

from our viewpoint...

Community events matter now more than ever

There is something special about a community that gathers. Whether it's on Main Street for a parade, under the bright lights of the fairgrounds, or in the local park with music filling the evening air, events have a way of pulling us together.

These gatherings remind us that a community is more than just streets, businesses, and houses — it's the people who show up, share stories, and create memories. Each event, no matter how big or small, offers us the chance to feel connected. We shake hands with neighbors we haven't seen in a while, we cheer on our local kids, and we welcome new faces who might just decide to put down roots here because they see how much heart our town has.

Community events don't just warm our hearts — they strengthen our economy. Visitors come to town to attend a festival, a ballgame, or a holiday market, and while they're here, they stop for a meal, they shop in local stores, and they fill up their gas tanks before heading home. Every dollar spent ripples through the local economy, supporting small businesses that, in turn, support our schools, our nonprofits, and our families. A single well-planned event can generate thousands of dollars in new revenue and introduce outsiders to everything our community has to offer.

But beyond the numbers is something even greater: pride. When we come together for a fair, a concert, or a special celebration, we show the world — and ourselves — what it means to belong here. These events are the glue that binds generations, the spark that keeps traditions alive, and the stage where new ideas and new friendships are born.

That's why hosting community events is not just about fun or tradition. It's an investment in our future. It's a chance to draw in new families, new businesses, and new opportunities. And it's a reminder that even in challenging times, when the world seems divided, we can always find common ground by coming together to celebrate who we are.

The next time you see a poster for a community event, don't just mark the date on your calendar — bring a friend, invite a neighbor, and show up with pride. Because every gathering makes us stronger, every shared laugh draws us closer, and every event plants the seeds of tomorrow's growth.

—Julie Thayer,
High Plains News

letter policy

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Fathers important to children's success

When you have a good daddy, coloring pages together is more than just arts and crafts time. It's him entering into your world of creativity, sitting in your space, letting the crayons run wild beside you. It's home meeting you as the princess you are right now. And a father's time spent with his daughters today will shape how they view men in the future.

The way you twirl them.
The way you talk to them.
The way you look at them.
The amount of time you spend with them.

It all matters.
Statistics show just how much. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, children with involved fathers are 39% more

Simply Blooming Grace

Rachel Redlin



likely to earn A's in school and 45% less likely to repeat a grade. Daughters with present fathers are less likely to struggle with depression and more likely to have higher self-esteem. In fact, one study out of the University of Oxford found that girls with active fathers were 43% more likely to pursue higher education.

A dad's role is not just about providing; it is about presence. When he models respect, love,

and consistency, his daughter learns what to look for in friendships, relationships, and eventually, in marriage. Proverbs reminds us, "Train up a child in the way she should go, and when she is old she will not depart from it."

So how do you raise her in the way she should go? Sometimes, it's simpler than we think.

Grab a coloring book and sit down beside her.
Go to those school dances,

even if you don't know the steps.

Take her on coffee dates where hot chocolate counts.

Buy her the sparkly dress, even if it's just for a Tuesday.

Plan a monthly movie date and let her pick the show.

Go to the park, swing beside her, and laugh like a kid again.

These little investments add up. Studies show that even 15 minutes of intentional father-daughter time a day can have a lasting impact on her emotional development. She won't remember all the details, but she'll remember how it felt to be seen, cherished, and chosen.

Because when dad steps into her world, she learns how valuable she really is. And that is something she'll carry for the rest of her life.

Processing horseradish from the garden

Since we have been doing some recipes in these writings the past few weeks...how about one more!

I often get requests from folks wanting to get my recipe for my processed horseradish. Once again we're actually talking about my Dad's horseradish recipe. He always made a very smoothly blended processed horseradish...and because he gave so much of it away over the years...along with fact that I have carried on making this horseradish recipe, I too give a lot of it away and get many of the requests for the recipe.

The only problem is...we have no official "written" recipe for this delicious condiment. For many years, I would assist my Dad with the processing of the horseradish. We would dig the roots, and it became my job to peel and chop the roots, and Dad would put them into a standard kitchen type blender, and from

Marty and Kay Melia

The Gardener



this point my Dad would process the stuff using water, vinegar, salt and sugar...in increments that he kept in his head!

Every year I would suggest that he write down how much of each of the ingredients he adds to be blended in with the chopped roots...but he never did. When he passed I went online to try to find some specific measurements so I could carry on the tradition, but I didn't really find anything that sounded quite right.

So I took it upon myself to try copy his process...and for the last eight years I have pretty much figured it. BUT...I too have not written it down and

pretty much eyeball it like my Dad.

I recently tried to explain it to a friend who loves our horseradish...and for the first time ever I will put into words (the best I can) the approximate measurements for the ingredients that go into the mix.

I start with about two cups of the peeled, chopped and diced horseradish roots, placed in the blender. Then add about a quarter cup of water followed by a quarter cup of white vinegar. Add to that a half teaspoon of canning salt and finally a teaspoon of sugar (I like it on the sweet side).

