

Bluestem Breezes  
Karaline Mayer  
January 9, 2014

## The Wonder of Windbreaks

What a cold spell we've had here lately! My favorite spot in the evenings is right in front of our wood stove, with wool socks, flannel pajamas, and hot chocolate. Ok, too much information. It's cold outside and I'm trying to cope as best as possible.

Let's move this thought process out of doors. What are ways to lessen the winter weather feel for livestock? Shelter.

There are lots of options when it comes to windbreaks: walls, buildings, low-lying areas, trees, etc. Be creative, right? Use your resources. Where I am from, the low-lying areas weren't really any different than the hilltops, besides a few feet. There are definitely advantages to living in the Flint Hills.

To expand on one type of windbreak for livestock, let's discuss this tree idea. Just like anything, it's going to take some time and money. To soften the impact on your wallet, you may want to consider purchasing seedlings from the Kansas Forest Service.

Their Conservation Tree Planting Program is currently underway, and ends the first Monday of May. My advice is to order early (as in now!). They always run out of certain trees during their spring offering.

There are several ways to order from the Forest Service. I have order forms in my office (every Extension office has them), you may call toll free (1-800-740-8733), or visit their website ([www.kansasforests.org](http://www.kansasforests.org)).

You have several options when purchasing: container-grown seedlings, bare-root seedlings, or bundles of varieties of trees. There are indeed benefits to each option. Research what will fit best in your location, appropriate with your needs and goals.

As a reminder, these trees must be used for conservation purposes. This includes windbreaks, woodlots, riparian plantings, wildlife habitat, Christmas tree plantations, or other related conservation practices.

Most trees from the Forest Service may be ordered in groups of 25. Their prices are very reasonable. Trees may be picked up the second Monday of March through the second Monday of May. Remember, these are seedlings: 1 or 2 years old, 8-18 inches tall.

If you're interested on learning about appropriate windbreak spacing, that information may be obtained off the Forest Service website or through the Extension Office.

Further information on ordering trees and tree management is available by visiting the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; [kamayer@ksu.edu](mailto:kamayer@ksu.edu); 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).