

Jody Holthaus, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Livestock and Natural Resources

There's a lot going on in the Animal Science realm. First of all the Northeast Kansas Sheep and Goat meeting will be Monday February 27th, at 7 pm at the Klinefelter Barn in Hiawatha. There will be discussion with Dr GF Kennedy DVM with Pipestone Veterinary Clinic. He will be talking about Coccidia, Parasites and Mineral deficiency. Then our very own, Matt Young, Brown County Ag Agent will go over sheep and goat budgets.

Please RSVP to Brown county Extension at 785-742-7871 by February 24th.

Make plans to attend KSU Cattlemen's Day, Friday March 3rd. All events will be held at the Weber Hall on the KSU campus. After hearing from Dr Ken Odde, ASI Department Head and KSU President Richard Myers, Dr Barry Flinchbaugh KSU Professor Emeritus, will present "Ag Policy in the Trump Administration". Dr Glynn Tonsor, Robin Reid and Dustin Pendell, KSU Ag Economics will discuss Beef Cattle Economics. There are some really good breakout sessions for a complete schedule visit <http://www.asi.k-state.edu/events/cattlemens-day/index.html>. At the end of the day, the 40th annual Legacy Bull and Female sale will take place at the Stanley Stout Center. To view the catalog visit, www.asi.k-state.edu/bullsale.

On March 4, the KSU Sheep Producer Day will be held at the Sheep and Goat Center, 2117 Denison Avenue. There is a multitude of talks, by Industry professionals.

Then the Junior Producer days are lined up, Jr Swine Producer day will be March 11th. Visit the program website at www.youthlivestock.ksu.edu for registration and schedule.

Junior Meat Goat Producer day will be March 25th in Weber Hall. Information is at the youth livestock page.

"Body Condition Scoring: It's About More than the Score" by Justin Waggoner, Beef Systems Specialist

Body condition scoring is one of the most valuable management tools at the disposal of the cattle manager. This one number gives us a direct indication of an individual cow's previous plane of nutrition and future reproductive capability. Although the individual body condition scores are important, we don't necessarily manage individual cows, we manage groups of cows. Thus it is important for us to look beyond the individual scores and look at the distribution of body condition scores within the herd. If we have a herd (Herd 1) with an average body condition score of 5 that is essentially characterized by the classic bell curve, with a few thin cows (3.5's), the bulk of cows in the middle (4's and 5's) and few over-conditioned cows (7's) everything is

good. Alternatively we could have a herd (Herd 2) with an average body condition score of 5 that is essentially the result of a few thin cows (3's) and some over conditioned cows (6's and 7's). Body conditioning scoring also has more value when it is done on the same group of cows at multiple times during the production year. If Herd 2 was scored at calving and had been previously scored at weaning and had an essentially normal distribution (similar to Herd 1). We need to ask ourselves what happened. Did we change anything? Although these examples are somewhat extreme they illustrate that we have to look beyond the individual body condition scores of cows at one point during the production year to get the most of body condition scoring.

David Hallauer, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Crop and Soils, Horticulture

Prescribed Burn Planning

Six weeks ago in this space, I wrote about planning for a prescribed burn. The predominant focus was if a prescribed burn was really for you. If you want to check that column out, you can do so by scrolling down to the Weekly News Articles section at:

<http://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/crops-soils/index.html> . It will be the fourth or fifth option.

Since burning season began in earnest over the last couple of weeks in northeast Kansas, I want to hit this week on an equally important aspect of the prescribed burn: safety.

Start by knowing local regulations. To list them all in this space would be impossible! Many require a burn permit and/or permission to initiate a prescribed burn. Before you ever even think about starting the burn, make sure you understand local regulations and get appropriate local permission before you begin.

Once you know local regulations, be sure you understand how fire is going to respond. For example, one of the reasons there are burning regulations about ignition of fires at a certain time before sunrise and before sunset, is because of the way fire behaves. It's difficult enough to judge distance during a daytime fire, let alone trying to maneuver around landmarks or other hazards after dark. Dew tends to increase smoke production, reducing visibility as well. Understanding fire behavior around culverts, up and over hillsides, even around power lines is important from a safety standpoint as well. In the absence of local regulations, state statutes need to be considered.

