

Midwest Messenger LIVESTOCK

ROUNDUP

Young Stockmen participate in southwest Kansas bus tour

A bus tour of central and southwest Kansas beef and dairy operations was the focus of the third semester of the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) Young Stockmen's Academy (YSA) Sept. 21-23.

Innovative Livestock Services hosted the group's first tour stop near Larned, where the YSA class got to see the progress on and hear about the considerations for their new feedyard in Kansas.

The class continued west to Twin Circle Dairy near Lewis. The newly built dairy features a pair of 120-cow rotary parlors and milks 19,000 cows twice daily. Twin Circle Dairy is one of five area operations selected to supply milk to the Hilmar Cheese Company plant in Dodge City.

Following the dairy stop, the group traveled a few miles down the road to Cross Ranch, owned by 2007 KLA President David Cross. In addition to a cow-calf herd, the ranch consists of a custom weaning and growing business.

To round out the first day, the YSA class was joined by KLA members for dinner and networking at Prime on the Nine steakhouse in Dodge City.

Day two started at Dodge City Veterinary Clinic with a Beef Quality Assurance training and injection-site demonstration led by veterinarian Tim Parks with Merck. Clinic co-owner and veterinarian Chad Kerr joined the group for the visit and provided insight into the veterinary business and his experiences over 25-plus years of practice.

The tour headed to Scott City where they visited the KLA Environmental Services office for lunch and an overview of the business by KLA staff. Cobalt Cattle hosted the class at their Leoti feedyard location after lunch. Cobalt Chief Executive Officer Joel Jarnagin spoke about the cattle feeding industry in the region and led a tour of the operation's new feed mill.

For the final stop of the day, the YSA class visited Larson Ranch in Leoti, owned and operated by YSA alumni Brady and Kyla Larson. The Larsons raise Angus

and Charolais seedstock and recently implemented Halter virtual fencing collars on the cowherd. They hosted the group and local KLA members for dinner and networking following a discussion and tour of their barns and feeding pens.

Hilmar Cheese Company in Dodge City was the final tour stop. Production shift manager Pablo Morales spent time with the class providing an overview of plant operations and the supply chain for Hilmar products. Then, the class adjourned until their final meeting during the 2026 KLA Convention in Manhattan Nov. 18-20.

Members of the 2026 YSA class are James Brack, Moscow; Sierra Cargill, Medicine Lodge; Gatlin Clawson, Meade; Brooke Falk, Harveyville; MaKala Fitzsimmons, Cunningham; Shane Flach, Manhattan; Casey Giffing, Ulysses; Hannah Grund, Wallace; Nick Higgason, Olmitz;



Submitted photo

Pictured in the front row are Justine Johns, Minneapolis, left; Brooke Falk, Harveyville; Hannah Grund, Wallace; Teagan Sturdy-Milliken, Lyndon; Sierra Cargill, Medicine Lodge; Adalaide Kline, Colby; Baylee Shultz, Berryton; Taylee Velasquez, Hugoton; MaKala Fitzsimmons, Cunningham; Skye Schumaker, Pratt. In the back row: Shane Flach, Manhattan, left; Jack Roenne, Great Bend; Luke Kaiser, Grinnell; David Cross; Gatlin Clawson, Meade; Nick Nowak, Ellis; Nick Higgason, Olmitz; Casey Giffing, Ulysses; Quinton Porter, Hays; and Brady McComb, Pratt.

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Discuss post-wildfire range recovery in Oshkosh

Nebraska Extension will host an informational meeting on range recovery after wildfire Wednesday, Oct. 14, with participants meeting at the Oshkosh Methodist Church at 4 p.m., then traveling to the range sites for viewing and discussion.

The program will include a tour of area pastures burned in the Morrill fire to assess recovery progress. Dr. Mitch Stephenson with Nebraska Extension range management will lead a discussion of the recovery process and key considerations for grazing management going into the fall and winter and next spring and summer.

Dr. Karla Wilke, Nebraska Extension expert in cow-calf stocker cattle management, will present information on supplementation and feeding options for the cowherd, considering available feed and market prices.

After the range walk, participants are invited to return to the Oshkosh Methodist Church, where supper will be served at 6:30 p.m. by the Garden County Do More Robotics 4-H Club, followed by a program featuring Stephenson and Wilke.

Brad Fraass, executive director for the Farm Service Agency in Cheyenne, Deuel and Garden counties, will

give an update on the status of government programs. Mary Reece will give a summary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) disaster program and ongoing NRCS technical assistance opportunities.

There is no cost to attend, but for a meal count, contact Morgan Wiant at the Nebraska Extension Office in Oshkosh at 308-772-3311 or mwiant2@unl.edu.

Questions about the program? Contact Aaron Berger at 308-235-3122 or aberger2@unl.edu.

Evaluate feed options amid drought, higher hay prices with help of Extensions webinar

With drought conditions affecting forage availability and higher hay prices increasing winter feeding costs, Nebraska Extension will offer its Fundamentals of Feeding the Cow webinar series this fall to help cattle producers evaluate feed options and make informed nutrition decisions.

The four-session online series will be held Nov. 9, 12, 16 and 19 from 7:30 -8:45 p.m. Central time.

Fundamentals of Feeding the Cow is designed to help producers better understand the nutritional needs of beef cows and how those needs change throughout the production cycle. Participants will learn how to evaluate available feed resources, compare alternatives and develop feeding strategies that meet cow requirements while managing costs.

