



Meadowlark Extension District Weekly Agent News Articles

Fenceline

by Jody G. Holthaus

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Livestock-Natural Resources**

Zika Virus

With all the rain, it's no wonder there are a lot of mosquitoes. The Zika virus is mosquito transmitted and has now been reported in Shawnee County. The primary means of transmission is to get bit by the infected female Aedes mosquitoes. The primary vector is the yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*.

Zika was first isolated in 1947 in Uganda's Zika Forest in Africa, where it was discovered in a rhesus monkey. The virus remained low key, until an outbreak in 2007 in Micronesia. Scientist believe the virus mutated into an increased virulence strain. It has been spreading quickly through the Pacific Islands and in 2015 it appeared in South America.

Most humans infected with Zika have very mild or no symptoms. A small number of people (1 in 5) develop mild symptoms that include, fever, joint pain, conjunctivitis and a body rash. Symptoms typically occur 2 to 7 days following the bite, from an infected mosquito. In some, more severe symptoms may occur, like paralysis. Researchers are investigating the link between the Zika virus and birth defects including microcephaly.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are tracking the distribution of the virus and recommending some people, including pregnant women refrain from traveling to areas where the virus is present.

Protect yourself from bites! Make sure your window and door screens are "bug tight". Install weather stripping to keep mosquitoes from entering around loose fitting doors and windows. Use the correct type of lights outside. Incandescent lights attract mosquitoes, where fluorescent lights neither attract nor repel mosquitoes.

Aedes species associated with Zika are considered "day" biters so protect yourself whenever you are outside. Read the label of insect repellents so that you are applying them correctly. Follow all the directions on the insect repellent label.

Prevent and control! Make sure any refuse you have on your property, that can hold water, like old tires, cans etc., are dumped of rain water. It takes less than one cup of water, for the development of mosquitoes.

Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers, unclog your rain gutters every year. Clean out bird baths and ornamental pools and unused swimming pools. Pools should be cleaned and chlorinated when not in use. Alter the landscape of your property to eliminate standing water, and puddle of water can become a mosquito breeding ground.

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The Effects of a Second Cutting (or heavy grazing!) on Brome

Adequate fall moisture has resulted in a nice recovery to forage crops this fall. Forage growth in pastures has remained strong and hay fields have recovered nicely since harvest. When we see such a nice recovery as this, there might be the temptation to try and get a second harvest of forage – or some fall grazing - out of the hay field. Can it be done? Sure! Should it be done? That depends!! Since forage management is an art and a science, the best answer can be obtained only after asking some hard questions.

First, how did the stand actually respond/recover after harvest? There may be a lot of ‘forage’ out there, but is it really anything good? Summer annual forages like foxtail, crabgrass, and others also used the moisture to their advantage and responded very nicely as well. If they are the predominant species, is that what you want for hay? Weed pressure also seems to be high this fall.

Second, how healthy IS the stand? Well over half of our brome hay fields are deficient in Phosphorous according to soil test results. Low soil test levels can lead to less plants per square foot, decreased winter hardiness, and slower spring green up. IF that describes your stand, a harvest or heavy grazing at this point may only make that worse.

Why? During fall, forage regrowth is what produces energy to be stored in grass roots. If we cut again, we run the risk of depleting leaf area to a point that root reserves are being depleted to regrow instead of being replenished for winter. If a second cutting or heavy grazing pressure doesn't allow a second round of ‘replenishment’ to occur, we can run in to trouble!

This fall has provided a great opportunity for our grass stands to go in to winter with very nice growth. That can help with spring prescribed burns (but only if absolutely necessary on our cool season forage stands!) as well as giving us plenty of photosynthetic area with which we can replenish energy to root systems for next spring. Some grazing pressure – so long as it leaves a four to five inch stubble height by the time of a killing frost – might be acceptable. A second cutting of hay? Probably an idea you should reconsider.

Conservation Tree Planting Program

If you got your windbreak all ready to plant this spring – then didn't get it done, you've got a second chance!

Sure, a spring planting is yet again a possibility, but if you don't mind paying a little more for containerized tree species – and getting them planted here shortly – you can order conservation trees from the Kansas Forest Service's Conservation Tree Planting Program right now! The fall ordering season runs through October 14th.

Species available include containerized Black Hills Spruce, Bur Oak, Eastern Redcedar, Eastern White Pine, Fragrant Sumac, Pecan, Ponderosa Pine, Redbud, Southwestern White Pine, and Swamp White Oak. All orders are in bundles of 25 trees for \$50.00. Non-Plant Materials like Rabbit Protective Tubes and Weed Barrier Fabric and Pins are also available.

Pick up an order form and price list from your District Extension Office or visit www.kansasforests.org .

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Family Checkbook: Mark Your Calendar for Important Financial Dates

September seems to trigger a lot of calendaring. By that I mean adding dates and deadlines to the calendar that range from appointments to celebrations. As my calendar quickly fills up, I need to add important financial dates while I still have time unallocated! Perhaps these reminders will help you, too.

One financial date that's on the top of my list is to update my will. While this doesn't have a set date, I need to create a deadline date so that it gets done! A will gives you control over what happens to your assets (money and property) after you die, as well as who takes care of your children or other dependents. Working with a professional, like a lawyer, is recommended so that what you want is clearly stated.

Even if you already have a will, it's a good idea to review it every few years to be sure that it still accurately represents what you want to happen. Things change over time, and your will needs to reflect that.

Reviewing financial documents help us protect our financial security and perhaps gives us an opportunity to save money. Comparing insurance policies among different companies may lead to lower costs. For example, life insurance is designed to help provide for anyone who is dependent on your income if you were to die.

Periodically ask yourself:

BDo I have the amount of life insurance I want to have?

BHas anything changed in my life that means I should adjust this amount?

BAm I getting the best coverage possible for the amount of money I'm paying?

Take time to comparison shop for life insurance policies.

For those families with someone planning to attend college in 2017, here's a date to add to your calendar. The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will be available earlier this year. The FAFSA online form will be available October 1. Completing the FAFSA is necessary to apply for federal student aid as well as other sources. You will use income data from 2015; no more having to wait until you complete your taxes (or remembering to update tax data later). Take advantage of the Data Retrieval Tool and all your tax filing information will be automatically loaded from the tax forms you filed with the IRS. You don't have to complete the FAFSA immediately when it's available; however, it is good to complete it as soon as you can to be sure that you receive full consideration for financial aid.

Do you know someone who doesn't have health insurance? Our country's uninsured rate dropped to a new low, as was recently reported by Health and Human Services. As a result of the Affordable Care Act, our nation's uninsured rate is now 8.6 percent.

However, we still need to spread the word about the importance of health insurance. Health insurance is critical for financial security no matter what your age is. Open enrollment for Marketplace health insurance plans for 2017 runs from November 1, 2016 to January 31, 2017. Mark your calendar to compare health insurance options.

Of course, it's important to remember that there's no limited enrollment period for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). You can apply any time. In addition, you may also qualify to enroll during Special Enrollment Period due to a life event like losing health insurance coverage or having a baby. To find out if you qualify, go to healthcare.gov/screener/.

What other financial dates are important to you? Take time to mark them on the calendar to help you manage your financial life.

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Nancy C. Nelson
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Family Life

No article

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