

Conference registration open

Registration is now open for the Rural Opportunities Conference, which will be held April 9-10 in Dodge City. The deadline to register to attend the conference is April 2.

The Rural Opportunities Conference will highlight rural business and community development topics. General session speakers include:

Duane Goossen, vice president for Fiscal and Health Policy at the Kansas Health Institute, will provide an overview of data and options for financing local and state government.

Tracy Streecher, director of the Kansas Water Office will present information about Kansas' water supply and use and future water needs in the state.

Christy Hopkins and Liz Sosa, PowerUp liaisons, will discuss strategies to engage and connect younger rural residents within their communities.

Breakout sessions will discuss funding diversity and collaboration for community and entrepreneurial development; closing the workforce housing gap; the economic impact of water in Kansas; and attracting residents, workers and entrepreneurs to rural Kansas. A new breakout session will focus on topics proposed by conference attendees.

For a complete schedule of events, please visit KansasCommerce.com/RuralOpportunitiesConference.

The Rural Opportunities Con-

ference will be held April 9-10 at the Magouirk Conference Center, 4100 West Comanche, Dodge City, KS 67801. Registration and exhibits open at 9 a.m. April 9.

The cost to attend the conference is \$75 per person and includes all sessions and meals. Registration is available online at KansasCommerce.com/RuralOpportunitiesConference. The deadline to register is April 2.

For those requiring overnight accommodations, special conference rates are available at the Hampton Inn & Suites (620-225-0000), the Best Western Plus Country Inn & Suites (620-225-7378), and Dodge House (620-225-9900).

New wheat line resists wheat curl mite

Sometimes the best defense is a good offense. Following that logic, researchers at Kansas State University are building a defense against pests and diseases that attack wheat by identifying plants that carry natural resistance to those pests and diseases with an eye toward developing varieties for Kansas that carry those resistance traits.

The wheat curl mite, known to scientists as *Aceria tosichella* Keifer, is a tiny, white pest, whose size belies its ability to wreak havoc through the diseases it carries into wheat fields.

Many wheat varieties are well suited to grow in Kansas in other ways, but none are resistant to the wheat curl mite and the diseases it vectors -- Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus, Triticum Mosaic Virus and Wheat Mosaic Virus, formerly known as High Plains Virus, said K-State entomology professor, Mike Smith. He and a team of researchers are studying wheat varieties grown in other areas that naturally resist the mite and the viruses it carries.

"We have identified plants with resistance to the wheat curl mite and two of the diseases it carries -- wheat streak mosaic virus and High Plains virus and have now developed what's called an advanced breeding line, that will result in a new variety of wheat that carries resistance to the mite and those two viruses," said Smith, who is a lead researcher on the project.

"This is not GMO wheat," he said, referring to the practice of taking genes from one species and incorporating them into another, resulting in a genetically-modified organism. "This is done with genes that already exist in wheat. There is nothing transgenic or GMO about this."

By developing varieties that resist pests and diseases, scientists can protect Kansas wheat, reduce or eliminate the need for

pesticides, and increase producer profits, he said.

The project is funded by the Kansas Wheat Commission and Kansas Wheat Alliance.

Other K-State lead researchers involved are Wen-Po Chuang, post-doctoral research associate in entomology; Anna Whitfield, associate professor of plant pathology; and wheat breeder Allan Fritz, professor of agronomy. Scientists at Oklahoma State University, the University of Nebraska, and Texas A&M University are cooperating on the project.

At stake in Kansas alone, is a crop with a cash value of \$2.9 billion (2012), according to Kansas Wheat. The cash value of Kansas wheat exports (sold outside the U.S.) was \$1.5 billion.

"There is no chemical control for the curl mite or any of these viruses," Smith said. "With no control, Kansas producers are losing \$20 million to \$30 million a year due to these mites and viruses."

"There are lines in other states that have resistance to the mite or resistance to some of the viruses, but not both," Smith said. "This is a unique line that we're developing."

