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Livestock and Natural Resources

Magic Potions

I've been inundated with friends trying to get me to buy their magic drink. Guaranteed to make me feel better, have more energy and lose weight. I'm happy it's working for them. But what if you had such magic for cattle? It's guaranteed to make them feel better, use their energy to gain more weight. While we're at it, lets add prevent some bad parasites, and keep them from bloating.

You may think I've been drinking the Kool-Aid of some animal pharmaceutical company. Ionophores were discovered in 1950 and first used to prevent coccidiosis. They change the microbes of the rumen, helping cattle use the feed more efficiently and aid in body weight gain. I've seen study after study, they cost pennies a day to feed and pack the pounds on. Ionophores turn the positive charged grams into negative grams, which helps the rumen digest more feed, to put it very simple. There's no GMO or hormones so no fear mongering here! Dr Chris Reinhardt our former KSU Feedlot Specialist said: Ionophores can be added in small amounts to feed rations in several ways, including in the form of cubes, blocks and as part of a mineral supplement.

Producers need to keep in mind that Rumensin is approved for cows and only Bovatec is approved for free choice.

In general, ionophores enhance absorption of nitrogen, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc and selenium. Feed efficiency is improved because ionophores increase capture of feed energy during rumen fermentation with less methane produced. Because of increased energy retention during rumen fermentation, animal performance improves.

Ionophores reduce incidence of coccidiosis, acidosis and bloat. Reduction of these stressors also aids animal performance.

A local expert or veterinarian can assist producers in assessing the optimal form of ionophores that suits their operation and help determine how much to use.

Ionophores are very inexpensive. On average, it costs about two cents per cow per day to use them. If you consider that a cow eats about 20 pounds of forage per day and consumes a ton of forage over a 100-day period, you can save about 10 percent of that ton. If hay costs are at \$130 a ton, you save about \$13 per cow over the winter. Even in a small herd that's a significant savings."

In addition to improving feed efficiency, ionophores have been shown to increase rate of gain by 2 to 7 percent and do not impact carcass characteristics.

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
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Cool Season Turfgrass Management

Has your turf taken a beating over the past year? If improving your cool season turf is on your to-do list, September could be a very busy month.

If you were to choose one time of year to fertilize a cool season lawn, September would be that month. As days shorten and night time temperatures moderate a little, cool-season grasses begin the tillering process. This is the process through which new shoots start to form at the base of existing plants, naturally thickening up the stand. Fertilization is important to help 'promote' this tillering process.

Your nitrogen rate doesn't have to be high. One to one and a half pounds of actual nitrogen per thousand square feet in the form of a quick release fertilizer will likely do the trick. Use a fertilizer that contains phosphorous (P) and potassium (K) as recommended by a soil test or apply a balanced fertilizer product so some level of P and K are being applied.

If you want to put the effort in to a second fertilization, mark your calendar for November. A November fertilizer application will help the grass green up earlier next spring and provide the nutrients needed until summer. It, too, should be quick-release fertilizer applied at the rate of one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet

If the past summer's drought and heat thinned out your turf grass stand, September is a good time for overseeding. Start by evaluating your thatch layer and adjusting mowing height. Thatch layers greater than a quarter inch can cause seeding issues and should be addressed before overseeding. This is also one of the only times we would typically advocate for reduced mowing heights. Drop the mowing height to an inch and a half and remove the clippings during the mowing prior to overseeding. Overseeding can be done as simply as using a rake to roughen the soil surface and then applying seed, but is typically the most successful when combined with core aeration or a verticutting operation. Verticut seeding is the best, since it typically results in the best seed to soil contact – an integral part of the chances of success with overseeding.

One more September turf chore that you might consider is core-aeration. Core-aeration should be done when soil is just moist enough so it crumbles easily when worked between the fingers. Use of a hollow tine aerator is preferred so cores can be removed and deposited on the soil surface to break down. Run the aerator to a depth of two to three inches and repeat aeration passes (from different directions) so the resulting holes are spaced two to three inches apart. When done correctly, core-aeration helps reduce compaction while encouraging a more rapid decomposition of thatch. It can also help increase water, nutrient, and oxygen movement in the soil, while providing an environment conducive to overseeding and lime applications.

For more specific information on any of these practices, contact a Meadowlark Extension District Office or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu. We have publications on lawn fertilization, overseeding, aeration, and much more, that can help with your turf improvement projects.

Cindy S. Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
FACS

Thinking About Sandwiches?

The sandwich has a long history and its origins are unclear—but regardless of when, where and why they came about, there are many ways to make them healthy! Try these tips for making nutritious sandwiches without compromising on taste.

Opt for whole grain bread. What makes a sandwich as sandwich? The bread, of course! Carbs have a bad reputation, but they are an important part of your diet. Whole grain breads, rolls, wraps, pitas and English muffins are some of the healthiest bread options for sandwich building.

Bonus tip: Whole grains provide greater nutritional benefits than their refined grain counterparts.

Pick your protein. Lean proteins such as turkey, chicken, lean roast beef, and tofu all work great on sandwiches. While cold cuts provide a quick and easy protein option, check the nutrition facts on your favorites to get an idea of their fat and sodium content. Also, processed meats may not be healthy when consumed daily.

Bonus tip: Make your dinner work double duty. Roast a slightly larger chicken, turkey, pork loin or lean cut of beef than you would normally. Slice extras to use for sandwiches. This can save you money and provide a healthier option for your sandwich.

Choose your cheese. Cheese isn't always a sandwich necessity, but it can add good flavor, another source of protein, plus calcium and Vitamin D. Opt for low-fat cheeses and make sure you don't add too much.

Bonus tip: Cheese can serve as your protein if you like to go meatless.

Don't forget the veggies! Veggies are a great addition to any sandwich. Add sliced tomato, lettuce leaves, sliced peppers, sliced mushrooms...whatever suits your fancy! Veggies are high in nutrients but low in calories and fat, so don't hold back when adding them to your sandwich.

Conclude with condiments. Mayo also has a bad reputation when it comes to nutrition. However, if you look at the nutrition label, you'll find most brands are high in healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. That being said, it still should be consumed in moderation. If you're looking for new ways to add flavor to your sandwich, try toppings like whole grain mustard, banana peppers, hummus, smashed avocado, light salad dressing, and wasabi. Hold the salt, especially if you're using processed or deli meats.

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Ag producers' stress management is focus of workshops

Stress levels continue to climb in agriculture: Several years of low commodity prices, slipping farmland values and potential trade disruptions take a toll not only on balance sheets but farmers' wellbeing.

To help farmers, family members and others manage stress, K-State Research and Extension is hosting two one-day workshops in Manhattan and Dodge City.

North Dakota State University extension specialist Sean Brotherson will present "Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness in Times of Tight Margins" on Friday, Sept. 21, in Manhattan at Kansas Farm Bureau, 2627 KFB Plaza. He will address what to watch for and how to manage.

A day earlier on Thursday, Sept. 20, Brotherson's presentation will be at the Western State Bank Expo Center, 11333 US-283, in Dodge City.

All are welcome, including farm family members, businesses, and anyone who wants to learn about managing stress.

Each workshop day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. The cost of the workshop is \$20, which covers meals and materials. Online registration is available

<https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8H7DrdrHNhHWaNL>.