

Fenceline

by Jody G. Holthaus

Meadowlark Extension District Agent

Livestock-Natural Resources

Finally, we are seeing green pastures. It's always reassuring that the world will go on after a dreary winter. Our livestock are starting to act goofy, and not for good fences would surely be out. It's so tempting to let the ponies out to graze, but that can be so dangerous, when the grass is growing quickly, it's very easy for horses especially ponies to founder. It's always fun to watch them free range, much to husband's dislike.

A good rule of thumb on turning horses out to grass is to wait until the growth has slowed down. Somewhere around 6-8 inches. Immediate access to lush, spring grass can cause colic or laminitis (founder).

A crucial factor in managing horses on pasture is to avoid abrupt changes from a fed ration to pasture and from extremes of pasture quality. Changes especially are a problem when horses are moved from a lower quality pasture or no pasture to a high-quality pasture.

Cattle aren't exempt. An interesting note to add to pasture management plans. Pastures with legumes such as clover offer help in management strategies to prevent grass tetany. Legumes offer more readily available Magnesium and therefore can serve as a natural Mg supplement for grazing cattle and sheep. Some weeds also contain high levels of Mg as well and can serve as a magnesium source. Legumes and some weeds provide Mg that is more readily absorbed into the blood stream than many grasses.

Common prevention for grass tetany is the strategic use of high magnesium mineral. This is still the standard approved practice for grass tetany prevention. Grazing fertilized grasses in Winter and Spring requires high magnesium mineral feeding. Feeding a high mag mineral should begin in the fall and continue thorough spring time. Remember, grass tetany occurs in cool, damp cloudy days very typically occurring during Winter and Spring. Cattle that have been diagnosed with Grass tetany are also typically found to have low Vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is normally added to our commercial mineral mixes for this reason.

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## Mole Control

Now that mowing season has begun, you'll likely start to notice 'meandering paths of upheaved soil' that makes the mower ride a little rougher! Moles! While they tend to spend most of their time below ground, the above ground damage is all too visible – and annoying!

Soil upheavals are a result of the moles looking for food. Moles primarily feed on earthworms (and a little on grubs as well!). As they burrow through the soil to look for them, they tend to cause disturbance damage to roots and even the uprooting of small plants. In other words, the moles aren't feeding on your flower bulbs – but they may be doing damage to the bed by their foraging just the same!

No shortage of 'mole control' products have been tried over time. Home remedies like chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleach, windmills, and human hair have all been suggested and tried as possible control methods. Unfortunately, none have proven to provide consistent and reliable control. Even poison baits tend to fail because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not the vegetable matter that is typically the base of most baits. Grub control products might help w/ the grub population, but they aren't effective against earthworms, leaving the primary food source untouched.

The best control method is actually the use of traps: harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed types to be specific. Each can be effective but may take some time to master!

Not all of the upheaved soil paths that moles create are active. Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after being built while others are travel lanes used for a longer period of time. To determine which ones are actually in use, use a broomstick or other object to poke holes in a number of runs. Come back a day later to check them and see which of the runs have been "repaired." If repaired, these are the active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place traps in active runs by digging out a little soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap well so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finish by pushing down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. The hope is that moles will be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. If you haven't caught a mole in three days, move the trap and start again!

For more information on mole control as well as "How-to" videos, see the K-State Research and Extension wildlife control page on moles located online at <http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html>. Publications are also available from your District Office.

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark District Agent  
Family Life

### **Climb Toward Better Health**

Have you climbed a flight of stairs lately? This can be humbling, even for those who walk and exercise regularly. If you are panting after climbing a flight or two of stairs, consider adding a daily climb to your routine.

Stair climbing adds a vertical element that engages your lower body muscles, including your quads, hamstrings, and glutes. Many activities will get your heart rate up, such as swimming, walking, and biking, but they don't have this vertical element.

Stair climbing also provides a workout for your heart, and it burns calories at a faster rate. Just a few minutes of stair climbing a day, at any pace, can boost your health. You can do it just about anywhere. It's free, and there is no need to worry about the weather.

You can even save time by taking the stairs. A study involving a group of hospital workers found they saved up to 15 minutes per day taking the stairs instead of waiting for an elevator.

So take the challenge and this week STEP IT UP! Take the stairs every chance you get when you are going up or down three floors or less.

Cindy Williams  
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### **Make Healthier Grilled Cheeses**

Who doesn't love a great grilled cheese sandwich? Grilled cheese seems like the perfect food. It's easy to make, has few ingredients and sports a crispy crust and a warm, gooey, cheesy center. In fact it was one of the first foods that my children learned to cook when they were young.

What's not to love? How about the 410 calories and 18 grams of saturated fat per sandwich? We don't love that. Grilled cheese can attribute its high fat and calories to the butter spread on the outside of the bread to make it crispy and the copious amounts of cheese in the middle. Pair that with a couple of slices of plain white bread and you have a nutritious disaster.

But do you really need all of that to make a perfect grilled cheese sandwich? NO! Here are five secrets for how to make grilled cheese that saves calories and fat to boot.

1. Pick the right cheese: When it comes to grilled cheese, not all cheese is created equal. Some people love American cheese. It has superior melting qualities, but it falls short on flavor so skip mild-flavored cheeses and opt for ones with a stronger flavor—like sharp, or even extra-sharp, Cheddar. Blue cheese is also a great option. You'll get more bang for your buck and because it's big on flavor you won't have to use as much, which helps cut fat and calories.
2. Thin beyond cheese for flavor: Ok, so cheese is a necessary ingredient. But you don't have to have mounds of it to make the perfect grilled cheese sandwich. You can get that hit of soft melted loveliness that cheese contributes by using just a little—mixing it with other ingredients like mashed beans or even salsa and hot chilies.
3. Choose better bread: Whole-grain breads are great to use.
4. Master a crispy crust: Skip the butter and use a panini maker.
5. Know that everything isn't better with butter: The butter on the outside of a grilled cheese sandwich not only crisps up the crust, but gives it richness as well. But since grilled cheese is already rich, you really don't need butter for the flavor either. Instead, experiment with creamy spreads you put inside that are lower in fat such as reduced-fat mayonnaise with a squeeze of lemon or reduced-fat sour cream mixed with chopped fresh herbs. They'll add that silky mouthfeel and sense of richness you may be missing without the butter but with less fat and calories.