

MEADOWLARK EXTENTION DISTRICT WEEKLY NEWS FROM AGENTS

Jody G Holthaus
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Livestock-Natural Resources

Peanut Butter Balls and Genes

We talk a lot about genetics in the livestock world. Not so much on the human side of things. My youngest son thinks he should get a DNA test. I told him he could pay me the cost and my turn around time is immediate! I'm not sure what he thinks he is going to find out? I guess it's in the Holthaus DNA to sneak cookies and candies at Christmas time. There was that one year, when I made the peanut butter balls and stuck them in the freezer to chill. After about a week, I decided it was time to dip them in chocolate, except that there were just a handful to dip. It wasn't difficult to figure out who the culprit was. The one that looked green around the gills, when I mention, peanut butter balls. Now several years later, he is asking for just a few peanut butter balls. When I make Christmas cookies or candy, I give everyone a taste, and then put them away for Christmas. Last night, I caught grandgirl #1, going back for seconds and thirds. She said "But Grammy they are so good". Her daddy just said, "its genetics".

DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid, is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms. Nearly every cell in your body has the same DNA. The information is DNA is stored as a code made up of four chemical bases, adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine. The order, or sequence, of these four bases are what make you, you.

Scientist are able to change some of these bases and make something like this, they can create an orange the size of a baseball into a smaller version, like the little cuties! That is called a Genetic Modified Organism, a GMO. When a gene from one organism is purposely moved to improve or change another organism in a laboratory, the result is genetically modified organism.

There are different ways of moving genes to produce desirable traits. For both plants and animals, one of the more traditional ways is through selective breeding. This is the case with seedless watermelons.

Genetically engineered products are not new. Insulin used in medicine is an example of genetic engineering: the insulin from the intestines of pigs is inserted into bacteria. The bacterium grows and produces insulin; this insulin is then purified and used for human medicine.

Thyroid medicines, until recently were derived from animals, now the hormone can be cultured from bacteria.

GMO's are in the middle of a controversy, yet there is no scientific evidence that they have caused any harm. There are those that argue, GMO crops use too many herbicides. The truth of the matter is, without the GMO crops, many more herbicides would need to be used.

As consumers, I think it is important to educate yourself with the facts about your food.

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David Hallauer
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Upcoming Winter Meetings

Winter time means winter meetings! A number of K-State Research & Extension sponsored events and local educational programs are just around the corner and it's time to get dates on your calendar!

This year's northeast Kansas K-State Corn Management School will be January 13th in Olathe at the John Deere Ag Marketing Center, 10789 South Ridgeview Rd. Sponsored in part by the Kansas Corn Commission and Pioneer, this corn focused program will include discussions of on-farm research, high-yielding corn production practices, weed control, soil fertility, and price and market perspectives. Registration is free (lunch included) and can be made via any office of the Meadowlark Extension District or online at: <http://bit.ly/KSCORNSchools>. Registration deadline is January 6th.

Since our rotation is typically corn/bean, it makes sense to hit on some soybean education, too, right?! The K-State Soybean Production School will be Friday, January 27th at the Highland Community Building, 501 West Avenue in Highland. The one-day program will cover weed control strategies; production practices; nutrient management; and insect/disease pressures. Lunch is courtesy of Kansas Soybean Commission. There is no cost to attend. To help with a meal count, please pre-register by January 19th to a Meadowlark Extension District Office (or dhallaue@ksu.edu) or the Brown County Extension Office at (785) 742-7871. Online registration is available at: K-State Soybean Schools <http://bit.ly/KSBEANSchools>.

Just around the corner as well is the annual Nemaha County Soil Health Workshop on Thursday, January 5th at the Nemaha County Community Building in Seneca. This year's workshop focus is grazing. Dusty Schwandt, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist will talk about grazing cover crops. Integration of livestock and cropping systems will be the topic presented by KSU Southeast Area Beef Systems Specialist Jaymelynn Farney. Morris County rancher Shawn Tiffany will share from the producer perspective his experiences using cover crops for grazing and soil health. Program registration starts at 9:00 with the program starting at 9:30. There is no fee to attend, but RSVP is requested by Friday, December 30th, 2016 to the Nemaha County Conservation District at 785-336-2186 Extension 110.

There is no shortage of local and regional expertise being offered in meetings this winter! Hope you can attend! If you have any questions about any of these meetings or need further information, please drop me a line at dhallaue@ksu.edu or contact one of our District Offices.

