

**Marie's Picks . . .
from 2009-10 reports**

18Jan11

My picks this week are short and medium term outcomes reported by Laura Marks, Flint Hills District #13, and a success story from Karaline Mayer, Wabaunsee County, about their Sericea Lespedeza work.

Producers, especially new landowners and absentee landowners, are becoming more aware of the long-term effects of Sericea Lespedeza on their grasslands. Several landowners and managers have come into the office to report or receive confirmation/identification of plants they have identified or believe to be Sericea Lespedeza in their or neighboring pastures.

One of the medium term outcomes of the Sericea Lespedeza action plan is for producers to identify plants, check and recheck stands. We want that plant identification imbedded in their minds because Sericea Lespedeza does have the opportunity to take over native pastures. During our June plot tour, a producer brought a plant sample he noticed in a roadside ditch on the way to the tour. He read the articles and publications, visited with Extension and Noxious Weed personnel, and was in fact looking for this noxious weed. This is exactly our goal!

--Marie Blythe mblythe@ksu.edu

04Jan11

My picks this week include evidence of Medium Term (Behavior Change) Outcomes reported by Fran Richmond, Frontier District #11, and Medium and Long Term (Condition Change) Outcomes and a Success Story from Chris Long, Walnut Creek District #2:

*After polling 4-H members who experienced the 2010 Citizenship Washington Focus, a vast majority of the youths commented that "the trip gave me more confidence in my abilities to do new things." Others said "I am more confident, out-going, and I speak up more in class," "I volunteer more for things now," "I have more confidence," "I was struck by being in Washington D. C., where history was made and where government happens," "When I see things on TV and places where I've been, I take notice now. I share in government class and know more about the legislative stuff," "I got to meet people from other states and they talk different, but we were a lot alike." "I learned a lot about big cities and how to find my way around," "I liked experiencing the new things like riding a plane, a train, and a boat." One mother said "I can't believe how out-going and confident she is now." A unanimous response was that the two years of work/preparation was well worth the experience of a lifetime.

*Producers have included hunting options when deciding on alternative forms of income.

*The number of acres in hunting leases has increased throughout the year.

*One individual used information learned to set up a hunting lease and is now receiving an alternative source of income from his acres. Other individuals used the information to address liability issues when allowing hunters to use their ground without a lease.

14Dec10

This week my picks are outcomes and success stories reported by Jake Weber, Crawford-Cherokee-Montgomery Counties; Scott Chapman, Post Rock District; and Anna Mae Brown, Crawford County.

*Thirteen new Master Gardeners joined the other Master Gardener volunteers bringing the total number of active Master Gardeners in the southeast Kansas area up to 70. During the past year the active Master Gardeners reported at total of 1,265 volunteer hours and 4,442 educational contacts.

*Child Care Providers are able to handle issues of anger aggression in their child care facilities having learned observation skills for determining the cause of anger outbursts, using prevention techniques to avoid anger situations, and teaching positive behaviors.

*More producers are soil testing and utilizing nutrient management plans resulting in improved nutrient use efficiencies and protecting the environment while maximizing return on the producer's fertilizer investment.

*The Lincoln and Mitchell County Conservation Districts are working with the Post Rock Extension District to promote and encourage soil testing by covering half of the costs of soil tests submitted through our office.

07Dec10

This week my picks are outcomes and success stories reported by Darl Henson, Coffey County; Bill Wood, Douglas County; and David Key, Meadowlark Extension District #7.

Of the three Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) projects affecting Coffey County, two have completed the planning phase and entered the implementation phase. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of available funding and implement water quality enhancement agronomic practices on their farms.

Two farmers participated in the Cover Crop Demonstration Project in our first year. One farmer grazed his two plots. We utilized exclusion cages in those plots to find out how much forage was produced for his cattle. One provided 2700 pounds of dry forage matter in the "Brassica" only plot, and the other 6550 pounds of forage in the "shotgun mix" plot. The costs per ton figured out to be \$22.77 in the "Brassica" plot, and \$17.15 in the "shotgun mix." These costs are considerably less than current hay prices of \$50 per ton. In addition, I know of four producers who are planting cover crops to utilize for grazing cattle this winter, and another six are trying cover crops without grazing.

