

Conservation leaders tour dairy

The school year is drawing to a close, and the students are excited to see summer coming. A big congratulations to all of this year's Golden Plains graduates.



Gwen Griffiths

• Rexford Correspondent

Leaders of conservation districts from all over Kansas met Tuesday and Wednesday at Shepherd's Staff. In addition to their meetings, the group toured McCarty Dairy and enjoyed a camp fire at the paint ball park.

The Gideons held their monthly meeting Saturday evening at Shepherd's Staff.

Shepherd's Staff held a father-daughter banquet on Sunday evening. Twenty dads and their daughters attended and enjoyed dinner, testimonies from other dads and a game.

The fathers were challenged to make their daughters a priority in their life by committing to "date" them, having a plan for fatherhood and sharing their faith with their daughters.

Any kids ages 8 to 14 that are interested in Creative Arts Camp should contact the Shepherd's Staff office by Tuesday, May 15. The camp will run Sunday through Friday, June 10 to 15, and is a great way for kids to learn skills they can use to serve their church.

Don't forget to start digging out all of the stuff you've been storing for a garage sale. Rexford's city-wide garage sale will be Saturday, June 23. We will want to list all garage sales on a community map, so we will need to know who wants to par-



GWEN GRIFFITHS/Colby Free Press
Cory Anderson of Oakley enjoyed dinner with his two daughters at the father-daughter banquet Sunday.

icipate. Please call 687-2076 if you want to be a part.

To publish your news - just call me at 687-2076 or e-mail griffithsgang@gmail.com. Have a great week!

That's the news from Rexford. I'd love

Ag cost analysis gets updated software

Kansas State University has updated Fuelcost, the irrigation fuel cost-analysis software program designed for agricultural producers who irrigate cropland.

"Energy inputs are such a significant cost to producers and this tool can help them consider fuel source alternatives and analyze pumping costs to determine if they're appropriate to the pumping conditions," said Danny Rogers, agricultural engineer with K-State Research and Extension.

The program is on the Mobile Irrigation Lab website at mobileirrigationlab.com. By using their farm's irrigation system characteristics and fuel information, the program can help producers evaluate how well

their current irrigation pumping plant is performing, compared to a properly designed and operating system. Other options include estimating pumping costs for various conditions, comparing energy sources and evaluating the economics of upgrades or repairs.

Fuelcost is a standalone program that is downloaded onto a farmer's computer, Rogers said. It has been reorganized to be much more user-friendly.

"With the upgrades, a menu driven program also allows the user to reach the desired analysis option before any field inputs are required," Rogers said.

Information about crop irrigation in Kansas is available from extension offices and online at www.ksre.ksu.edu/pr_irrigate/.

Inchworm hatch is on

"Two and two are four. Four and four..."

The Inchworm Song remains popular on Sesame Street. So, even youngsters know how to recognize cankerworms - which children and adults alike may have a good chance of seeing this spring.

"Some Charlotte (N.C.) residents have already described this year's hatch as epic," said Ward Upham, K-State horticulturist. "...We're in wait-and-see mode."

Cankerworms are moth larvae. Their mothers are wingless females that crawl up a deciduous tree's trunk to lay eggs. Their favorite nurseries include apple, ash, elm, linden and oak trees.

The larvae's color, striping and number of tiny pencil-point legs will vary by species, Upham said.

But, all cankerworms hatch in spring, ready to eat and get around by "looping." They bend in half - arching their back to bring their rear "prolegs" up next to their front "real legs." Then they stretch out,

moving their front legs forward.

Cankerworms are easiest to control before they reach a half-inch long.

"At that stage, you usually have to be scouting to notice inchworms or their damage," Upham said. "You can try rapping on branches, though. If disturbed, cankerworms will often drop down on a silken thread."

Unless the pests stage three straight years of heavy, tree-weakening infestations, however, controls generally aren't necessary.

Tree leaves may look skeletonized by the time cankerworms mature at about an inch long. But, that's when the larvae spin their way to the ground to pupate. Their damage is done.

"For about a week, you may find yourself walking into worms and webby strings. Worms may drop onto everything outdoors ... crawl around," Upham said. "But then a healthy tree will put out new leaves and be just fine."

Foster Care Awareness month spotlights needs

May is Foster Care Awareness Month in Kansas and across the nation. The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services this month is spotlighting the needs of the more than 5,000 children in state custody.

Most often, children who have been removed from their home by a judge and placed in foster care are vulnerable and disadvantaged. They may have experienced abuse, neglect or other traumatizing situations. They need a loving, attentive foster family that will help them make a fresh start.

"Being a foster parent is a life-changing experience," said department Secretary Phyllis Gilmore. "It's a unique opportunity to forever change the direction of a child's life and impact who they become as adults."

Lucy Castillo, from Emporia, experienced the life-changing impact of a foster parent firsthand. A judge pulled her from her home when neglect by her mother and

truancy from school combined to put Castillo in difficult circumstances. She was placed with a foster parent, Stella.

In Stella's home, Castillo found new motivation to complete school and pursue her dream of becoming a chef. Her foster mom and other adults in her support network encouraged her as she tried various avenues to complete her high school degree, including alternative school, online education, and finally through a General Educational Development certificate.

"I knew that I wanted to be in the kitchen, to be a chef, and I knew I couldn't do it without that piece of paper. I knew I had to accomplish that goal to get to bigger goals," Castillo said.

She is now enrolled in the Culinary Arts program at Flint Hills Technical School. In addition, she was recently recognized nationally as one of the top 100 Outstanding Youth Leaders for her work in the

Kansas Youth Advisory Council, a leadership and advocacy organization made up exclusively of Kansas youth have been in the foster care system.

Castillo's youth council advisor, Vicki Richardson, nominated her for the prestigious award.

"She's always involved in activities and travels all over the state to talk to foster parents, judges, workers," Richardson said. "She's quick to volunteer, doesn't like limelight and doesn't necessarily need recognition."

The Kansas Youth Advisory Council has long advocated for the rights and needs of foster children. Because the council is made up of foster children and alumni of the foster care network, they have a unique perspective on the challenges faced by children in state care.

During the 2011 legislative session, their work to equalize high school graduation credit requirements for youth in state care was

signed into law. Now, a child who has been in the foster care network after age 14 will only be required to attain the minimum number of credits set by the Kansas Board of Regents in order to graduate. This is beneficial for foster youth because the instability of their situations may cause them to transfer to a school with higher graduation requirements just before they are supposed to graduate.

Castillo is currently an alumni and past historian of the council. She said her involvement motivated her to continue moving through life on a good, productive path.

Statehouse candyman thanked in resolution

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) - The Vermont House has passed a resolution thanking one of its members for the peanut M&Ms.

Rep. Ken Atkins, a Winooski Democrat, has carried on a tradition since 1999 in which every time there's a pause in legislative action for a House roll

call, he dumps a bunch of M&Ms into a glass jar on his desk and other House members gather around for a snack.

The retired teacher says he likes a snack during House action, and he used to tell his students not to bring a snack to class without enough to share.

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