

It's necessary to know the facts from fiction

Scientists worldwide are studying a new and still emerging avian - or bird - flu.

A recent, made-for-television movie, "Fatal Contact: Bird Flu in America," which aired on ABC May 9 has sparked more interest in the new flu virus. To help separate fact from fiction, Scott Beyer, Kansas State University Research and Extension poultry specialist answered frequently asked questions about the new flu:

Q: Who is at risk from bird flu?

A: The new strain of bird flu is transmitted primarily between bird species. There are some cases in Asia and Europe in which the virus has passed from an infected bird to a person who has been in close contact with that bird, but researchers believe that the virus will have to mutate (a process in which genes rearrange themselves) several times and perhaps in a series or in a cascade of mutations before it becomes a health risk for the human population.

Q: Does that mean that the general population can ignore the prospect of new bird flu?

A: No. When a virus is new, the general population will not yet have had an opportunity to develop a natural immunity to it and scientists also will not have had the time to formulate a vaccine effective in fighting the virus. That means that normally healthy people may face increased risks from the virus. People who are immuno-compromised such as the elderly, people who are suffering from a chronic illness or children, whose immune systems are not yet fully developed, may face even greater risks.

Q: How can people protect themselves?

A: Be aware. Keep up on the news and when - and if - the virus should mutate in such a way that it becomes a health threat to the general human population, use common sense: Practice good hygiene; wash your hands frequently; get plenty of rest; eat a variety of foods; stay hydrated and away from crowds.

Q: If the flu is spread by poultry, what is the poultry industry doing to protect its flocks to keep the flu from spreading?

A: In the United States, the poultry industry has dealt with poultry viruses for years, but not this particular strain. The industry has been vigilant in testing since the 1970s. If pathological reports, blood tests, swabbing facilities

Home ed
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and even testing farm cats and dogs near a poultry facility indicate the presence of any poultry virus, the flock is destroyed, the farm emptied and sanitized.

Poultry production techniques do, however, vary worldwide. In many places, including the Far East where the new bird flu was first identified, poultry often is raised in small, independent flocks and sold at open-air markets allowing an opportunity for infected birds to infect other flocks.

Q: Is eating chicken or eggs safe?

A: In the United States, a vigilant monitoring system keeps infected birds from entering the consumer food supply. Cooking poultry to the recommended internal temperature - 160 F - will kill the virus. Eggs also are safe. If a laying hen is infected with the virus, the hen will stop laying (eggs). Also, if for some reason, an egg is infected with the virus, cooking the egg to 160 F will kill the virus.

Q: Will migratory birds carry the infection?

A: That's a worry, and the reason scientists are studying the birds in their current habitat and expected migratory flyways with the hope of reducing the spread of the virus. That also is why farmers are being encouraged to discourage migratory bird contact with their flocks and with their farms in general. For example, a farmer may want to allow corn stalks to stand to discourage migratory geese that need a clear field for landing.

The study of migratory birds, including ducks and geese, is ongoing, and keeping up on the news is advisable, as Kansas is a flyway for migratory birds.

If you have further questions, contact your local K-State Research and Extension Office or e-mail: twatts@oznet.ksu.edu.

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Norton County fifth and sixth graders learned about the danger of alcohol and other drugs at a recent youth forum. After listening to the presentations and eating pizza, the kids (above) filed out of the St. Francis Par-

ish Center to go to a free movie at the Norton Theatre. There, they were given free popcorn and soda (below) to munch on while they watched "RV".

