**Agriculture**

**How Dry Are We?**

I don’t have to be the one to tell you that we are in a drought and continue to be in a drought. But how dry are we? I attended an Agronomy update the week of Thanksgiving where one of our K-State Climatologist provided us with in depth information. Between April 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023, on average – our southeast area of the State is 10.13 inches BELOW normal precipitation. Between November 1 and March 31 our southeast area of the State on average receives 10.33 inches of precipitation. What does that mean? In order for us to not be in drought come April 1st, we must receive 20.46 inches of precipitation by the end of March! This amount has never been received during that time frame! One should never say never, however, the closest to that occurring occurred 1972-1973. To go along with that, we are close being in a Super El Nino and predict that we will end up in a Super El Nino. We have had 5 Super El Nino years previously and in 100% of those, we have ended up with above normal precipitation during our winter months. So, while we remain hopeful that we will receive much needed moisture, it is quite possible we will enter spring 2024 still in drought conditions.

**Family Consumer Sciences**

**How often do you clean your kitchen sink?**

With the holiday season upon us, the kitchen is a place to not only prepare food, but gather for conversation and connection. To prevent it also becoming the breeding ground for illness-causing bacteria use the following tips:

- **Practice good personal hygiene.** One of the top causes of foodborne illness is the failure of the preparer washing their hands. Wash your hands, tie back your hair and make sure you are practicing good hygiene habits.
- **Know your times and temperatures.** Cook your foods to their proper internal temperature. Cooking a turkey? Remember the internal temperature should reach a minimum of 165 F, cooking at no lower than 325 F.
- **Remember the 2-hour rule.** Discard any perishable items left out at room temperature for more than two-hours unless you’re keeping it hot or cold at the proper holding temperature.
- **Prevent cross-contamination by cleaning as you go.** Using contaminated equipment causes cross-contamination and the spread of bacteria.
- **Don’t forget the sink!** The sink often goes unnoticed during kitchen clean up, leading to food contamination. After using your sink to wash or prepare food, clean and sanitize it:
  1. Use warm, soapy water to wash the sink. Wipe it clean with paper towels.
  2. Using a sanitizer and let air dry. Sanitizers can be homemade (1 tablespoon of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water) or use a commercial sanitizer or sanitizing wipe.

For other questions when it comes to food safety, contact your local K-State Research and Extension Office. May your holiday season be one filled with joy, health and good cheer.

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For KSRE publications and information, visit [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu)
Christmas Toy Drive

All donations will be collected at the Butler County Extension Office at 206 N Griffith, Suite A in El Dorado Until 11:30 a.m. Friday, December 8th

New and Unwrapped Items Needed for Children 11 years of Age and Younger:

- Sports Equipment
- Art Supplies
- Toys
- Books
- Journals
- Puzzles
- Board Games

All collected items will be given to the Augusta Community Caring Center where they will be distributed to Butler County Families in need.

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