

INSIGHT – Hope springs eternal

By Kim Baldwin, McPherson County farmer and rancher, Kansas Farm Bureau

There have been noticeable signs that spring has arrived on our farm. Following a snowfall during the kids' spring break, the sun has come out and the temperatures have warmed up. It's a different feel of seasons. The flowers have begun appearing in my yard and on my fruit trees. The bees have been out scouting and gathering water. The wheat in the fields has begun to turn a vibrant green. Migratory birds are moving north. The daylight is present longer.

The consistent signs of this season I watch for every year are once again, like clockwork, appearing. It's something I find peace in knowing that while there are many unknowns in this world, there are natural elements of the season that steadily persist year after year.

One of the consistent events on our farm every spring is the preparation for planting. The winter shop work has been completed. The machines and equipment have been serviced and we prepare to plant seeds in

the ground once more. Over the years, I've heard time and time again that one must be an eternal optimist in order to farm as there are so many uncertainties. There are so many things one does not and cannot control in farming, which still determines the outcome of the investments we make. Weather, pests, disease, costs and the markets are just a sampling of areas that could cause sleepless nights for many if one allows those uncertainties to consume their thoughts.

Yet, just like clockwork, we still plant those seeds into the ground every spring. We believe the sun will rise and the right amount of rain will come when needed. We believe we will have enough hands available to help harvest the crop. We trust there is demand for our grain, which will allow us to continue for another year.

This year is no different. We are preparing to begin the planting our fall crops in the coming days.

We are preparing for the spring rains that will provide essential moisture to these newly planted seeds. We are preparing for the routines of the work that is done every year as we raise a new crop for another season.

We are preparing for the consistencies we experience every year during this season and are mindful that inconsistencies will appear.

Yes, there are many things we can't control which at times can cause concern.

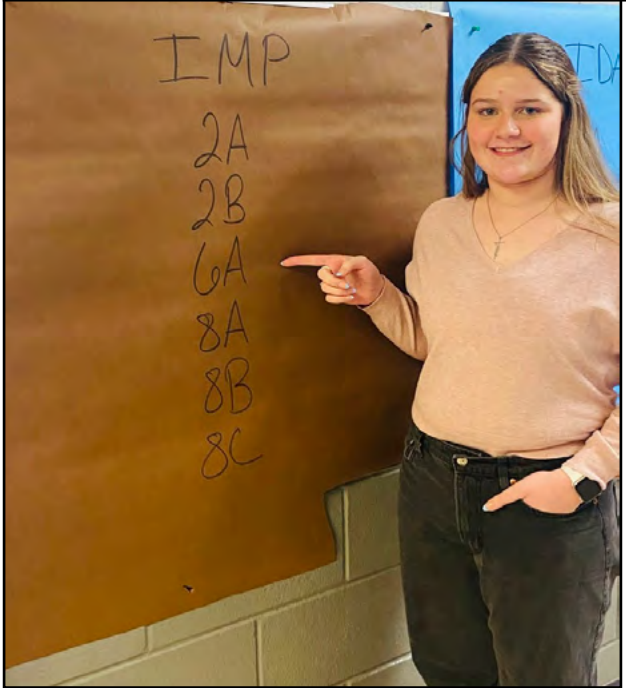
Yet despite those unknowns, we still prepare to plant the next crop. We prepare to plant seeds that are full of hope.

High School Ladies Place in Forensics

Three high school students showcased their talents at the TVL Forensics meet on March 24th, achieving remarkable results:

Lillie Weiser secured 3rd place in Prose, earning a spot at the state festival. **Alyssa Rager** achieved 5th place in Poetry.

Adalei Conley attained 6th place in Impromptu Speech. Despite the small team size, their combined efforts led to an impressive 6th place overall finish. The team is coached by Hannah Kolterman.



Chiggers in Kansas

K-State entomologist shares tips to avoid the itch

Scratching could promote a secondary infection, Cloyd says

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

Warmer days may lead many to itch for spring and summer, but a Kansas State University entomologist cautions against a small mite that is likely to give you a less-pleasing seasonal itch.

Chiggers are active beginning in April, says K-State's Raymond Cloyd, and are usually found in areas with unmanaged vegetation, as well as parks, golf courses, sports fields and other grassy areas. The larvae attach themselves to humans, pets and other animals.

"Chiggers do not suck blood," Cloyd said. "Rather, chiggers burrow and feed on dissolved skin.

The larvae inject a saliva that causes the skin tissue to dissolve, and that is what the chigger larvae feed on."

According to Cloyd, the larvae are difficult to see with the human eye. Humans often notice the presence of chiggers by a reddish-rash and itchy skin.

Cloyd cautions humans to resist the urge to scratch.

"You want to avoid scratching too often because you can promote a bacterial infection by opening wounds," he said. "I've been bitten by chiggers many times, and I know it's very tempting to scratch, but you don't want to create a bigger problem."

Cloyd said some topical ointments may help with the itch and a dermatologist may be able to provide recommendations.

Once attached, larvae feed for "a few days," according to Cloyd, and then they fall off the host.

The larvae become nymphs and then adults that reside in the soil. The nymphs and adults do not feed on humans or other animals. Instead, they feed on insects, mites, and their eggs in the soil.

The best advice, ac-

cording to Cloyd, is to avoid getting bit in the first place.

"If you're going to go into an area where chiggers are likely to be, use DEET or other repellants, and then when you come back inside, immediately take a shower to help reduce the itchiness caused by chiggers," he said.

Chiggers are usually active from Spring (late April) until Fall, or until the first frost. The species of chiggers found in Kansas do not transmit disease, Cloyd said.

Cloyd has written a publication, titled Chiggers in Kansas, with additional tips for protecting yourself from chiggers, including:

*Avoid walking into areas with tall grass and weeds.

*Do not sit, lie down or walk barefoot in areas that may harbor chiggers.

*Insert pant legs underneath socks.

*Mow turfgrass regularly and remove extensive vegetation, such as brush, shrubs, grass and weeds).

*Wash clothes using a hot water wash and rinse to kills chiggers that may be attached to clothing.

*Consult a physician about products that can be used to relieve discomfort and itching.

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Onaga High School Gymnasium
Dinner & Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Dinner Ticket.....\$25.00

Dance held at Onaga Area Community Center
Sponsored by Friends of Onaga Wrestling
No dinner tickets sold after April 28

Classes having reunions please contact an Alumni Officer.

Classes are responsible for their own reservations and decorations

For Tickets Contact

Tracy Meyerkorth, VP 785-564-0844 or

Bailey Jo Starns, Sec'y/Treas. 785-456-4014

539 Main St Wheaton, KS, 66521

Venmo: @OHSALumniAssociation

Logan Marten, President

If requesting by mail, **YOU MUST ENCLOSE A SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE!!**

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