


Weather
Corner



National Weather Service

Tonight: Showers and thunderstorms likely before 1 a.m. Some of the storms could be severe and produce heavy rainfall. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 61. East wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 88. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southwest.

Tuesday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 63. South wind around 5 mph becoming east.

Wednesday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 93. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 63.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 90.

Thursday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 60.

Friday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 89.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 58.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 90.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 60.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 90.

Friday: High, 76; Low 55
Saturday: High, 76; Low 59
Sunday: High, 73; Low 59
Precip: Friday 0.20 inches
Saturday 0.26 inches
Sunday 0.42 inches
Month: 3.00 inches
Year: 13.15 inches
Normal: 9.94 inches

(K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise Tuesday 6:17 a.m.
Sunset Tuesday 9:13 p.m.
Sunrise Wed. 6:17 a.m.
Sunset Wed. 9:14 p.m.
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

Small budget cuts hit home for Kansans

From “BUDGET,” Page 1

court clerk’s offices around the state. This is in addition to the hiring freeze the court imposed last year that will save another \$2 million, said court spokesman Ron Keefover said.

Keefover said judges representing 17 counties already have asked for permission to reduce the hours clerk’s offices are available for court business, and he expects that to increase.

Douglas County Court Administrator Linda Vogelsang said that starting Monday, the clerk’s office will be closed each day during the noon hour because it’s losing four temporary workers who had been helping the 15 full-time employees. She said the office handles about 15,000 cases each year.

“We don’t take this lightly. We know that for some people, the lunch hour was the only time they had and we worried about that,” Vogelsang said. “We are doing the best we can given our constraints.”

Sometimes cuts imposed by one agency affect another.

Dick Koerth, Department of Wildlife and Parks assistant secretary, said six of the 24 state parks have been using about 70 inmates as workers year round, but especially during the busy summer months. The Department of Corrections closed four minimum security prisons to save money, putting an end to having those inmates available for work.

“What you are going to see this summer is less mowing and less trash pickup in the parks,” Koerth said. “Those inmates won’t be available to help keep the parks at the level we have been.”

Most of the attention on the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services was finding enough money to care for the physically and mentally disabled, and provide health care for the poor. That meant finding cuts where it could.

The agency is cutting back on what it spends to help pay the costs of about 1,200 funerals of welfare recipients with little or no assets. Funeral assistance averaged \$678 but that will be capped at \$550.

“In the grand scheme of things, we have a lot of programs that serve a lot of vulnerable people and when you are comparing programs, this isn’t the highest priority,” said department spokeswoman Michelle Ponce.

The agency gets 2 percent of revenue from state-owned casinos to finance problem gambling programs, but said any money in the upcoming budget year would go instead to alcohol and drug treatment programs. The only casino being built is in Dodge City and it’s expected to generate \$440,000.

The Kansas Department of Transportation is continuing with less mowing on the shoulders and medians of the 10,000-mile state roadway system to save fuel costs.

“Instead of making two passes on the shoulders with mowers, they’re making one,” said spokesman Steve Swartz. “Fuel costs are big for us, so anywhere we can save money is good.”

Sometimes even the smallest cuts will be noticed. For decades, the Department of Health and Environment had booths around the fairgrounds at Hutchinson. This year it won’t be at the fair, saving about \$10,000.

Spokeswoman Maggie Thompson said the agency will talk to other public health providers to see if they want to use the booths this year.

“We are confident we will be able to provide information through them, but unfortunately we won’t be able to be there this year,” she said.

Summary shows rise in farmers’ income last year

MANHATTAN – It may seem like a distant memory amid the current U.S. and global economic struggles, but strong crop prices boosted Kansas farmers’ take-home income last year for the second year in a row.

In its annual summary, the Kansas Farm Management Association revealed that average net farm income for 1,452 member farms was \$123,397 – up 7.3 percent from an average \$115,035 in 2007 and well above the \$46,593 average for 2006.

