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Meadowlark Extension District
Livestock and Natural Resources

Every Now & Then

Every now and then, we get questions about “what to charge for custom haying”. This year the questions seem to have no season. Could be because haying season is like that Energizer bunny, it just keeps going and going. The cool season hay harvest ran right into the warm season hay harvest.

For those curious about the prices charged, you can find Kansas Custom rates at the KSU Ag Economics website: www.agmanager.info. There’s a tab at the top, Custom Rates.

We are also getting questions about Blue/Green algae in ponds. You can find the do it yourself test instructions on our website: www.meadowlark.ksu.edu under Livestock and Natural resources. There is a jar and stick test, that can be pretty good indications.

I did a bit of research and was surprised to learn there are 4493 ponds in Jackson county, 3773 in Jefferson county and 3292 ponds in Nemaha county. Of course Jefferson County has that one really HUGE one!! Perry Lake.

With that many ponds 11558 in our district, and 241295 in Kansas, we have the capability of holding 1.3 million acre/feet of water. Some best management practices for a pond are in order. Any management practice that slows the flow of surface water with its accompanying silt and nutrients lengthens the life of a pond.

The single, most valuable management practice, before your pond begins to show signs of over-abundant nutrients, is the development of an unmown, vegetated buffer strip around the pond. This is an area 15-20 foot wide area surrounding a pond that is left unmown or mowed only once or twice a year so that grasses and plants grow knee -high. This vegetation serves to slow the flow of surface water into the pond allowing much of the silt and nutrients to drop out before they reach the pond.

This unmown area, called a riparian [meaning situated along the bank] buffer, may be enhanced by planting wildflowers and seasonal grasses to make the area attractive to butterflies, hummingbirds, dragonflies, and ground - nesting birds.

Prevention is easier than a cure If your pond often has a heavy coverage of algae, this indicates that nutrients have already become a problem.

The best management practices will help limit additional nutrient input, but some type of weed control may be desired. There are two types of algae control: mechanical or chemical.

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

Wheat Variety Plot Results

The Meadowlark Extension District Wheat Variety Plot was harvested July third. Eleven entries averaged 77.8 bushel/acre. Yields ranged from 69.0 to 90.9 bushels per acre and moisture levels from 12.5 to 15.5 percent. Test weights ranged from 51.9 to 61.7 pounds.

Entries and yields (adjusted to 15% moisture and corrected for check strips) were as follows: WB Grainfield -79.4; WB 4303 - 78.5; Zenda - 69.0; T-158 – 75.6; WB Cedar – 84.1; 1863 – 71.4; SY Grit – 70.7; LCS Chrome – 90.9; Everest – 69.5; LCS Mint – 88.7. Data for SY Wolf will not be published this year due to a harvest time data collection error. We sincerely apologize for the omission and inconvenience!

Variability within strip plots does exist! Results are best used in combination with other data sources. One great source is the data from the Kansas Crop Performance Test program. Those results can be found at <http://www.agronomy.k-state.edu/services/crop-performance-tests/winter-wheat/index.html> . Results from this plot are available at www.meadowlark.ksu.edu under the Crops & Soils link. Brown County results will be posted there when available.

A big thank you is extended to the participating seed companies and their representatives. Special thanks to plot cooperators Doug and Leonard Edelman for their patience and assistance.

REMEMBER! – Tomato Blooms

If you look at your tomato plants in two to three weeks and scratch your head about the lack of fruit – remember July eleventh and twelfth and the days surrounding them! Why? Because heat is a real detriment to fruit set in tomatoes!

Temperatures that stay at 75 degrees F or above at night and daytime temperatures that rise above 95 degrees F (particularly when in combination with dry, hot winds) are perfect for causing poor fruit set on tomatoes. Temperatures this high do a couple of things. First, they can interfere with pollen viability. No pollen equals no fruit! Second, they can cause excessive growth that can also lead to a lack of pollination.

Recovery isn't immediate, either. In fact, it takes about three weeks for tomato flowers to develop into fruit large enough to notice that something is wrong. Add to that an additional week before tomatoes are full size and ready to ripen, and all of a sudden it's almost a month down the road that you note the lack of fruit! Fortunately, cooler temperatures will allow flowering to resume so fruit set can occur.

Combatting the heat can be a tough one. Anything that can be done to help cool the plants may help, but doing so can be very difficult. There are some varietal differences as well. 'Heat-set' tomatoes such as Florida 91, Sun Leaper and Sun Master do tend to have the ability to set fruit at temperatures two to three degrees higher than most other varieties, but even they will succumb to extreme temperature.

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

Vanilla—Not Just for Desserts

Vanilla ice cream, sugar cookies, vanilla icing, the list goes on and on. But that's just in desserts! How about vanilla in savory dishes such as meats and soups?

Vanilla has a sweetness that comes from the natural vanillin in vanilla beans. This makes up a tiny fraction of the over 300 flavor compounds within the bean.

As a flavor enhancer, vanilla helps intensify other flavors. Examples would be intensifying coffee, nuts or fruit flavors. Citrus fruits will have a creamier taste.

In soups such as pumpkin, butternut squash or cauliflower, vanilla enhances their flavor. Add a couple drops to tomato soup and the acidic bite is mellowed to provide a smooth flavor.

Add vanilla to vinaigrette dressings to boost the flavor of cucumbers, tomatoes and bell peppers. Tahitian vanilla works well for cold salads.

For meats, add vanilla to sauces such as barbecue sauce or marinades. For example, vanilla helps Mexican mole sauces have a flavorful kick. When root beer is used in a ham glaze, it has vanilla in it to increase the flavor.

Don't forget seafood. Add to citrus sauces or a traditional beurre blanc sauce. The vanilla in citrus sauce reduces the acid taste for a smooth flavor.

Nancy Nelson, Agent
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

NO NEWS