

KDA focus on farmers' health, safety at 2026 National Farm Machinery Show

Raising Hope, partners offering safety demonstrations, health screenings

Farmer appreciation and a focus on farmers' health will be the mission for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Raising Hope, Safety, Health, and Rescue Program at the 60th National Farm Machinery Show. The show, set for Feb. 11-14 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, is the country's largest indoor farm show with more than 900 vendors. It brings thousands out to see the most complete selection of cutting-edge agricultural products, equipment, and services available in the farming industry. KDA's Raising Hope, a program that focuses on farm safety, farmer's health, and farm rescue, is using the popularity of the show to get a message to farmers and their families. In addition to farm safety exhibits and rescue exhibits, Raising Hope is partnering with several agencies to offer health and safety services and information to help farmers and agricultural producers remain at their physical best, Commissioner Jonathan Shell announced. "Healthy farmers, both physically and mentally, means healthier farms," Commissioner Shell said. "For years, KDA has offered world-class safety and rescue demonstrations. Now, with our Raising Hope program, we can also focus on the health aspect of our agriculture producers. Adding health screenings

during the National Farm Machinery Show allows us to fulfill our mission and promise of advocating for healthy farming communities."

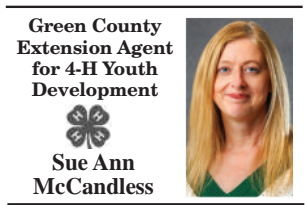
In partnership with the MASH (Mobile Agriculture Safety Health) Team, Raising Hope is helping farmers and agricultural producers focus on health. Available health screenings will include those for blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, hearing, and carotid artery. There will also be resources available for mental well-being and general health education. The health screenings will be available 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST each day.

This year's show will feature KDA employees demonstrating safety around farm equipment including tractors, Power Take Off (PTO), Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS), and more. Grain bin rescue methods and accident prevention will also be demonstrated, along with information about "Share the Road" safety and signage.

Partnerships for this year's show include Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention, Appalachian Regional Healthcare, KY Hears/Heuser Hearing, and the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment.

The health screenings and health education are components of the newly formed Division of Farm Safety & Rural Health, which was created to promote the physical and mental health and safety of Kentucky's farmers and farm families. Raising Hope, which joined forces with KDA's Farm Safety program in 2025, is supported by appropriations from the Kentucky General Assembly and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Adventure awaits with 4-H: Fifth grade students may apply now



Sue Ann McCandless

Young people interested in learning more about nature and spending time outdoors may want to apply for Kentucky 4-H's Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences Academy. Applications are now open for the academy's next group of scholars. The academy is a three-year program designed to increase young people's awareness and knowledge about the state's natural environment. In

the program, scholars receive hands-on instruction from natural resource professionals about the area's water, forests, entomology and wildlife. They learn about Kentucky's natural diversity in some of its most beautiful locations.

Applications will be available through April 1 and are open to current fifth-graders who will be sixth-grade students when the academy begins meeting in the fall of 2026. If selected, youth must make a three-year commitment to the program. Participation is limited to 25 new first-year members, so don't delay getting registered

if you are interested. Scholars meet each fall at UK's J.M. Feltner Memorial 4-H Camp near London for a two-day experience in September and take quarterly one-day field trips in the winter, spring and summer at various locations across the state. Families are responsible for providing transportation. The program cost is \$175/year, that covers lodging and meals for the fall retreat and programming cost for the one-day events. Partial and full scholarships may be available. Youth will partici-

pate in a variety of investigations including stream sampling, forest measurement, wildlife observation and insect collection. Youth will also visit various natural areas such as Lost River Cave, Salato Wildlife Education Center, Minor E. Clark Fish Hatchery, Pine Mountain Settlement School, Robinson Forest and the University of Kentucky's campus.

For more information or to get an application, contact Green County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development, Sue Ann Loyal at 270-932-5311.

CLIP 'N SAVE

Thomas Riley and the crew will soon be back in Green, Taylor and adjoining Counties



Thomas Riley is shown with Dad, Pat Riley and son Brayden

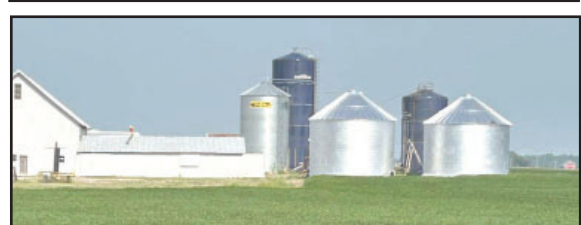
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to discuss painting when the weather makes it possible

Examples of Riley's painting in Central Kentucky



Pruning



Kara Back

February is the perfect time to start thinking about pruning. It is often cold, but the cold temperatures ensure the plants you are pruning are still dormant. Waiting until March causes you to run the risk of warm weather causing plants to break dormancy.

Early flowering trees and shrubs need to be pruned at a later time of the year. If you prune them in February, you will be cutting off their beautiful flowers! Prune lilacs, forsythias, snowball bushes, etc. after they have completed blooming. The general rule is if it blooms before June, prune after flowering. If it blooms after June, prune late winter/early spring.

When pruning, cut no more than 1/3 of the height of the plant. I will cut out any dead

branches, branches that are rubbing together, and branches that are growing inward. This will help airflow and make the shape of the tree or shrub more appealing. My cuts are always about 1/4 inch above another growing point such as another branch or bud. If I take the cut back to the trunk, I never cut flush with the trunk. There is a location where the trunk and branch join called the branch collar. This area has a high concentration of hormones and chemicals that allow the tree to seal off pruning wounds and help prevent decay from entering the tree. That is why you want to prune above this area. Do not paint a seal over the pruned area. If the tree is healthy, the branch collar will do its job just fine. Go ahead today and mark a few days on your calendar to get pruning done this month. If you are like me, the longer you wait the busier the days get this time of year.

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Greensburg, Kentucky
"Bridging the Past and the Future"

This message paid for by the City of Greensburg ABC Regulatory Fee