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Blue/Green Take Away

We hosted a successful informational meeting about Blue/Green algae. Dr Gregg Hanzlicek from the K-State Veterinary Diagnostics lab presented the info about the toxic algae and my coworker David Hallauer talked about all the other green stuff and scum on ponds.

My take away, this is sort of the Cliff notes on the meeting. If you have had BG algae in the past you will have it again. Mostly due to warm weather, no wind, sunlight and nutrients in the pond. There have already been some cattle deaths in western Kansas, just a matter of time for Eastern Kansas. Dogs are usually the most affected, because they will jump in, any kind of water.

When you see the blueish green looking like paint spilled. If you stick your hand in it, and it looks like grains of sand, then you have it. If the green is small little plants with roots, then you have duck weed.

When the Blue/Green algae dies, it lets off the toxins, then the wind can blow all of this scum into one area. It's when cattle drink from these areas, that they can become sick and die. It's either a very quick death, within hours or can cause liver failure, which can take awhile. Fencing off the pond areas with the scum and letting cattle drink in the open areas is safe.

Most of our septic ponds have Blue/Green algae, so be sure to have them fenced to keep your dogs out of there (I think that's a regulation anyway). If you put some livestock in the lagoon to graze it down, they can become ill.

The KDHE has a jar and stick method of checking to see if you have Blue/Green algae. You can find the details at our website: www.meadowlark.ksu.edu. OR you can send a water sample to the KSU Vet Diagnostic lab, they cost \$21.50. Our office can assist you with those details.

There tends to be less incidence of toxic algae in native grass pastures, but doesn't mean it can't happen. When you check your cows in the pasture, be sure to check the ponds each time. This can quickly form.

As for the rest of the green stuff in your ponds. David Hallauer says figuring out which aquatic weed you have is half the battle. We have a handy publication that you can pick up that will aid you or Texas A & M has a website that has nice color photos, to help you decide.

Grass carp can aid in the control of mosses, they don't do much for the marginal weeds and they like to travel, so if the pond is over the spillway, your fish are probably gone. David recommends restocking them every few years.

As the summer continues, we will probably see more of these problems. I'm hoping for a big rain that will eliminate this problem!