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Ticks

Ticks are very active throughout the state, and have been for the past month. Cool and humid weather earlier this summer provided a great opportunity for numbers to increase, causing them to be encountered even in corn fields!

Ticks are typically more prevalent in more undisturbed areas of grasses, weeds, and other overgrown vegetation. Even so, they are very good at finding hosts and getting the blood meal they require for development and reproduction.

Because of the potential diseases they can transmit, preventing tick bites should be a priority, particularly if you are going to frequent areas ticks may frequent as well. Typically, it consists of an integrated approach that may include modification of their habitat (to lessen the likelihood ticks will be present), personal protection via the use of insect repellants, and removal of ticks as soon as possible after they have been found (ticks removed within several hours after attachment are very unlikely to transmit pathogens).

For further information about tick biology as well as suggested management and protection recommendations, check out our Ticks in Kansas publication available from your District Office or online at: <https://www.vet.k-state.edu/vhc/docs/ticks-in-kansas.pdf>

Hay Harvest – and Recovery

Tis the season for haying! Fortunately, weather hasn't delayed progress very much – and the heat has actually sped the drying process up a little! Unfortunately, there isn't much of a positive outlook for moisture in the near future, either!

Early reports would indicate a mixed bag in terms of cool season grass hay yields, with some indicating a decent crop and others reporting below normal. The follow up question to that becomes: why? That's a question you can ponder as you proceed through harvest and continue to evaluate as you head in to planning for the 2017 crop!

In some cases, weather is certainly a component. A dry didn't encourage much movement of fertilizer in to the soil profile and hampered early season growth as well.

It could also mean it's time to evaluate your fertility program. Brome and fescue require 12 pounds of Phosphorous per ton of yield. If soil test levels are high, lower applied Phosphorous rates may get you by – at least for a time! If they are already low, and an adequate supply isn't provided, the response to other nutrients – nitrogen in particular – will likely be reduced. In other words, lots of N doesn't typically compensate for low P levels.

Have you evaluated mowing height or harvest timing? Harvesting too low can inhibit regrowth, particularly on stressed stands. Understanding how grass responds to later harvest times can also help you evaluate why a stand may not be coming back as fast as you'd like.

Be on the alert for things like armyworm damage as well! If a stand isn't regrowing like you think it should, it never hurts to take a closer look to see if armyworms might be the culprit.

Just like fall harvest is a great time to evaluate crop fields, hay harvest is the time when we can do the same for our forage stands. Taking a moment to evaluate now can help you fine tune your management program to optimize yields