

People's choice award chosen!



Shelly Shearer of Alma sang her heart out on Friday at the Norton Idol contest held during the fair. She wound up tying for the People's Choice Award with her rendition of Martina McBride's "Anyway".

-Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Conservation Reserve Program

The Farm Service Agency announces a general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program which began on August 2 and continues through August 27. During the sign-up period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for Conservation Reserve Program's competitive general sign-up at the Norton County Farm Service Agency office.

Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program that assists farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program plant long-term, resource-conserving covers in exchange for rental payments, cost-share, and technical assistance. The Conservation Reserve Program protects millions of acres of America's topsoil from erosion and is designed to improve the nation's natural resources base. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years. In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices.

By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, the Conservation Reserve Program also protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes,

rivers, ponds and streams. Acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to wildlife population increases in many parts of the country. As a result, the Conservation Reserve Program has provided significant opportunities for hunting and fishing on private lands.

Land currently not enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program may be offered in this sign-up provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current Conservation Reserve Program participants with contracts expiring this fall covering about 4.5 million acres may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this sign-up are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1.

The Farm Service Agency implements Conservation Reserve Program on behalf of Commodity Credit Corporation. Farm Service Agency will evaluate and rank eligible Conservation Reserve Program offers using an Environmental Benefits Index for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in Conservation Reserve Program. The Environmental Benefits Index consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits) and cost. Decisions on the Envi-

ronmental Benefits Index cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the Environmental Benefits Index data of all the offers.

Farm Service Agency Participants, who would have met previous sign-up Environmental Benefits Index thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. In addition to the general sign-up, Conservation Reserve Program's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land.

The Norton County Service Center employees attended state-wide Conservation Reserve Program training on July 27th, 2010. Informational meetings will be held in August for a question and answer session concerning rules and regulations pertaining to the Conservation Reserve Program sign-up. Due to the potential for a large Norton County Conservation Reserve Program sign-up, the Norton County Farm Service Agency Office is recommending Farm Service Agency Participants call ahead for an appointment to eliminate the waiting process. An appointment system will allow NRCS and Farm Service Agency to work together to implement a successful general Conservation Reserve Program sign-up. Appointments will begin this week.

Norton County Comment

A noxious weed is an invasive species of a plant that has been designated by county, state, or national agricultural authorities as one that is injurious to agricultural crops, natural habitats, ecosystems, and humans or livestock. Typically they are plants that grow aggressively, multiply quickly, and adversely affect native habitats, croplands, and are injurious to humans, native fauna, and livestock through contact or ingestion.

The Kansas Noxious Weed Law was first enacted in 1937. It requires the control, management and eradication of 14 plants designated as noxious weeds by the Kansas Legislature. The law assigns specific responsibilities to landowners, counties and the State.

There are four noxious weeds from the state list that our Norton County Noxious Weed Department concentrates on. They are

Musk Thistle, Canada Thistle, Bindweed and Johnson Grass.

Weed season normally starts in March when the frost is gone from the ground. Weeds can be sprayed as late as December or until the frost reappears in the ground. This gives the department a two to three month break in the dead of winter to get ready for the next season.

The Norton County Noxious Weed Department sprays noxious weeds for both Norton County and Kansas Department of Transportation, and sprays for general weeds for Norton County Road and Bridge Department. They also respond to calls from residents asking for assistance in identifying weeds as either noxious or just annoying, and spray for noxious weeds on private land.

For Norton County Road and Bridge Department, they spray from 300 to 600 miles of roads

annually for general weeds. They spray an average of 600-700 miles of roads in Norton County for noxious weeds. They spray 120 miles of Kansas State Highway right-of-ways (Highway 36, Highway 283, Highway 383 and Highway 9) for noxious weeds.

There are different chemicals used for each of the noxious weeds, but the same chemical can be used against both thistles. This means that three separate trips must be made over the same route when spraying for noxious weeds.

Each year the State of Kansas sends a list of properties to be surveyed for noxious weeds. The list consists of 10 randomly chosen sections of land. The survey results are used for noxious weed statistics and to determine if the battle against them is being won.

This spring the Noxious Weed Department tried something new;

they sprayed county road right-of-ways with a chemical to retard the growth of grasses. The hope was to minimize the amount of mowing required.

The equipment the department uses to do their job includes a large truck with a 1,200 gallon tank used for spraying general weeds in right-of-ways, two pick-up trucks with smaller tanks for spraying ditches and smaller right-of-ways, and a jeep with a 20 ft boom for spraying on private land.