“Crop prices were higher (in 2008),” said Administrator Kevin Herbel, adding that growing conditions for wheat were better last year than they were in 2007, when a freeze cut production, particularly in central Kansas.

The agency reports net income on an accrual basis – adjusted for any inventory changes between the beginning and end of the year, he said. The result represents the return on the farmer’s labor, management and investment in the operation.

Herbel emphasized that the data is a barometer of Kansas agriculture statewide – not a definitive picture of every operation. In fact, about 16 percent of the member farms had negative net farm income last year. That was generally tied to their type of enterprise, timing of purchases or timing of sales.

Plenty of factors were working against farmers last year, said Michael Langemeier, an agricultural economist with Kansas State University Research and Extension.

For example, total farm expenses increased about 18 percent, with the largest increases in fertilizer (up 35 percent) and herbicide and insecticide (up 34 percent). Seed costs were up 12 percent. Gas, fuel and oil were up more than 30 percent. Other machinery and equipment expenses also increased, with a 16 percent increase in repair expense and a 9 percent increase in depreciation. Lower interest rates led to a 5 percent decrease to \$21,791 per farm in interest expense for 2008.

Just as in 2007, livestock operations bore the brunt of the price and cost volatility that weighed on net income. As in the previous year, livestock producers were hit with high feed costs and lower livestock prices, Langemeier said. In turn, average net farm income for operations primarily in the cattle backgrounding business was a negative \$10,355 and for cowherd operations, just \$32,674.

“This was the third year in a row that there was negative net income for backgrounding cattle on the farm,” Herbel said.

In contrast, those whose main business was irrigated cash crops had an average net income of \$230,850 last year – down from \$280,585 the previous year. Dryland crop enterprises averaged \$142,603 in net farm income, up from \$120,594 for the year earlier.

In addition to the disparity between livestock and crop enterprises, regional disparities emerged, too, Herbel said.

While average net farm income for the state increased from 2007 to 2008, profitability as measured by the operating profit margin decreased. The average operating profit margin for surveyed farms in 2008 was 20.1 percent, down about 2 percent from the previous year’s. The farms’ higher value of farm production levels (an increase of 15 percent) was offset by their 18 percent increase in total farm expenses.

As part of that, average net farm income for northwest Kansas last year was \$150,935, while the farms in north central Kansas came in at \$101,573. Northeast Kansas operations posted an average net farm income of \$115,877, the southwest region was at \$81,546, south central Kansas farms averaged \$133,778 and southeast Kansas was at \$132,962.

Even at \$150,935, the net farm income figure for northwest Kansas farmers was a sizeable drop from 2007’s average net of \$233,000. The decline was partly due to decreased yields on irrigated crops and increased costs of production, Herbel noted.

More information about the association and its “2008 Summary and Analysis” is available on the K-State Research and Extension agricultural economics Web site (www.agmanager.info/kfma).

Association provides ag accounting

MANHATTAN – The Kansas Farm Management Association, a part of Kansas State University Research and Extension, is one of the largest farm management programs in the United States, says Administrator Kevin Herbel.

Twenty agricultural economists, all faculty members in K-State’s Department of Agricultural Economics, make up professional staff. The economists work with the association’s members, providing production and financial management information for Kansas farm families to use in decision making.

Helping members with individualized, research-based information is the program’s primary goal, Herbel said. Through on-farm visits, whole-farm analyses, enterprise analyses, and other educational programs, the economists help farmers in:

- Developing sound farm accounting systems.
- Improving decision making.
- Comparing with the performance of similar farms.
- Integrating tax planning, marketing and asset investment strategies.

The K-MAR-105 Association is a nonprofit educational corporation associated with the Farm Management Association and K-State. K-MAR-105 serves as the central information-processing unit for the six regional associations in the program. The data banks it maintains not only inform members but also are used extensively (and anonymously) for Department of Agricultural economics research and Extension activities.

The program has been working with Kansas farmers since 1931. The K-MAR-105 Association has been providing financial accounting systems and financial performance benchmarks since 1968.

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