"We are using the mite- and virus-resistant plants in crosses that will be submitted to HPI to make doubled haploids," said Fritz, who added that doubled haploids involve a new technique that allows researchers to cut time for development of a variety from 11 years to six or seven years. He referred to Heartland Plant Innovations, a collaboration of Kansas Wheat, Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, and private investors, working to develop technologies for gene discovery, trait validation and crop improvement.

"That will allow us to rapidly combine the resistances

with other traits, such as more durable resistance to the rust diseases. It's an important step toward delivering varieties that protect producers from losses due to wheat streak," Fritz said.

The K-State team will plant field plots near Salina this year to make sure what they're seeing in the greenhouse and lab holds true.

Another bit of good news for wheat growers is that preliminary data show that some Hessian fly resistance genes also have resistance to wheat curl mite damage.

The next step, Smith said, will be for Fritz's group to determine the yield potential and quality of the grain in the new breeding line. That will likely take two to three years as the seed becomes available and is planted in various parts of the state.

"There are 300 different soil types in Kansas alone," he said, adding that soil type is just one of many variables that affects how a wheat variety performs. Planting date, moisture and temperature through the crop year are among the many other variables.

"Our next and final step is to nail down resistance to the Triticum mosaic virus," Smith said, adding that he's optimistic the team will be successful, but that the odds of finding it in the lines with resistance to the mite and the other two viruses are reduced.

"It's not unreasonable to think that in three or four years, we'll have a new variety that is resistant to this mite and the diseases it carries," Smith said.

More information about wheat curl mites and the viruses they carry is available on the K-State Department of Entomology website: entomology.k-state.edu/extension/insect-information/crop-pests/wheat/curlmite.html.

Funds available to improve windbreaks

Kansas landowners now have until April 18 to apply for cost-share funds to restore or enhance windbreaks and stream-side forests, also called riparian forests. The funding is available through the 2014 Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI).

This newly-extended deadline means the \$684,000 earmarked for Kansas' 2014 projects is still available for qualified landowners, said Bob Atchison, rural forestry coordinator for the Kansas Forest Service.

"As a USDA initiative, the CCPI can address all kinds of natural resource needs associated with agricultural lands. Landowner participation is both voluntary and competitive. The projects also can be ambitious enough to take more than one

funding year," Atchison said.

CCPI forestry funds can cover the majority of costs for establishing riparian plantings and for improving or renovating windbreaks, forests and woodlands, he said. The costs can include using heavy equipment to remove unhealthy trees, planting quality trees and shrubs, controlling weeds, and installing protective fencing or a micro-drip irrigation system.

"For Kansas, the initiative couldn't come at a better time," Atchison said. "The state's needs are becoming critical, in terms of our having healthy, mature trees in place -- not only to preserve our soil resources but also to protect our water resources. Increasing pressures on our natural resources have been leaving us in an increasingly

vulnerable place."

The CCPI is part of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Landowners apply for CCPI-EQIP funds at the Natural Resource Conservation Service office in their local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center. NRCS offices can take applications at any time. Applications that miss a particular year's deadline simply go into the next fiscal year's selection pool.

More information about the forestry initiative is available at www.kansasforests.org by clicking on Rural Forestry and then Financial Assistance Programs or by calling the Kansas Forest Service at 785-532-3310 or e-mailing atchison@ksu.edu.

Linda Spresser, Eleanor Morrel, Diane Carter, Wayne and Louise Cressler, Stan and Ramona Shaw. Come join us for a Wednesday afternoon of fun.

A light snow fell in town Saturday evening. Not a lot of moisture in it. By Sunday evening it was melted.

Patriot Pin Winners!



The winners of the Patriot Pin essay contest for the VFW 9th district were, 1st place Riley Stockman, 2nd place Bodey LeRoux, and 3rd place Ryann Kats. Ms. Dawn Berry was also recognized for encouraging her English students to submit these essays. Pictured, presenter J.T. Plummer, Ms. Dawn Berry, Bodey LeRoux, Ryann Kats and Riley Stockman.

—Photo courtesy of Shannon Kats

Truly amazing names given to plant life

Kay Melia
Master Gardener

Can't you just visualize this scenario? Two successful plant scientists had just completed the development of a new tomato, and had tested it carefully for several years. It was a beautiful tomato that was sure to win the favor of gardeners everywhere as soon as the seed was released to the public. The two gentlemen were sitting out on the patio having coffee and contemplating their success.

