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Booze in college shouldn't stay quiet

University of Kansas students seeking relief from stress or just a bit of fun may think twice now before inviting alcohol or drugs to the party.

University officials have decided that what underage students are doing in Lawrence doesn't necessarily have to stay in Lawrence if it involves alcohol or drugs. Henceforth, the university will inform parents when students under age 21 are caught in violation of drug and alcohol laws.

We welcome the change in policy at KU, and think universities that don't phone home now when young students endanger their lives or the lives of others during an incident of substance abuse would do well to follow suit.

It's the nature of university officials across the country to want to treat their students like responsible adults. However, some students don't always act like responsible adults, and if a call home and parental intervention will put them back on track, so be it.

In KU's case, officials had good reason to review the school's policy and make a change. Alcohol played a role in the deaths of two students this spring.

Jason Wren, 19, of Littleton, Colo., was found dead at a fraternity house March 8 after a night of heavy drinking. He had been kicked out of a university residence hall for earlier incidents involving alcohol. Dalton Hawkins, 18, of Shawnee, died April 24 after falling off the roof of a campus building. An autopsy report indicated he had been drinking.

We think Wren's family would have been interested in knowing he was having trouble with alcohol and are pretty sure they would have tried to help him with his problem

In addition to calling parents, KU will step up efforts to educate students about drinking and has instituted an amnesty policy meant to encourage students to get help for friends having alcohol-related emergencies....

Stepping in to help a student before he or she has had multiple offenses or is in a crisis situation probably would prove to be more effective, and could save a life.

We'd encourage all colleges to review their policies concerning students and alcohol to determine whether they're doing all they could to ensure that someone doesn't have to call a student's parents with some really bad news.

Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or



Running is a life-training tool.

The weather was cool, but the sun warmed the air as my feet hit the soft ground covered in bark dust.

I was running for the third time this school year. It's a feat I can't boast much about, but I have to start somewhere. I know once I get into it, I will really enjoy it. And I know that being in shape is actually a great feeling. So I intend to make running a habit, a resolution that begins now and ends indefinitely. That is my hope, anyway.

The sky began to cloud over and I was sure that the rain would start coming. I felt a few sprinkles, but I was sweating, so I didn't mind.

I've never been much of a runner. The idea of competing in cross country running has honestly been repulsive to me. Why would someone do nothing but run for miles? And just for fun or perhaps a little medal? I was a walker. I didn't even mind fast walking. Just don't make me run, I would say.

I continued running, trying to count trees and the poles along the fence. I felt lunch sloshing around in my stomach and regretted that I didn't wait longer for my food to digest.

To my advantage, I'm in the best place to get into shape. Portland is one of the healthiest cities in the nation, which is probably a result of it being one of the best cities to bicycle. came up to a patch of flowers, picked a fluffy,



Even within the city, it has hundreds of hiking trails that are great to use for running as well. There's a tennis court beside my campus and a golf course with a public jogging trail a few miles down the street. Therefore, I am without excuse not to be in shape.

I knew I wasn't the only one who was struggling to get to the end of the fence.

Every Sunday morning as I make the 30-minute drive to church, I see people of all shapes and sizes running down the sidewalks along the street. Some are running fast, with long strides. Others are struggling to make their legs move at a jogging pace. I see young people and I see aged people. At least they are trying. They are all aware that being in shape and taking care of their bodies is important to a healthy lifestyle.

I allowed myself to slo to a walking pace. I

gray dandelion and blew out the seeds.

It can be hard to slow down, especially in the city. Everyone is always focused on getting somewhere as fast as possible. In working out, it is particularly difficult to take things slow and not overwork the body. Since I had a neck injury several years ago, I can hardly put any strain on my neck without giving myself a headache. That makes working out frustrating, since I have to go slower and take it easier than most people.

I finally saw the end of the trail. I told myself to push just a little bit harder and run as fast as I could to the end. I wanted to finish strong.

Not only do I intend to finish each run as As I dodged trees, mud and other runners, strong as I can, but also each school year, each season of life and every experience that has shaped me into the young woman I am today.

I may not always enjoy every minute of it, and sometimes I'll feel sick and want to quit. But if I don't even try, I won't know what I'm missing. One of my favorite authors says it best: "May [God] quicken those who have not yet begun to live this life to see what they are missing before it is too late."

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Consumers drive farming

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Industrialization - the trend toward larger operations that capture economies of scale and manage risks in a growing global economy is affecting Kansas farmers and their counterparts across the country.

Without a doubt, there are benefits from industrialization - especially less-expensive food. There are also costs - a declining rural population, and the concern that fewer and larger buyers of farm and ranch commodities can, and possibly will, use their market power to depress prices.

Industrialization is growing nearly everywhere in the food production industry. Farms are getting bigger and more efficient while the number of farmers shrinks.

In 1900, there were 173,000 farms in Kansas with an average size of 241 acres. Today, the number of farms is 64,000, down 62 percent, while farm size is up more than 300 percent to an average of 740-plus acres.

In 1997, the largest hog producer controlled 4 percent of the nations herd. By 2009, the largest hog producer controlled nearly half of the nation's hog herd. In 1976, there were 6,255 livestock processing plants in the U.S., and by 1999 that number dropped 45 percent to 3,419. Today, that figure has dropped another 40 percent.

The grain industry has also been affected. This can be seen is acquisitions by large grain companies, the seed and biotech industries and at the retail grocery and restaurant levels.

The primary causes of industrialization in agriculture are society's desire for cheap food and the technological advances that have allowed fewer people to produce and market more food at lower costs. From an individual standpoint, none of us wants to pay more than we absolutely have to for quality food.

Stability results in well-fed nations, and morally no one wants to see people go hungry. Society wants cheap food, and in our country,

Bruce



that's what we have.

The desire by society for cheap food leads to incredible pressure on both food and commodity prices that tighten ag-sector profit margins, because input costs continue to increase with inflation. The result is an industry where lessefficient farms fall by the wayside and wellmanaged, efficient farms survive, and more often than not, grow.

For agriculture to remain successful, this industry must increase efficiency, lower costs and/or add value. Without such progress, the average farmer/rancher of today quickly becomes the low-end producer of tomorrow, debating whether and when to quit farming.

Today, our society not only wants cheap food, but also better food. Consumers are changing. They're busier and less interested in food preparation. They want more choices. Food can no longer be merely cheap - it must be more convenient, consistent and wholesome

Agriculture has responded. Consumers today have more choices than ever.

There are more and more branded products. But a branded name alone does not guarantee consistency or quality. To do this, we must assure uniformity throughout the food production system. For meats, this implies uniformity in animal genetics, nutrition, handling and processing. In the case of crops, it might mean uniformity in plant genetics, fertility, pest control, handling and processing.

Food supply chains have been developed.

Supply chains attempt to more efficiently link food production, processing and retailing, with the end result being greater uniformity, consistency and quality. Supply chains can provide a quality product at a lower cost by reducing transaction costs and potentially offering farmers an opportunity to add value to their product.

Fewer farmers mean a less populated, less prosperous rural America with a weaker voice when addressing farm level concerns. Farmers and farm organizations must set priorities and choose their battles and use political capital wisely.

The question isn't necessarily what are farmers and ranchers for or what are they against? It's how do they position themselves to prosper in this rapidly changing business environment?

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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