The department is responsible for the maintenance on this equipment as well.

The Norton County Noxious Weed Department is headed up by Reggie Beckman. He has worked for the county since 1994 and has been the department head since 1998.

Assisting Mr. Beckman is Clarence Wetter who has been with the department since 2004.

Kansas agricultural technology field day

By ELAINE EDWARDS
elaine@ksu.edu

Social networking in agriculture will be explored at the Kansas Agricultural Technology Field Day set for Aug. 10.

A discussion and examples of how the agriculture community uses these new technologies is being organized by Elaine Edwards, news and marketing coordinator for Kansas State University

Research and Extension and Jeff Caldwell, multimedia editor at Agriculture.com.

The field day, set for Tuesday, Aug. 10 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Airport and Expo Grounds in Great Bend, is designed to give farmers, ranchers and others the opportunity to see the latest technology available, learn from those who designed and use it, and in some cases, even try it out

themselves.

"A benefit of social networking for farmers and ranchers is the ability to share information and ideas with others associated with agriculture," said Edwards.

"With social networking avenues, you can meet, connect, interact and share with more and different people-- people you'd probably never connect with otherwise." Edwards said.

K-State Research and Extension, along with the Kansas Agricultural Research Association (KARA), is sponsoring the field day.

More information about KARA and the field day, including industry updates and speaker presentations, is available on the website www.ksagresearch.com or by calling Bob Wolf at 785-532-2935.

Poster contest aims to put the brakes on fatalities

Kids ages 5 to 13 in Kansas are encouraged to enter artwork for a statewide poster contest focusing on Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day.

This is a nationwide effort to increase roadway safety and reduce all traffic fatalities.

Three statewide winners will receive family packages at the Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City.

Statewide winners will also receive \$50 gas cards from Quik-Trip Corporation.

A total of 18 regional winners in the six regions and age groups (ages 5-7, ages 8-10 and ages 11-13) across the state will each receive a bicycle donated by Wal-Mart stores in Kansas as well as a helmet donated by Safe Kids Kansas.

All entries must be postmarked

by Friday, Sept. 3, and should be mailed to: AAA Kansas, Public Affairs, 3545 SW 6th Street, Topeka, KS, 66606.

On the back of the 8 by 11-inch paper entry must be the child's full name; age at time of entry; mailing address; county; a parent's name; and contact phone number.

For more information, go to KDOT's Internet main web-

site page at <http://www.ksdot.org>www.ksdot.org.

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people ages 6-33.

It's important to encourage everyone - drivers, passengers, pedestrians and bicyclists - to take extra caution every day and especially on Oct. 10, the day officially designated as Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day.

Norton CRP local meetings

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup 39 will be the topic at meetings scheduled for producers in Norton County.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will discuss eligibility, the sign-up process, and Environmental Benefits Index point system.

The CRP general sign-up period is August 2 through 27. Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this sign-up, provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring September 30, covering about 4.5 million acres nationwide may make new contract offers. Kansas has 2,759,298 acres enrolled in CRP, of which 610,311 acres will expire on September 30.

Norton County producers are encouraged to attend one of these meetings:

Wednesday, August 11th, 2010 at 7:00 pm at Prairie Land Electric, 14935 US HWY 36, Norton, KS. Thursday, August 12th, 2010 at 9:00 am at Prairie Land Electric, 14935 US HWY 36, Norton, KS

CRP is a voluntary program that assists farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Erin M Clason, Norton County Executive Director at (785) 877-5156 or e-mail erin.clason@ks.usda.gov by August 10th, 2010.

SECOND ANNUAL

BBQ & Smokin' Challenge

August 27 and 28, 2010

Elmwood Park Livestock Barn - Norton, KS
Check-in for Contestants Friday: 6 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Check Your Meat (You Can Enter 1, 2, 3, 4 or all 5!)

- Chicken Thighs \$40.00
- Pork Spare Ribs \$40.00
- Pork Butt \$40.00
- Beef Brisket \$40.00
- All Four \$150.00
- NEW Category-Beans \$5.00

Tell Us Your Style (Smoker, Traeger, BBQ Grill, etc.
Electrical Outlets are Limited-First Come, First Serve

ENTRY FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT:
Norton Area Chamber of Commerce Office online at
DiscoverNorton.com; email nortoncc@ruraltel.net
the CCRG BBQ Committee Members: John Carlin,
Bruce Colip, Jimmy Railsback and Tony Grysch

ENTRY FORMS MUST BE TURNED IN BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 13

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