— Telegram photos by Charlotte Stephenson

Kids learn at youth forum

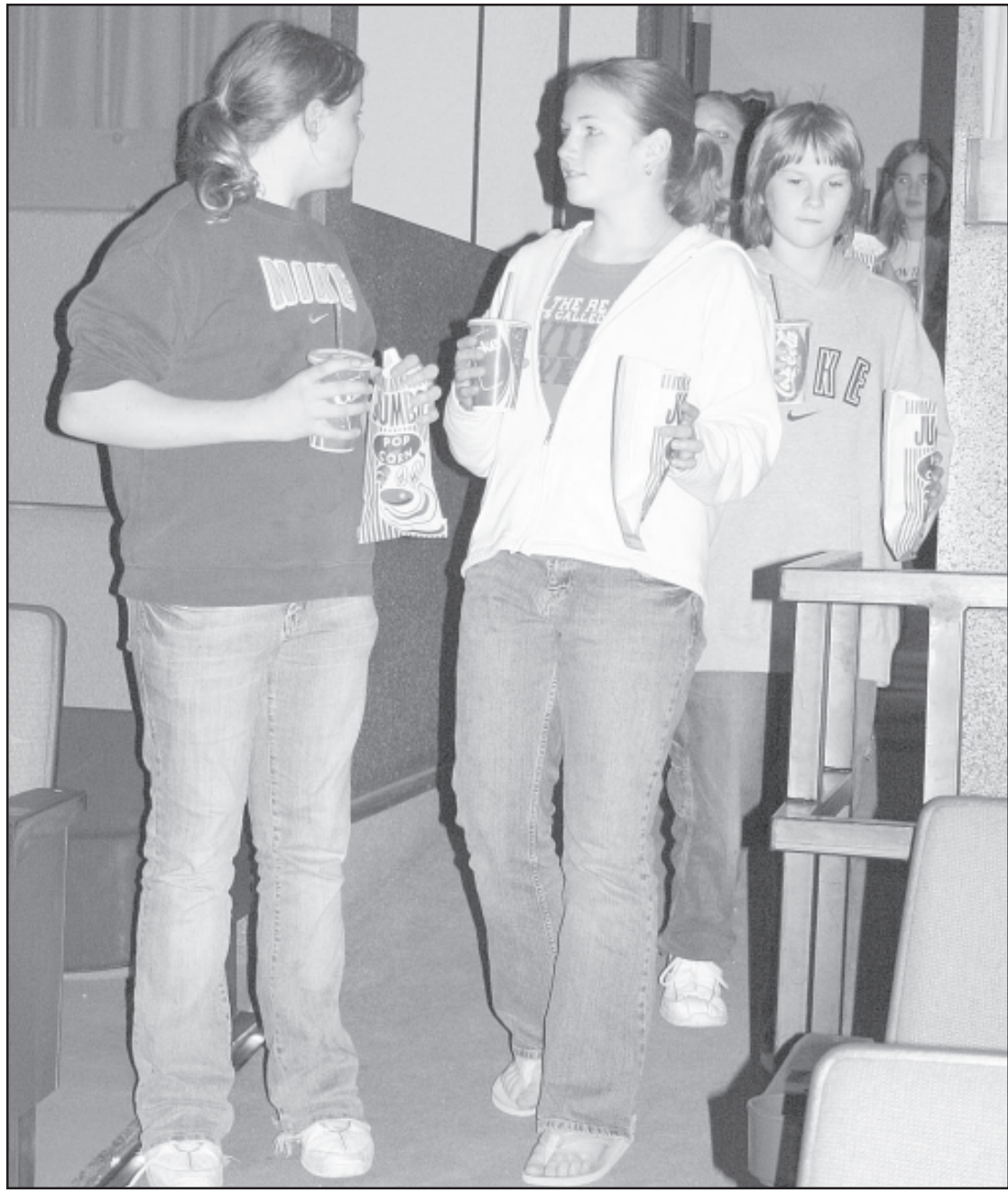
By VERONICA MONIER

Norton County's fifth and sixth graders learned more about the danger of alcohol and other drugs at a youth forum held recently.

The forum was sponsored by the Norton County Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Officer Toby Kuhn with the Norton Police Department said the kids heard from several different presenters, including himself and Officer Brian Shannon, Norton County Attorney Karen Griffiths, Magistrate Judge Deb Anderson, and Norton County Sheriff's Deputy Scott Bohl about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol. They also learned about curfew and how the criminal justice system works, he said.

After the presentations were finished and all questions were answered, he said the kids had a pizza and soda supper and then went to the Norton Theatre for a free movie, "RV", popcorn and more soda.



Catholic church gives student scholarships

The St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish in Norton has awarded eleven scholarships totaling \$9,000 to 11 area students.

Cody Lowry, son of Cindy and Curtis Lowry, Almena, has been awarded the \$1,000 Gordon and Lulu Brantley Memorial Scholarship. Cody plans to attend Colby Community College.

