4-H Happenings
Tom Smith

The Pushmataha County Jr. Livestock show will be held on March, 2, 3 and 4th, 2017 at the Pushmataha County Fairgrounds in Antlers.

Thursday, March 2nd 9 AM – Swine Weigh and Check In
Show at 6pm

Friday, March 3rd 9 AM Cattle, Sheep and Goats Weigh and Check in, followed by sheep and goat show

Saturday, March 4th, 2017 10 AM Livestock Judging Contest
7 PM Premium Sale

Pushmataha County Share the Fun

What: County wide 4-H Talent Contest
Where: Clayton School Auditorium
When: Friday, January 27th
Time: 6pm

Now is the time to “get your act together” and come join the fun!!!!!!

This year we are having an evening program. There is no entry or admission fee.

Happy New Year! May it be your best ever.

2017 Annual Choctaw Nation Livestock Show
Shows will be held on February 4, 2017 at both the Wilburton (EOSC) Campus and the Durant (Bryan County) Fairgrounds.
Pushmataha County Public Speaking Contest
Contest Date: March 23rd at the First United Methodist Church in Antlers.
Registration is at 9 AM
Contest begins at 9:30 AM
Deadline to register is Thursday, March 16th.
Forms available on our website.

District Share the Fun
What: District Wide 4-H talent contest
Where: Kiowa
When: February 18th, 2017
Time: TBA
Must place first at the county Share the Fun to qualify for the district competition.
Must be a Senior 4-H Act to compete at the District event.

S.E. District Public Speaking Contest
Contest Date: Thursday, March 30
Location: First Baptist Church, McAlester
The Famous Persons Contest is moving back to this contest date!!!
Deadline to register is Thursday, February 16th.
To sign up for this event contact Shelly at 298-5563.

I hope that in this new year you make mistakes:
Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself.
You’re doing things you have never done before.
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Mrs. Eden’s class, at Antlers Elementary School, was the winner of the 4-H annual food drive pizza and cotton candy party. The class collected 167 non-perishable food items for the Antlers food bank. Party Day was December 15th!

Right: The 4-H Holiday Extravaganza held on December 9th at the extension office was a fun filled day of baking and Christmas Crafting. Even Mr. Tom got in the act and made a beautiful wreath for our office door!!!
Food is Fuel

You wouldn’t starve your car of fuel and expect it to run efficiently would you?

Successful weight loss is not about starving, it’s about fueling your body with the healthy, low calorie food it needs to lose weight.

What to Eat. Stock Your Kitchen for Success

Milk
Research has shown that two glasses of nonfat milk after exercise helps you gain more muscle and lose more fat.

Full-fat cheese
Go for a little bit of the good stuff instead of too much of the skinnier version. "You'll end up eating more of the low-fat cheese if you're not fully satisfied by it," Grotto says.

Greek yogurt
"It has more protein than regular yogurt, and it’s extra creamy. Use it in place of sour cream or crème fraiche in chilis, -sauces, potatoes, and dips," Grotto says.

Frozen vegetables
Just three minutes in the microwave and they’re ready for you to add them to salads, soups, or stir-fries or to munch on them for a snack with a little hummus or salsa. Fitness Magazine.com

Small Choices = Big Changes.

Make Small Adjustments

⇒ Ask yourself if the next food you put in your mouth is a net gain or a net loss. Repeat throughout the day.

⇒ Eliminate an hour of chair time from your daily routine.

⇒ Gradually add sleep to your nightly schedule in 15 minute increments. Continue until you feel fully rested each morning.

Source: Tom Rath
EatMoveSleep.org
5 More Tips For Reducing Your Need For Hay

By Tom Smith

I don’t know about you guys, but I HATE baling hay in the summer, and I hate even more hauling it back out to the cows every winter. So I’m gonna keep hammering you ranchers about it. And remember, hay is usually the most expensive feed you give to your cows. So here are some more tips to reduce the amount you need to supply without leading to malnutrition and poor reproduction.

1. Use net-wrap when baling or buy bales that are net-wrapped. There will be less leaf-loss and spoilage, especially for those bales stored outside. And for those who bale their own bales, less time to wrap and kick the bale out.

2. Put as much hay as possible in barns, sheds, etc., to reduce damage from rain and wet ground.

3. Store those outside bales in north-south rows on well-drained sites. This allows sunlight to reach both sides of the bales as well as the ground between rows, drying the area and reducing spoilage. And use old tires, pallets, etc., to get them off that wet ground to reduce losses on the bottoms of those bales.

4. Invest in bale-feeders and hay rings designed to reduce waste. While they are more expensive, they will last several years and will pay for the difference in price each year with savings in hay.

5. Move your hay feeding location across the pasture through the winter. Not only will there be less mess and habitat for stable flies when warmer weather arrives, but the manure (think “fertilizer”) will increase forage production across those fields next spring, summer and fall, reducing your need for hay next year.

These changes will not completely eliminate your need for hay, especially during the worst days of winter, but they will reduce the time you spend out in the wind and cold on that old tractor. Then you can prop your feet up by the fire and laugh at your neighbor who ignored this advice.
How do Santa’s reindeer fly? I know every child has asked this question at some time. And since this involves animals (reindeer) and science (the physics of flying), who could be better to answer that question than an animal scientist? Dr. Glenn Selk, Professor Emeritus with the Animal Science Department at Oklahoma State University, wrote the following article many years ago, and I have yet to see a better scientific explanation of this mystery.