Charlie--So, what are we going to name this thing Harry?

Harry--Oh I don't know. We are having a little celebration out here this morning, so how about just calling it "Celebrity."

Charlie--Naw, that's already been taken. You know Harry, this is a really big tomato. How about naming it "Big Beef?"

Harry--Can't do that. There's already one of those, too. How about we just call it "Red Tomato!"

Charlie--Sounds good to me. "Red Tomato it is!"

Charlie and Harry did good, especially when you consider that there are more than 3,700 different named tomato cultivars out there. In fact, "Red Tomato" may have already been taken!

Wouldn't it be interesting and enlightening to know how all the flowers and vegetables got there names/ "Yaya carrots come to mind. I'll bet there's a good story behind that name. I've been hearing good things about a new sweet corn lately, and I see it's available in the Gurney catalog. It's called "Gotta Have It." Kinda makes you want to send old George a check for a couple packs, doesn't it? One of my favorite tomatoes is called Northern "Exposure. The name pretty well describes what it's all about.

J.W. Jung has a new one this year called "Pretty Pleasin" peas, as well as a new green bean named "Annihilator." That's pretty scary. Read the description and it tells you that it is so much better than the other

green beans that they should be annihilated from your thoughts. Jung also offers a pink blueberry dubbed "Pink Lemonade." That might be a bit confusing, or even deceiving.

Burpee is offering a whole series of "Honeymoon Hibiscus." Don't believe I'll go there. Nor do I wish to order "Hollow Crown" parsnips. They've been around for over 50 years, so maybe the crowns are filled by now. Burpee also has a great 3 to 4 inch radish that is descriptively called "Fire and Ice." The top half is red and the bottom half is white. They are beautiful radishes, with great taste.

Some catalogs really try to sell their customers on certain offerings. The Territorial Seed Company in Cottage Grove,

Oregon excels at descriptions. For example, Territorial offers a one-inch size tomato called "Orange Paruche." Listen to this. "The quintessential flavor of summer is captured in these succulent, sweet and flavorful fruit. Orange Panuche excels in production and taste with astonishing quantities of orange fruit that are vitamin packed!"

I can just barely resist ordering a packet of Orange Panuche seed. Then comes the reality of it all. 15 seeds for \$6.55, plus shipping and handling. I think I'll wait until next year. But I'll be thinking about Orange Panuche all summer!

The names given to plant life are truly amazing and their descriptions make it difficult to decline their offer.

Community Meeting:
USD 211 Bond Issue Election
Sunday, March 30 at 4:00 p.m.
in the East Campus Auditorium.

The public is encouraged to attend this very important meeting. Tours of the Eisenhower Elementary School and the Junior and Senior High Schools will be given at 3:00 p.m. and immediately following the meeting.

April 1st, Norton County

Voting Locations

- City of Norton, Wards I, II and III
- Courthouse Lobby
- Rural USD #211
- Courthouse Lobby
- City of Lenora Highland #1
- USD 211 Voters
- Lenora Community Center
- (Normal Voting Location)

JENNINGS NEWS

By Louise Cressler
Sympathy is extended to the family of Jean Gillespie, rural Clayton. Lunch will be served to family and friends at the United Methodist Church in Jennings. Graveside services will be held at the Gettis cemetery, rural Clayton.

Wayne and Louise Cressler are enjoying their daughter, Sharon Gaston, Ames, Iowa, who came Friday to visit several days with them. She will go home on Wednesday morning. Playing cards at the Sunflower Senior Center Wednesday were: Agnes Wahlmeier,

OPEN HOUSE

The Public is Invited to attend an

Open House

FOR

Norton Estates

Norton's New Moderate-Income Housing Addition

Located in Northwest Norton

Crane Street and Reagan Ave.

The Open House will be held Thursday, March 27, 2014 from 4:00-8:00 p.m.

These duplexes will be available for rent or purchase and include 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, open concept living/dining room, large kitchen, and single car garage. All appliances are provided, along with lawn care and snow removal.