Thirty-four livestock producers attended the "Eastern Kansas Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) School" we hosted and cooperatively sponsored with the Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kansas Rural Center, and several neighboring Extension Councils. Of the twenty-three evaluations completed, 22 producers indicated they increased their "knowledge of MIG" at least one level. When asked "How will you use the information learned?," more than half indicated they would work on plans and get started using MIG; the rest indicated they would start applying some of the management practices to improve their operations.

As a result of Meadowlark Extension District hosting an informational meeting on the benefits and use of the Facilities Conservation Improvement Program (FCIP) in December of 2008, the USD #442 School District was able to utilize the program to upgrade their lighting, heating, and air systems at their High School. The district will save an estimated \$24,733.00 in utility expenses over the life of the FCIP contract with those savings paying for the improvements.

30Nov10

This week my picks are outcomes reported by Diane Nielson, Atchison County:

*Fifteen high school youths were trained to use GPS (Global Positioning System) units as part of the Student Wellness Ambassador program. These teens then organized activities for 45 elementary students. Working with fifth-grade teachers, GPS activities were introduced to students. Three middle school students attended Health Fest training and learned to use GPS units. One student returned and joined a fifth-grade teacher to lead a week GPS camp for 15 elementary youths. Plans are underway for two teachers to attend GPS/GIS (Geographical Information System) training with the agent to introduce GPS/GIS community service learning to middle school students.

23Nov10

My picks this week are outcomes (knowledge gain and behavior change) from Shannon Blocker, Anderson County; Laura Marks, Flint Hills District #13; Martha Murphy, Crawford County; and a success story from Ben Allen, Rolling Prairie District #8:

Outcomes (knowledge gain and behavior change)

Evidence:

*One youth participating in Growin' Gardeners, continued to weed the flower garden outside of class time later in the summer. As a result of his fun horticulture experience, he will enroll in "Plant Science" in 4-H for 2011.

*During the fair, 4-Hers were overheard discussing how to properly handle and care for their animals, as well as the importance of public perception for their industry. The need for a livestock welfare committee for the county fair is in the process of being formed by the fair board.

*Two hundred thirty-five children (2nd grade - 5th grade) participated in one of 14 3-day summer cooking "Kids Can Cook" classes offered in their local communities. Knowledge gain included:

89% knew which foods would be safe to pack in a sack lunch. . . a 15% increase.

89% could identify an example of cross contamination . . . an 8% increase.

Success Story:

*We held a pasture tour this summer. Landowners and managers of about 30% of land area in the county were present. These owners/managers learned to identify forbs, legumes, and native grasses. These people are all in the grass business, but it is pretty amazing how little they know about what actually grows on the land. If it is not a "grass" most feel that it is a "weed" and needs to be eliminated. Operators of about 12,000 acres told me that they had plans to spray "weeds" but after attending the tour, they realized that the plants they were

trying to reduce were actually beneficial plants. Multiply the cost of \$12-15 per acre to spray.....that is quite a few dollars.

16Nov10

My picks this week are outcomes (knowledge gain and behavior change) from Nancy Pihl, Marion County; Jill Martinson, Dickinson County; and 4-Hers success stories submitted by Susie Latta, Marshall County.

Outcomes (knowledge gain and behavior change)

Evidence:

- Several older 4-H members have developed the leadership skills needed to serve as project leaders for younger members, and to serve as fair superintendents (without the guidance of an adult).

Eleven camp counselors developed and practiced leadership, problem solving, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution skills through counselor training and the day to day activities with the campers in their living group. Counselors who had a co-counselor also learned the importance of teamwork and communication within their counselor team.

Success Stories:

"Through my years in 4-H - I have grown in my projects, learned important skills including time management and leadership skills. I believe I wouldn't be the person I am today without my background in such an exceptional program."

