

Morton County Farm Bureau Association

Cassie Mason, County Coordinator

Insight: Advancing Rural Mental Health

Will Stutterheim, Fort Hays State University

Born and raised on a farm in Northwest Kansas, I've seen firsthand the challenges the agricultural community faces. As a child, my parents had to fight to keep our farm, and I saw the mental and emotional toll these challenges placed on our family.

Years later, I took a job as a therapist in a rural community just miles from my parents' farm. I saw the need for education on the effects of stress in agriculture, but I also saw the stigma associated with talking about mental health. Kansas was hit hard by drought, and the effect of the stressors could be seen on our farms and in our rural communities.

I saw the community struggling and decided to give my first presentation on the effects of stress in agriculture. The stigma surrounding mental health was very strong 20 years ago and only three people ended up attending that first presentation. Stigma has always surrounded mental health; however, in agriculture, it's almost ingrained in the profession.

"Rub some dirt on it," "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and "tough it out" are some well-known phrases in farming communities. While "toughing it out" might work on a minor physical injury, it isn't the best way to recognize, understand and manage your stressors during times of uncertainty.

In the past 20 years, I have seen significant improvements in the stigma surrounding mental health. Instead of getting lost in the stigma and ignoring mental health needs, people are starting to recognize the symptoms of stress earlier and how that can affect mood and anxiety. This is critically important, because like any challenge,

the quicker you are to respond to your mental health needs, the more likely you will be successful.

They also recognize and understand that much of their stress is from challenges they have little to no control over. Instead of blaming themselves for challenges outside of their control, hardworking farmers and ranchers are finding better ways and resources to manage their stress, anxiety, depression and overall mental health. The stigma is still there, but it doesn't have the same grip that it used to, and this allows people to think about mental health differently.

It's not just the agricultural community that is getting better; the people and resources supporting the community are changing as well. I have seen so many great people and organizations take on the stigma surrounding mental health in agriculture. The next generation of farmers are taking the time to talk about and prioritize mental health. Small communities and agricultural organizations are working tirelessly to spread information and resources to those who are struggling. Families that were once reluctant to discuss the effects of stress now come together to talk and support each other through challenging times. Rural communities are full of amazing people and resources working to overcome the mental health stigma and finding ways to support those in need.

While I worked as a therapist, I was always fond of saying that stress and mental health issues are not an excuse or a weakness like the stigma suggests. They are a challenge.

Improvements are still needed regarding mental health and the stigma surrounding mental health — I've seen

firsthand the substantial steps that have already been taken to improve mental health in agriculture. My first crowd may have consisted of only three people, but since then, I have given similar speeches to thousands of farmers and ranchers in numerous towns across Kansas.

Amazing people are working tirelessly to break down this stigma every day, and there's a way to honor their advocacy: Kansas Farm Bureau's Rural Minds Matter Advocate of the Year Award. It was humbling to receive the inaugural award last year, and I am excited to see the program continue to celebrate the impact of mental health advocates in rural communities. Their dedication can be truly life changing. To learn more about the awards or to nominate an advocate, please visit www.kfb.org/rural-mindsmatter.

Farmers and ranchers are recognizing the need for bootstraps while also recognizing the toll these stressful times are having on them. If we work on this challenge in the next 20 years like we have in the last 20 years, I can't wait to see the advancements the next generation of farmers and ranchers make to further break down the stigma surrounding mental health.

About the author: Will Stutterheim has more than 20 years of experience helping individuals and families cope with the pressures of agriculture through mental health therapy and education.

"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.

Kansas Department of Commerce Launches New Kansas Small Business Office

Lt. Governor and Secretary of Commerce David Toland announced Wednesday the official launch of the Kansas Small Business Office. The division is dedicated to empowering small businesses across the state with the resources, connections and support they need to prosper, serving as a vital link between entrepreneurs and state government.

"While large corporations relocating or expanding in Kansas tend to grab the headlines, we fully acknowledge small businesses are key drivers of our state's robust economy," Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Commerce David Toland said. "With the creation of this new division, we are committing resources to double down on that growth."

The focus is warranted, as more than 99 percent of all businesses in Kansas are small businesses.

The Kansas Small Business Office consolidates key Commerce resources and creates a centralized point of contact in state government for entrepreneurs navigating business development, certifications, permitting, capital access,

mentorship and more. One of the office's unique offerings will be ConnectKS, a new online platform that will simplify access to business resources statewide. Powered by EcoMap, ConnectKS is designed to help entrepreneurs, small business owners and ecosystem builders connect with programs, funding opportunities, support organizations and events.

The platform provides a real-time, searchable database of resources available across the Kansas entrepreneurial ecosystem. The digital hub is tailored to meet the needs of users at every stage of business development.

