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BIDS

ACCEPTING BIDS - Russell County Commissioners will be accepting sealed bids for the sale and removal of the white goods/metal stockpile located at the Russell County Landfill until 9:00 a.m., Mon., May 5, 2025.

For specifications contact Russell County Highway Dept., 4288 E. Hwy 40, Russell, KS 67665 or call (785) 483-4032.

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Thank You

Many thanks to everyone for the prayers, cards, calls, and food before and after Richard’s passing. A special thank you to Pastor Les Rye, Lyn Leach, the Dorman family, Rick Langdon, and Kevin Park, who all played important roles in the funeral. Again, thank you to everyone who reached out to me and my family during this very trying time.

Nola Schultz

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Kansas Farm Bureau....Insight

Kim Baldwin, McPherson County farmer and rancher

Pioneer lessons

As the end of the school year is quickly coming into sight for my children, the end-of-year activities are beginning to ramp up. State assessments have been completed, countdowns have begun and field trips have picked up.

I recently joined my daughter's elementary class as they expanded on their classroom lessons about pioneers and experienced a different time period for a day. Students dressed up as pioneer children, wrapped their lunch in parchment paper, packed it into metal pails and headed to Wichita to participate in a day of experiential learning.

Their earlier lessons truly came to life as these students experienced multiple aspects of what life was like for a child in Kansas more than 150 years ago.

For a portion of the morning, the students entered a restored farmhouse and learned about a variety of chores required to churn butter, fire up the kitchen stove, wash dishes and make toast. Afterwards, the students moved outside to learn about some of the tasks they would have helped with had they lived on a farm. From cutting grass using a scythe, tossing hay using pitchforks, utilizing pulley systems to move heavy objects to planting rows and rows of seed on foot, the kids soon realized that there was a lot of work involved in running a farm back in the day.

While walking by some antique farm machinery that was being explained to the kids, I couldn't help but think that I sure was glad I live in 2025 and can utilize advanced technology and practices from planting seeds to harvesting crops.

I was soon reminded that while there have been major advancements in technology, some things still remain the same.

As the students wrapped up their lesson about all of the work required of a pioneer family to prepare for planting to harvest, we rounded a corner to discover a large display board with pegs.

The students were asked what was one thing completely out of their control that still needed to happen to increase the odds of growing a successful crop to

harvest. While there were some interesting answers presented by these third graders, the main answer was rain.

The students were then each handed a hockey puck and one by one they were prompted to select a space on the peg board to release their puck. Where the puck would land would determine the crop they would have, ranging from a bumper crop all the way to a total failure.

Students cheered one another on as each child would approach the board and chose where to place their puck before releasing it to watch as it bounced from peg to peg before arriving at its final spot.

High fives and cheers were given when a puck landed on average or bumper harvests and audible sighs were heard when a puck would land in the zones deemed below average and crop failure.

You could actually see some students were quite anxious as they approached the board to find out the results of their crop. Sometimes a student would second guess their initial placement of their puck and quickly select another area of the board before releasing hoping their luck would be better by making an adjustment.

Overall, there were more successful harvests than crop failures with this group of students. Nonetheless, the exercise allowed students to briefly experience the feelings and concerns a farmer living in the late 1800s would potentially have as they grew a crop.

The day I spent with a group of pioneer kids is one I will soon not forget as it was a great reminder of the realities and concerns of farmers back then that are still present for us today.

Sometimes it takes a day in third grade to help me realize that while there have been major advancements, there are still plenty of areas that impact the success of our farms today just like those from years past.

"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

Answers from Post Rock Extension

Cassie Thiessen, Post Rock Extension District Agriculture Agent,Horticulture, K-State Research and Extension

Pine Tree Problems

Although pine trees are not native to Kansas, they have been widely planted for ornamental, windbreak, and conservation purposes. However, because they are not adapted to our region's climate, they can face a variety of challenges. Certain varieties, like Scots and white pine, are particularly sensitive to drought. Several pines, including Austrian and ponderosa, are reasonably adapted to Kansas conditions; however, they still can suffer environmental stresses. Unfortunately, pines are also susceptible to several diseases, which can cause defoliation, dieback, and even death. If you have a pine tree that isn't healthy, accurately identifying the problem is important, as control measures are different for each condition.

Tip blight is a fungal disease that affects Austrian, ponderosa, Scots, and mugo pines. The disease is most severe on mature trees (20 years or older). Repeated infections over many years can kill large sections of trees or entire trees. The infection period for tip blight occurs when the buds start to expand, usually in late April. Wet spring weather increases disease severity. Tip blight symptoms first appear in late May or early June. The newly developing shoots (candles) fail to grow. The shoots are stunted, and the emerging needles are stunted and turn yellow or tan.

Dothistroma needle blight is a common and serious disease of Austrian and ponderosa pines in windbreaks and ornamental landscapes. Mugo pine also can be infected, but Scots pine and white pine are considered resistant. The disease causes premature needle drop the year after infection. Austrian and ponderosa pines usually retain needles for 3 to 4 years, so the loss of interior needles is a loss of important photosynthetic capacity. Repeated infection over many years can kill a tree. The disease tends to be more severe in crowded plantings.

Both tip blight and Dothistroma needle blight can be controlled with fungicide sprays. Spring applications will protect foliage from infection. However, follow-up applications will provide a more complete and dependable control. The Post Rock Extension Office offers a publication that outlines recommended fungicides and the optimal times to apply

them. You can pick up a copy at your local office or access it online at postrock.ksu.edu.

Pine wilt is a serious problem, caused by the pinewood nematode, a microscopic worm. The pine sawyer beetle, a long-horned borer, spreads the nematode. The nematode feeds and multiplies in the tree's resin canals, quickly causing wilting and death. The nematode and beetles spend the winter in the infected tree. The beetles start emerging around May 1, carrying nematodes to new trees and continuing the cycle of infection.

In Kansas, new pine wilt infections are most apparent from August to December. Trees wilt and die in a short period of time, from several weeks to a few months. The most important step to prevent the spread of pine wilt is sanitation. If a tree is suspected to have pine wilt, bring a sample to your local K-State Research and Extension office for submission to the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab. A branch that is at least 2 inches in diameter and 6 to 8 inches long, taken from right against the trunk, is adequate. If the test is positive, the tree should be cut down as soon as possible. Cut the tree to the ground — do not leave a stump. Chip or burn the wood immediately to destroy the beetles and nematodes. Do not save the wood for firewood.

The beetles are attracted to drought-stressed trees. If possible, provide water during dry periods to prevent drought stress. There are products available for preventative injections. While they do not provide 100 percent control, several injectable products significantly decreased pine wilt infection when used preventively in research trials. The materials need to be applied by a trained tree care professional. Injections provide no curative activity. Once a tree is infected, there is no way to stop the disease.

Pine trees are beautiful when healthy, but unfortunately, susceptible to many conditions. If you have questions on how to protect your pine trees, contact your local Post Rock Extension office.

Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Cassie may be contacted at cthiessen@ksu.edu or by calling Beloit (785-738-3597).

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