"4-H is my life style. If I had never joined 4-H, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I wouldn't know how to take charge of a group and get down to business. I wouldn't be as good of a public speaker if it hadn't been for 4-H."

9Nov10

This week my picks include outcomes and a success story from Erick DeWolf, Plant Pathology; and Barb Roths, Butler County.

Evidence of knowledge gain and behavior change --

A sub-set of the programs focusing on wheat production was surveyed during the 2010 growing season. This survey included 17 counties and involved 242 respondents. Results indicated that 93% of program participants increased their ability to identify wheat diseases, and 89% of the participants experienced a moderate to large positive impact on their understanding of the interaction between the timing of disease and potential to cause yield loss. More than 90% of farmers indicated that the programs influenced the varieties they would grow on their farms and the disease management strategies they would use.

Evidence of knowledge gain and behavior change --

--While attending sessions of *Be Waist and Wallet Wise*, participants identified at least two shopping tips that targeted the purchase of healthy foods, while staying within a food budget.

--After attending the first four days of **Moola Venture**, middle school youths were able to participate in the simulation, *On Your Own*, where they planned use of their assigned salaries, budgeted for monthly bills, tracked spending in their check registers, and responded to unplanned financial situations. Though they needed coaching to help make

choices, most were able to figure their budgets, write checks, and track expenditures in their check registers.

Success Story –

A Master Gardener expressed interest in learning how to preserve food safely and healthfully. After attending workshops in nearby counties, she was so enthused she wanted to offer the workshop locally. K-State food preservation specialist, Karen Blakeslee, and Area Family and Consumer Sciences specialist, Gayle Price, heard about the Master Gardener's interest. They offered to do a "Preserving the Harvest" workshop in Butler County. A local church offered use of their fantastic kitchen facility. The workshop, advertised with special efforts by the Master Gardener, filled to capacity. We had additional support from great volunteers, and Becky Reid and other Cowley County Extension staff. This is an example of how the collaborative efforts of people and agencies came together to offer a successful workshop that was enthusiastically received by those who attended.

2Nov10

This week my picks include outcomes and a success story from Susan Krumm, Douglas County; Nichole Burnett, Johnson County; and Ethel Schneweis, Ford County.

Evidence of knowledge gain --

More than 180 college students who prepare and serve food to their peers at the 11 University of Kansas Scholarship Halls learned how they can effectively reduce the risk of foodborne illness by proper handling of food.

Evidence of knowledge gain and behavior change --

By lesson six (of eight) in the nutrition kit lesson, students knew about thorough hand washing. At lesson eight, one student commented that her dad never washed his hands before preparing or eating food. Since participating in Kids a Cookin', she now makes him wash when she notices he hasn't.

Success Story –

A local restaurant provided employee ServSafe training for their staff. After learning proper ways to use thermometers, employees told their manager they plan to clean and sanitize thermometers after each use to store them clean and ready to be used the next time. They will also calibrate the thermometers on a routine basis. This was a change from their previous practice.

26Oct10

This week my picks include outcomes and success stories from Carmen Stauth, Kiowa County; Clint Milliman, Thomas County; and Jamie Hancock, Shawnee County.

Evidence of knowledge gain -- Revitalizing Rural Communities through Agriculture:

Absentee landowners learned about local rental rates and land values and how these rates and values may be influenced through cultivation practices for cropland and pasture amenities for grassland. An understanding of this information can be used for discussion with local producers to negotiate equitable lease arrangements.

Evidence of knowledge gain and behavior change -- High Plains Horseman's Day

Eighty participants in the High Plains Horseman's Day learned new training techniques and also spoke with other presenters on saddle fit, mare and foal care, insurance and leases,

horse confirmation, and pasture management. Some participants are experiencing different reactions from their colts when trying techniques they learned. Horsemen are vaccinating more and asking about insurance for their horses.