Have you ever wondered how Santa's reindeer can make that monumental journey on Christmas Eve? Let's look into some key facts about reindeer that may help us understand how they get Ole St. Nick on his appointed rounds over the world.

First of all, historians report that reindeer have been domesticated by humans for over 5000 years. Since Santa himself is no spring chicken, we can assume that they have worked together for quite awhile. They should not have any trouble finding their way around. There is no need to worry about them getting lost.

We do know that reindeer are ruminants. They are like cattle in this regard. They have four compartments to their stomach. Of course Santa gets them full up with hay before he leaves the North Pole, so they should have plenty of feed stored in the four compartments to make it all around the globe. Also, cattle nutritionists have known for years that hay digests more slowly than grain, therefore the big meal that the reindeer eat before the journey should last even longer. Or just like your mom says "It'll stick to their ribs!"

As for drinking water, that should be no problem whatsoever. In their homeland the water is all frozen, so they are used to getting the moisture they need by eating snow. So as the sleigh is parked on snowy rooftops in cold weather cities, the reindeer can take on the moisture they need if they get thirsty.

How do they keep warm while flying around on Christmas Eve? The fur that they have is very thick and can hold a lot of air. The "blanket" of insulation combining fur and air helps keep them warm in even the coldest of climates. Plus flying around Christmas night in many areas of the world that are warmer than they have at home should not be a problem.

How do they fly? Well that’s a tougher question, and we really do not have that one completely answered. However, let’s look at what we do know about them. Reindeer are amazingly fast runners on the ground. A newborn baby reindeer at one day of age can out run the fastest person on earth. By the time that they are fully grown it is hard to tell what speeds that they could reach.

Next, remember those huge antlers. Antlers of adult male reindeer can be as much as 4 feet long! Just think about it. Each reindeer has 2 sets; that’s 8 feet of antlers and with eight reindeer (or nine if we count Rudolph on foggy nights) that is 64 to 72 feet of total antler span. A typical small airplane only has about 20 - 30 feet of wingspan. Certainly it seems feasible that those eight reindeer, running that fast, with all that antler span, could indeed get off the ground.

There are a couple of myths about reindeer that we should clear up. You have probably heard the poem that says that they have tiny reindeer feet. Actually they have a very wide large hoof that they use at home to dig through the snow to find grass and moss to eat. You've got to think that those wide hooves would come in handy for sliding to rather sudden stops on the small landing sites that Santa has to work with on Christmas Eve. And you've probably heard the song about “up on the house top click, click, click”. Well it is true that reindeer do make a clicking sound as they walk. They have a tendon that snaps over a bone joint and makes a clicking sound on every step. These are just a few facts about Santa's Reindeer. Maybe this will help us understand that age-old mystery that occurs every Christmas Eve.
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Mistletoe
Bothering You?

By Tom Smith

By the time you read this, Christmas will be here, with New Year's right behind it. Already, people are decking the halls, stringing lights, putting up the tree, and hanging the state flower of Oklahoma, mistletoe. But to some homeowners, mistletoe is not a cause for celebration.

As you probably know, mistletoe is a parasite. It produces seeds, which are eaten by birds, pass through the digestive tract, and excreted. If they land on a tree branch, they adhere tightly and the seeds sprout and begin to insert roots into the tree tissues, stealing water and nutrients from the branches.

Control of mistletoe is difficult for two reasons. First, it is often found in the highest branches of the host trees, making it hard to reach. The second problem is that mistletoe is also a plant, so most chemicals that will kill mistletoe will also harm or kill the host tree. For this reason, pruning is recommended more than any other method, if the limbs can be reached safely. Limbs would need to be cut at least 12 inches above the stem of the mistletoe to be sure the entire root system is removed and prevent re-growth of the parasite.

Another option is to break off the stem of the mistletoe at the base and wrap the area with black plastic, such as garbage bags, to exclude light. Plastic can be secured with twine or tape, but should not be too tight. Without light, the mistletoe should die within 2 years. Yes, you read that right: two years! This is usually performed only on trunks and major branches. Be aware that some trees respond to this treatment by becoming more brittle and subject to breakage in the covered area.

Breaking off the stem, even without covering the area, will help prevent spread of mistletoe because it takes several years (usually 3-4) of plant development before the plant will produce flowers and make seeds again.

There is one chemical option available: Florel (active ingredient is ethephon) can be sprayed on individual mistletoe plants in late fall after leaf drop or in early spring when temperatures begin to warm (above 65 degrees F) but before the tree begins to grow new leaves. You would have to thoroughly wet the mistletoe leaves. Spraying at this time makes it easier to see the mistletoe and you also have better access with the spray. This only provides temporary control by causing some of the mistletoe to fall off. It will grow back at the same location, needing re-treatment much like cutting or breaking the stem at tree branch level, but will slow the spread to other areas and other trees. Few farm stores or chemical supply companies carry this product, but if control is desired, it may be worth the effort to search for it. It is also available online.

As with all pesticides, be sure to follow all label directions. While Florel can prevent cotton on cottonwoods and keep balls from forming on sweet gums, it can also prevent fruit set on peaches, apples, pears, etc., if used at the wrong time. Be careful to cover plants under the tree you are spraying as this can also prevent them from flowering.

Some tree species appear resistant to mistletoe. Bradford pear, Chinese pistache, crape myrtle, eucalyptus, ginkgo, golden rain tree, and conifers such as redwood and cedar are rarely infested. Some sources state that sycamore is also resistant, but as I look out the front door of our office, I see the two sycamores across the street are heavily infested, so take that for what you will.