"The Kansas Small Business Office is making it easier than ever for Kansans to find the resources they need to start and grow a business," Kansas Small Business Office Director Taylor Overton said. "Whether launching a first venture or scaling a successful company, our office provides clarity, connectivity and confidence to our Kansas businesses."

For more information about the Kansas Small Business Office, visit <https://www.kansas-commerce.gov/>

small-business-and-entrepreneurship/.

About the Kansas Department of Commerce

As the state's lead economic development agency, the Kansas Department of Commerce strives to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve prosperity in Kansas. Commerce accomplishes its mission by developing relationships with corporations, site location consultants and stakeholders in Kansas, the nation and world. Our strong partnerships allow us to help create an environment for existing Kansas businesses to grow and foster an innovative, competitive landscape for new businesses. Through Commerce's project successes, Kansas was awarded Area Development Magazine's prestigious Gold Shovel award in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, and was awarded the 2021 and 2022 Governor's Cup by Site Selection Magazine.

Classified

The Morton County Library is accepting applications for a desk clerk/custodial 2 days a week. Please pick up your applications at the library.

LAWN PRO
Affordable
Lawn Care Program
Free Estimate
CALL
620-544-1517

Legal Notice

First published in the Elkhart Tri-State News, Thursday, June 19, 2025.

Board of Appeals
Elkhart, Kansas
NOTICE

TRANE
It's Hard To Stop A Trane.
BOALDIN ELECTRIC
and
REFRIGERATION
Heating & Cooling
697-2545
KENT BOALDIN
Owner

The Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing at City Hall in Elkhart, Kansas, on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 5:00 pm to consider a variance for 113 N. Oklahoma, Elkhart, Kansas. The public may attend the meeting or mail a letter to the Elkhart Board of Appeals, P.O. Box 640, Elkhart, Kansas 67950 to make a comment.

Morton County is accepting applications

for an IT position and Appraiser Personal Property Clerk until 5:00 pm on Thursday, July 3rd.
Job descriptions may be picked up at Morton County Clerk's office 1025 Morton St. Elkhart, Ks 67950 or on our website www.mtcoks.com. EOE

SHERIFF'S LAND AUCTION

1,158 Acres – Native Grass

Public auction and sale of land to the highest bidder will be held by the Sheriff of Cimarron County at 10:00 a.m. on July 1, 2025, at the north front door of the courthouse in Boise City, Cimarron County, Oklahoma. The buyer is required to pay, in cash or certified funds, 10% of purchase price within 24 hours of the sale and the balance on sale confirmation by the Court.

The land is in one tract located 8.5 miles north of Keyes, Oklahoma, on the west side of highway 171, and consist of all of Section 1-T5N-R7, and all of the south half and the south 117.39 acres of the north half of Section 6-T5N-R8. Two good livestock wells are located near the center of each section, and access is limited to one entry from the east side near the middle of Section 6.

Interested buyers may contact James M. Boring for more information at (580) 651-3214.

Legal Notice

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BEFORE THE STATE CORPORATION
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF KANSAS
NOTICE OF FILING APPLICATION

RE: BEREXCO LLC -- Application for an exception to the 10 year time limitation of K.A.R. 82-3-111 for the BSWU #7-4 well, located in Morton County, Kansas.

TO: All Oil & Gas Producers, Unleased Mineral Interest Owners, Landowners, and all persons whomsoever concerned.

You, and each of you, are hereby notified that Berexco LLC has filed an application for an exception to the 10 year time limitation of K.A.R. 82-3-111 for the BSWU #7-4, located in the NW NE of Section 4-31S-41W, Morton County, Kansas.

Any persons who object to or protest this application shall be required to file their objections or protest with the Conservation Division of the State Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas within fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication. These protests shall be filed pursuant to Commission regulations and must state specific reasons why the grant of the application may cause waste, violate correlative rights or pollute the natural resources of the State of Kansas.

All persons interested or concerned shall take notice of the foregoing and shall govern themselves accordingly.

BEREXCO LLC
2020 N. Bramblewood
Wichita, Kansas 67206
316-265-3311



Syracuse Dairy
Morton County location is now accepting applications for milking positions starting at \$14.00 an hour with a \$250.00 signing bonus. Benefits include 401K, health insurance, dental insurance, and life insurance. Please apply in person at our office (751 SE CR 36, Syracuse, KS 67878) or call 620-492-2525.

NOTICE

Deadline FOR Elkhart Tri-State News

Pictures & Stories
Deadline 5 pm
Monday
Advertising
Deadline 10 am
Tuesday

Got News?

Phone: (697-4716)
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Elkhart, KS 67950