Personal safety considerations are important, too. Those with heart conditions, certain allergies, or respiratory diseases should think twice about participating in the controlled burn. Clothing should include a cap or hat, gloves, and high top boots or shoes. Clothing should be of natural fibers and cover the arms, legs, hair, and body.

Equipment should be in good working order with all on the burn crew aware of how to operate equipment and equipped with appropriate firefighting tools. Water needs to be in plentiful supply – including drinking water to keep the crew hydrated. Waiting until the morning of the fire to make sure the pump on the sprayer works is not in the best interest of anyone's safety! Have a burn boss – a point person coordinating the burn – is strongly suggested!

Be courteous! Logic says that where there's fire, there's smoke. Notify neighbors and let them know what you are doing in advance of the burn. Be aware of structures or other flammable areas so you can direct the burn accordingly. Smoke often carries not only flying sparks and embers, but other particulate matter as well. This particulate matter can be a hazard for those with health concerns and affect air quality monitoring not just miles, but *states* away! In addition to appropriate notification of fire departments in advance of the fire, it's also nice (and sometimes required!) that notification be given when the fire is out as well. If roadways border the burn area, extra precautions need to be taken to keep them free of smoke or safe for travel when smoke might be present.

Prescribed burns are a great way to clean up unwanted brush and nuisance trees – but only if you are prepared to conduct the burn and are able to carry it out in such a manner that you achieve your desired outcome. Start planning now to determine if a prescribed burn is the best option. If it is, continue preparations to give you an effective – and SAFE! – prescribed burn

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

Peanut Allergy Prevention

Peanut allergy is the most common food allergy and the highest among children. There is no cure or treatment except to avoid the consumption of peanuts.

New research now shows that introducing high risk infants to peanut foods could reduce the chance of developing a peanut allergy. There are three guidelines to consider:

1. Infants at high risk because they already have severe eczema, egg allergy or both. Experts recommend introducing peanut-containing foods as early as 4-6 months of age.
2. Infants with mild to moderate eczema. Experts recommend introducing peanut-containing foods around 6 months of age.
3. Infants without eczema or any other food allergy consume peanut-containing foods freely.

With these guidelines, the results suggest that peanut allergy can be prevented when peanut-containing foods are introduced in infancy through age 5. Infants in category one above had an 81 percent reduction in developing peanut allergy. As always be sure to consult with your health care provider on any allergy issues.

Safe Containers in a Microwave

Most homes have a microwave in the kitchen. The USDA recommends using microwave safe containers and wraps for best results. Glass, ceramic containers, and all plastics should be labeled for microwave oven use.

Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers, whipped topping bowls, and other one-time use containers should not be used. These containers can warp or melt, possibly causing harmful chemicals to migrate into the food.

Never use thin plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic grocery bags, newspapers, or aluminum foil in the microwave oven. Microwave plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper; and white microwave-safe paper towels should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.

Nancy Nelson, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Making Family Mealtimes Fun

Sitting down together for a meal whenever you can is a great way to connect with your family. Keeping it relaxed is key to making sure you are getting the most out of this time together, including talking, laughing and choosing healthy foods.

Here are some tips for making meals more relaxed in your home:

Remove distractions. Turn off the television and put away phones and tablets, so that your attention is on each other.

Talk to each other. Focus conversation on what family members did during the day. Give each family member the spotlight to share their highlight, lowlight, and “funny light” from the day or week.

Pass on traditions. Tell children about the “good old days” such as foods grandma made that you loved to eat.

Let kids make choices. Set a healthy table and let everyone, including the kids, make choices about what they want and how much to eat.

Let everyone help. Kids learn by doing. The little one might get the napkins and older kids help with fixing foods and clean-up.

Make-your-own dishes like tacos, mini pizzas, and yogurt parfaits get everyone involved in meal time.

Reserve a special plate to rotate between family members, for example on birthdays, when someone gets a good grade, or any other occasion you’d like to recognize.