MEADOWLARK EXTENTION DISTRICT WEEKLY NEWS FROM AGENTS

Cindy Williams **Meadowlark Extension District Agent** **Food and Nutrition, FNP**

Christmas Cuisine: Why We Eat Certain Foods During The Holidays

I ran across this article that was written by Tiffany Roney, from the K-State News. The source for this article was from Roger Adams, associate professor and rare books librarian for K-State Libraries, has studied the history of traditional holiday foods. I enjoyed this article and thought you would too.

Fruitcake would not be the holiday food people love to hate if they tried one made the traditional way, according to a Kansas State University rare books librarian who studies the history of traditional holiday foods.

“You see fruitcakes on ugly Christmas sweaters,” Adams said. “It has evolved from being something enjoyable to being very maligned.”

Adams said the reason for the fruitcake’s devaluation in public opinion is because of the quality and type of ingredients that are used. Today’s recipe is nearly unrecognizable from the one of the past, said Adams, who can point to recipes found in cookbooks dating back to 1487 that are part of the K-State Libraries’ Morse Department of Special Collections.

Fruitcake traces its origins to ancient Rome. According to Adams, the Romans’ fruitcake included pine nuts, pomegranate seeds, and raisins in a barley mash. By the Middle Ages in Europe, additional dried fruits were added, as well as honey and spices. Adams said the fruitcakes of today, except for the refined sugar and candied fruits, would be familiar to most people who lived in the 1700’s and 1800’s.

The original fruitcake was thoroughly saturated in alcohol, which acts as a preservative. The cake part of the original fruitcake included flour and eggs. It used lard or suet, which act as preservatives, instead of butter, which can become rancid over time. Adams said this focus on preservation is consistent with most traditional Christmas foods, which came from the need in older times to preserve foods through the winter.

This trend is also seen in jam cookies and sugar plums—the latter of which were considered an ideal treat for children because they did not contain alcohol, unlike many other traditional Christmas foods. This is likely why they were connected to children in the 1823 poem, “Twas the Night before Christmas.”

Mincemeat pie also was a preservation-focused holiday treat. Adams clarifies that these pies do contain meat, as well as suet and dried fruits—especially raisins, which he said are a “must” in every mince pie.

The traditional puddings of England, including the figgy pudding we continue to sign about, were much different from the pudding that are popular in the U.S. today, according to Adams. The traditional puddings were more cakelike and often included raisins or other dried fruits—hence the figs in figgy pudding. These puddings were soaked in plenty of alcohol, usually rum. Families would gather during Advent and light the pudding cakes on fire to create a celebratory flaming dessert, like flambe’.

Wassail, a warm Christmas punch, is a once-popular Christmas drink. Adams said wassail was meant to be enjoyed around the fireplace. Because of its warm-serving temperature and its inclusion of alcohol, which warms the body, it was not uncommon in the U.S. as late as the 19th century to find people traveling around, visiting relatives and drinking wassail to stay warm.

“I’d encourage everybody to get into their family cookbooks or the cookbook collection at their nearest library to see what their great-grandparents and others ate at Christmas,” Adams said. “I’d also encourage folk to try making different foods. We sometimes get too set in our ways, but try something new—maybe something that was once popular and has been forgotten.”

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Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District Agent
Family Life

What You Can't See Can Hurt You

Forget warm fires and cozy sweaters. Tis the season for dry and cracking hands. And while exposure to water may seem to make it worse, keeping your hands clean is even more important in the winter months when germs abound, and chapped skin means there are more ways for these germs to get into your body.

Here's when the American Cleaning Institute says to wash;

- After using the restroom
- Before, during, and after preparing food, especially raw meat, poultry, or seafood
- Before and after meals and snacks
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- After touching animals or handling animal waste
- After changing a diaper
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick or injured
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- More frequently when you or someone in your home is sick
- Anytime your hands are dirty

When soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer or hand wipes to slow the spread of germs. Alcohol based hand sanitizers or gels or antibacterial wipes are useful alternatives if soap and water are not available.

Hand sanitizers: Use one or two squirts or pumps of the product. Rub hands together briskly, including the front and back, between fingers, around and under nails until hands are dry.

Wipes: Wipe all areas of hands until they are visibly clean. Use one or more wipes and dispose in an appropriate trash container. Let hands air dry.