

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Lindsay Shorter

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

“Decisions, Decisions- Farm Bill”

Whether you are a farmer or not, chances are the Farm Bill may affect you more than you realize. While the name “Farm Bill” is easily recognizable, it’s slightly deceiving. Only about 15% of the bill has to do with what are known as Commodity Programs and Conservation Programs that can impact how agricultural producers deal with crop production as well as soil and water conservation. The other, much larger portion of the bill, goes to nutrition programs.

Last December the 2018 Farm Bill was passed and signed. Sign up for the new farm bill will go through March 15th 2020. While there are few major changes from the 2014 Farm Bill, there are still a few things producers should be aware of before making their selections.

Farmers still have the choice between Price Loss Coverage (PLC) or the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC), much of these programs are exactly like it was in the previous Farm Bill. One exciting change from the previous Farm Bill, is the selection you make (between PLC and ARC) you will not be stuck in that program for the entire five years of the Farm Bill. With this new 2018 Farm Bill, when you sign up next March, you’ll be signing up for the 2019 and 2020 crop year **only**. For 2021, 2022, and 2023, you will be able to switch between the different Farm Bill options each year. Many producers are excited for this change as originally when making a selection for the entirety of the Farm Bill (5 years), it’s hard to know what yields or prices are going to do in the upcoming years, let alone three or four years out!

Those changes, along with all the other changes to the Farm Bill you can expect to see, will be discussed in depth at our upcoming educational Farm Bill meetings. Our local Extension offices will be partnering with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to bring education about those expected changes to our local producers. As with every new Farm Bill comes new decisions for farmers to make, that can have lasting implications for their businesses. To assist producers in understanding those decisions and determining the best course of action, we will be hosting two farm bill meetings here locally.

On November 25th we will be having two educational meetings about the upcoming Farm Bill. The first meeting will begin at 10am at the Hamilton Community Building, located on Main Street in Hamilton, KS. The second meeting will be at 2pm at the Rolling Prairie Extension meeting room in Howard, KS.

FSA along with Extension agents will cover what changes you can expect to see in the new Farm Bill, what decision making tools we have available to help in the process, along with payment yield update calculations and more!

While this event is free to attend, please RSVP to the Greenwood County Extension office by November 22nd. You can do so by calling 620-583-7455 or emailing myself at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.