Then begin blending the in-

redients...it's important to have a decent and fairly powerful blender. Continue to blend the ingredients until you get a very smooth consistency without any slivers or chunks of the roots left in it. Be prepared to add a little more water to get the desired consistency...but not too much water to make it too mushy. When you complete the process, carefully taste it, and if you feel it meets your expectations, put the horseradish in jars, and start another blender full. Last year I set a new record with about 35 quarter-pint size jars of it. Make as much or as little as you want...depending how much horseradish you dig! Oh and be sure and keep the processed condiment in a refrigerator...ours usually lasts through Easter dinner!

Hear The Gardener Tuesdays and Fridays on KYVZ FM 106.1.

Building your emergency fund

Plan now to ease the blow of financial emergencies. Whether it's a natural disaster, job loss or sudden health issue, financial emergencies often strike when we least expect them. Preparing ahead of an emergency can help to ease the burden created by unexpected expenses.

Before an emergency it is important to build a fund. If you don't have an emergency fund, now is the time to start. Even a small amount adds up over time. By saving \$40 a month can give you an emergency fund to cover about six months of essential expenses.

The more cash you have, the less you will have to put on credit, which you'll have to pay back with interest. Ideally, you should save enough money to cover six months of expenses, based on what you spend in a typical month.

Review your homeowner's

Home and Family

Melinda Daily



and health insurance coverage to make sure you have the coverage you're expecting, and communicate with your family about your insurance policies. It's also important to keep your important records safe. That should be part of your emergency plan. If you have to grab something quickly and go, you'll have that information in a place where you can get it.

During an emergency: Use what you've prepared. Use the cash you've saved if you need to purchase essentials, and contact your credit card companies and lenders if you anticipate a break in your payments. Or, you may want to request an increase in

your credit availability.

If the financial emergency is caused by loss of a job, you might need to file for unemployment benefits, even if you aren't sure if you'll qualify. Your community may also have physical and mental health resources. There's often more help available than people realize. Food banks, housing assistance, even childcare and transportation services may be able to help. The amount of help may vary from community to community.

After an emergency: Rebuild and re-evaluate. If it's a natural disaster and you've had property damage, you need to start making your insurance claims.

Caution homeowners to be careful of scammers trying to take advantage of those in unfortunate circumstances.

Afterwards, prioritize how you spend the money that you have. You want to cover your basic needs — including housing, food and transportation — and think about how far your emergency fund can take you. If the home is affected, call the utility companies to turn off services during the time that you don't need them.

Once you've spent down your emergency fund and are on the road to recover, start building that fund back up again for the next time, because there probably will be a next time.

Melinda Daily is the Family Consumer Science Agent with the Sunflower Extension District.

Selling lamb and agriculture

By Glenn Brunkow
Pottawatomie County farmer and rancher

Kansas Farm Bureau

Insights



Jennifer and I sell lamb at the farmers market in Manhattan. Yes, it is a great way for us to sell our lamb, but what I enjoy the most is interacting with the consumers who buy our lamb. I take considerable pride in the meat we produce and in sharing it with the end user.

As good as that all is, this is also a chance for me to advocate for agriculture and in some small way, to help dispel some of the myths about how we produce food. It's not always easy, and I am not always successful, but it is important to try and get the truth out.

A couple of weeks ago a gentleman stopped at our booth and expressed interest in purchasing lamb, but first he had a question. He asked if we used pesticides on our farm. I told him we do, and they are a valuable tool.

He then told me he was not interested in buying any meat because it would have pesticide on it. I explained we follow all safety precautions including re-entry and grazing exclusion times. That was not good enough for him, and I could not convince him our meat was free of pesticide residue no matter what evidence I presented. In the end I chalked my interaction up to the old adage of "you can't win them all." However, that does not mean you shouldn't try. In the end we had a very civil discussion, but he would not be swayed. Thankfully, there are many other customers who do believe me.

I also had a customer ask me if my meat was free of hormones

and antibiotics. I told them, first, that there are no added hormones I could give sheep so that is not a concern. Moreover, I told them that we are in regular contact with our veterinarian and follow the label guidelines on the antibiotics we do give our lambs.

I told the customer we use as few antibiotics as possible, but when my sheep are sick, I want to treat them with the best possible medicine. The health and wellbeing of our sheep is one of the top concerns on our farm. I also said that we are very conscious of proper use of antibiotics because we want them to remain effective for our sheep as well as ourselves.

In this instance I was successful and made the sale. As

farmers and ranchers, we need to make sure we take our time and explain to consumers what we do and why we do it. Farmers and ranchers are among the most trusted professionals, and we need to make sure we use this trust to dispel bad information that consumers are constantly bombarded with.

We may not always be successful but that does not mean we should not keep trying to tell our story every chance we get. We're not going to win every conversation, but I believe we can win most of them. Each consumer we do educate is one more friend of agriculture — and we need every friend we can get.

"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.