Success Story --

Homeowners have commented that the changes they have made in response to the information they received from the Response Line volunteers has made a difference in their lives. One man commented, "In my 57 years of life, the smartest decision I ever made was coming here." He received answers to his gardening questions and also found information about Go Topeka where he will receive \$1,500 toward tuition and books for business classes to help his gardening and canning business. He is a disabled Veteran starting a new career.

19Oct10

This week my picks include outcomes and success stories from Chris Long, Walnut Creek District #2; Melinda Daily, Sunflower District #6; and Laurie Chandler, Shawnee County.

Wildlife and Natural Resources Management

Medium Term Outcome (Behavior)

More hunters and outdoor enthusiasts both young and old, who are essential to continued growth of this industry, have visited the area.

Producers are preparing more acres for wildlife habitat by planting more food plots and cover, as well as providing a water source.

Enrollment in the various youth programs centering around hunting or wildlife have increased.

Evidence:

- Producers have placed "Quail Guzzlers" in their CRP and other cropland throughout the district.
- Producers have planted feed strips specifically for wildlife.
- Producers have included hunting options as a part of their decision making process when trying to decide on alternative forms of income.

Long Term Outcome (Condition)

Increase the economic viability of businesses and producers who are involved in Wildlife and Natural Resources Management. Agritourism is becoming an ever-growing industry and can include wildlife and hunting; educating businesses on how to relate to this area can be of major importance.

Involvement in the hunting industry can also give producers another source of income from ground they own. Finding a niche in the market whether it be from raising a crop or livestock can also be directed toward putting their efforts into wildlife management.

The ultimate outcome for the program is to increase the economic growth of the district through the hunting industry, as well as, improve on the quality of the wildlife in the area.

Evidence:

- The number of acres in hunting leases have increased throughout the year.
- The amount of "Quail Guzzlers," that help provide a water source to upland game birds, have increased.

Kansas Crops' Children's Programs**Situation**

Kids are not familiar with crops grown in Kansas and how they are used in their daily lives.

Short Term Outcome (Knowledge)

Kids will learn about crops grown in Kansas, items needed to grow these crops, and items they use everyday that are made from crops grown in Kansas.

Evidence:

A total of 112 youths (students in three schools) learned how grains are processed into something to eat.

Students learned how to prepare bread and sunflower recipes through hands-on programs.

Medium Term Outcome (Behavior)

Kids will communicate with their families about Kansas Crops and tell them about products they use that are from Kansas crops. Families will discuss agriculture and how it affects their lives.

Evidence:

Students took home information from the Kansas Day programs to share with parents. They also took part of their food item, if they did not eat it all before they got home.

Long Term Outcome (Condition)

Northwest Kansas residents will base their consumer buying decisions on the crops grown in Kansas, how they are grown, effects on health by eating these crops, and perceptions about organically grown crops.

Evidence:

Students took whole grain recipes home and shared the healthy foods with their families.

Increase Community Capacity

Rossville PRIDE: Representatives from Kansas PRIDE met with members of Rossville PRIDE and me to look at their accomplishments since 2002. Rossville PRIDE has completed many community projects including:

- Healthy Ecosystem Healthy Community program in which they created a rain garden to remedy a severe drainage problem near the shelter house of Rossville City Park.
- Get It! Do It! Grant for the promotion of health and physical activity which helped to fund a sand volleyball court in Rossville City Park. Upon completion of the courts, sand volleyball tournaments have been held resulting in a greater level of physical fitness for participating youth.

- Upon completion of the sand volleyball courts, a community survey was developed (by K-State Research and Extension - Shawnee County) that asked for input on future park improvements. Survey results indicated the need to improve the playground equipment and shelters, and maintain the horseshoe pits.
- Successful grant applications were submitted to the Kansas Department of Commerce for a Small Communities Improvement Program grant and to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. These grants were used to purchase new playground equipment, tables and benches, and to do improvements on the old limestone shelters.
- The playground equipment was constructed in only five days with the assistance of more than 400 volunteers. At the end of the five days, the community felt a great sense of pride at the completion of the project.

The success of these projects has developed a “we can do it” attitude along with the desire to continue seeking bigger and better things for their community.