August

21 **Strengthening Families 7-17—Meeting weekly on Wednesdays from 10:00—11:30am August 21 thru October 30. Class sessions focus on building communication, bonding and resiliency within a family. Promotes the use of bonding, boundaries, and monitoring to support family members in resisting the use of drugs and alcohol and teaches alternative positive coping skills. Registration and cost information can be found online at <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>. Look for the link in the Upcoming Events section.



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