The series comes as drought conditions and higher hay prices are prompting some producers to take a closer look at available forage supplies and consider alternative feeds. Knowing a cow's nutrient requirements — and how to accurately compare feeds based on nutritional value and cost — can help producers determine which options make the most sense for their operations.

The series will cover four key areas:

- Understanding how a cow's nutrient requirements change throughout the production cycle;
- Reading and interpreting feed test analyses and feed tags;
- Comparing feed options and determining the best buy; and
- Developing cost-effective, year-round feeding plans.

Nebraska Extension educators Erin Laborie, Troy Walz and Brock Ortner will lead the series. Sessions are designed to provide practical information producers can apply to their own operations, with opportunities for participants to ask questions throughout the course.

More than 185 producers have participated in previous offerings of Fundamentals of Feeding the Cow.

Registration is \$65 and includes a notebook of Nebraska Extension resources. Participation is limited to 40 people, and registration is due Oct. 26. Register at go.unl.edu/feedingthecow

For more information, contact Erin Laborie at 308-268-3105 or erin.laborie@unl.edu.

NCTA students put ranch skills to work during two-day clinic

Students at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture had the opportunity to sharpen their horsemanship, roping and livestock-handling skills during a two-day Ranch Roping and Stockmanship Clinic led by Ryan Sexson of Nenzel, Nebraska.

The Sept. 15-16 clinic combined instruction in the arena with hands-on ranch work, giving students the opportunity to build new skills and then put them to use in a real working environment.

Students began the first day on foot in the NCTA arena, learning the fundamentals of roping. Sexson worked with students on managing coils, building and swinging a loop, positioning for head and heel shots, and making adjustments that could improve their catch percentage.

Students practiced on roping dummies, with each participant receiving individual instruction before moving to horseback.

Once mounted, students worked through the basics of introducing a horse to a rope and learned how to safely manage their rope and dally from the saddle. As students became comfortable, live cattle were brought into the arena so they could apply what they had learned.

Using breakaway hondas, students who were ready had the opportunity to practice heading yearlings. Every participant also practiced heel shots from horseback, either on live cattle or a dummy.

The small clinic setting allowed Sexson to work individually with each student throughout the day, helping them make adjustments based on their experience level, horse and roping skills.

"Every student saw improvement during the clinic," Jessica Rodman, the clinic's faculty sponsor said. "Ryan is a patient and kind teacher, and the students took to



Submitted photo

Students, faculty, and the clinician stand in front of pairs after returning them to pasture at the Leu Ranch. They are Karah Barnes, left, Jessica Rodman, Jaidin Miller, Ryan Sexson, August Skow, Ciara Peterson, and Madison Wilson.

him well. Everyone walked away with a new or improved skill set."

On the second day, the classroom moved from the arena to NCTA's Leu Ranch in Hayes County.

Students loaded their horses and traveled to the ranch to help precondition calves, turning the day into an opportunity to learn while completing actual ranch work.

Sexson taught students techniques for gathering and

driving cattle, sorting pairs and working cattle through a Bud Box. Each student had the opportunity to work with him individually while bringing cattle through the handling system.

The experience also incorporated animal health and livestock management. Students administered vaccines to calves while learning proper injection placement and needle management.

By the end of the day, the cattle had been worked and returned to pasture, and the students had experienced the satisfaction of completing a job while developing skills they can take with them into future ranch and livestock operations.

The clinic is an example of NCTA's Learn by Doing approach to education. Bringing an experienced clinician to campus gave students the chance to receive focused instruction, ask questions and practice their skills, while the second day at the Leu Ranch allowed them to apply those lessons to the kind of work they may encounter in their careers.

At NCTA, learning agriculture often means more than talking about how a job should be done. It means saddling a horse, gathering the cattle and doing the work.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) in Curtis is a two-year institution within the University of Nebraska system, dedicated to developing the next generation of agricultural professionals and veterinary technicians.

Talk grazing strategies during drought at Sidney pasture walk

Grazing strategies and management decisions during drought will be the focus of a pasture walk hosted by the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) and Nebraska Extension Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 9:30 a.m. to noon near Sidney, Nebraska.

The Grazing Strategies During Drought Pasture Walk will provide producers an opportunity to see and discuss how grazing management decisions can help extend available forage, manage livestock through drought conditions, and position pastures for recovery.

The event will feature Brian Sprenger, who will share his experience managing grazing before and during drought, including the decisions he has made as conditions have changed.

Topics will include:

- Grazing management and drought — Sprenger's experience managing grazing before and during drought.
- Drought management decisions — Trigger dates, stocking decisions, destocking options, and lessons learned.
- Extending the grazing season — Experiences using CRP, failed crops, dry lotting, and other forage options.
- Virtual fence during drought — What has worked, challenges encountered, and lessons learned.
- Pasture recovery — Managing through the remainder of the drought and considering recovery

into the next growing season.

The pasture walk will be held 1 mile south of 8585 Road 20 on Road 87, Sidney, Nebraska. Follow the pink flagging to the pasture.

The event is designed to provide a practical, producer-to-producer discussion about managing through drought and making timely decisions as forage conditions change. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and discuss strategies that may apply to their own operations.

To register or for more information, call or text Jack Arterburn, NGLC Western Program Coordinator, at 308-249-3717, or email jack@nebraskagrazinglands.org.