The \$500 Steven Wahlmeier Memorial Scholarship has been awarded to Amanda Wahlmeier, daughter of Jim and Jane Wahlmeier, Phillipsburg. She will attend Colby Community College to study history and music.

Alyssa Kaus, daughter of Bob and Deb Kaus, Norton, has been awarded the \$500 A.M. "Babe" and Josephine Hickert Memorial Scholarship. She will attend the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

The Glen and Helen Tweed Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500 has been awarded to Carissa Lacy, daughter of Gary and Jeanette Lacy, Norton. Carissa is a student at Ft. Hays State University pursuing a career in radiology.

Rachael Lentz, daughter of Mike and Katie Lentz, Norton is the recipient of the \$500 St. Francis of Assisi Parish Scholarship. Rachael will attend the University of Nebraska at Kearney to study accounting.

Two, \$1,000 Jack and Wanda Mechsner Scholarships are being awarded this year. Melissa Hillebrand, daughter of Gary and Sue Hillebrand, has had her scholarship renewed for the coming year. She is attending Kansas State University studying Agriculture Business.

Kayla Juenemann, daughter of Lee and Angie Juenemann, Norton, is receiving the other Mechsner Scholarship. She is attending Ft. Hays State University studying Elementary Education.

Four, \$1,000 Evelyn and Lester Fredderich Scholarships are being awarded this year.

The scholarships are being awarded to: Paul Gosselin, son of Sid and Jeanice Gosselin. Paul plans to study aviation at Kansas State University at Salina; Sarah McDiffett, daughter of Chriss and Evelyn McDiffett. Sarah will at-

tend Northwest Technical School in Goodland to study Technical Drafting; Ryan Maddy, son of Rod and Tammy Maddy. Ryan is attending Bethany College major-

ing in Accounting; and Derek Volgamore, son of Mike and Jan Volgamore. He is a student at Ft. Hays where he is studying Finance and Communications.

Congressman gets behind farmers with assistance

Congressman Jerry Moran asked House leaders to support agriculture disaster assistance as part of supplemental appropriations legislation currently working its way through the legislative process. Mr. Moran pledged to work with leaders to deliver fiscally responsible, yet effective disaster assistance.

"Farmers and ranchers suffered significant losses in 2005 as a result of adverse growing conditions," Congressman Moran said. "Unless the immediate emergency needs of the producers in Kansas and across the country are met, many producers will be

out of business."

All but 4 of the 105 counties in Kansas have been declared primary or contiguous disaster areas. A variety of natural disasters have caused devastating losses that are either not covered by crop insurance or are not adequately addressed by available policies.

These crop losses have occurred at a time of significant increases in cost of production.

The lack of adequate coverage coupled with the tremendous increase in fuel, fertilizer and natural gas leaves many farmers and ranchers on the verge of bankruptcy.

AT THE CENTER:

• **Monday, May 22** — Swiss steak, broccoli casserole, apricots, bread, putting. **Tuesday, May 23** — Philly steak sandwich, green bean casserole, ambrosia fruit salad, bread or bun, cook's choice complement. **Wednesday, May 24** — ham, au gratin potatoes, peas, dinner roll, peaches. **Thursday, May 25** — porcupine meat balls, baked potato, cucumbers in creamy sauce, bread, applesauce. **Friday, May 26** — chicken and pasta salad, cantaloupe, bread, brownie.

• **Monday, May 29** — closed in observance of Memorial Day. **Tuesday, May 30** — hot dog w/ kraut, mashed potatoes, seasoned corn, bread or bun, plums. **Wednesday, May 31** — Turkey, sweet potatoes, 5 cup salad, dinner roll, cookie. *Menu subject to change. Requested contribution, \$2.50 per meal, checks payable to Homestead Nutrition Project. Guests under 60 must pay full cost of meal, \$4.50 at the site. Home delivered meal \$4.75.*

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Northern Valley sweeps this year's large group music festival

It was a clean sweep for Northern Valley Schools at this year's state large group festival held April 13 at Colby High School. The high school band, Wo-

men's Chorus, Men's Chorus and Mixed Chorus all received I ratings. Mr. Wetter and Mrs. David are the group's instructors.

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