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Livestock and Natural Resources

It's that time of year that annual migration of cattle from summer pastures, back to the farm or ranch or moved into winter pastures. Hauling cattle safely is a part of every operation, whether you transport a few miles or cattle into the Flint Hills or even out of state.

When you haul cattle remember COWS- Cleanliness, is your trailer going to spread disease, does it have any sharp points that can be harmful? O is for overcrowding a trailer. I'm sure we've all been guilty of this a time or two, but use common sense on how crowded the trailer is, the weather conditions and the distance of the haul.

That brings us to W for weather. This time of year is much safer than summer months. But if you should have small fall calves, be careful on a really chilly day. Be sure to cover up some of the air ventilation if you're hauling baby calves or hogs.

S is for slippery surfaces. As the cattle get loaded, get nervous etc. an extreme amount of manure gets deposited in the trailer. Thus causing the slippery surface. Using some straw or sawdust can aid in the traction to avoid falls.

S is also for slow down- rushing people and rushing animals is never a good idea. If an animal should slip and fall, that can really throw a wrench into your plans.

Remember, common sense and COWS, Cleanliness, Overcrowding, Weather and Slippery surfaces are all the factors to keep in mind, to keep your cattle migration manageable.

David G. Hallauer
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Broadleaf Weed Control

Dandelions. One of the tell-tale signs in the lawn that spring has arrived. Problem is: it's an unwanted sign.

Since we don't like dandelions, it's common practice to run out in the spring and try to get rid of them. Some use herbicide applications. Others may try to tackle them by physical removal. Both tend to require a lot of effort – with mixed results.

For better results, consider a fall herbicide application, instead. In fact, the most effective time to control broadleaf weeds in the lawn is actually late October and in to early November. Dandelions have already produced a flush of new plants – I saw some the as early as two weeks ago at least. By later this month, winter annuals like henbit and chickweed will likely have germinated as well. That means that plants are small and easily controlled with many of our more common broadleaf herbicides. Even the more established dandelions will be better controlled in the fall than in the spring, since they are now moving energy reserves from the top portion of the plant to the roots in preparation for fall/winter weather. Herbicides applied in the fall will be translocated to the roots as well, killing the plant from the roots up.

Products that contain 2,4-D or dicamba (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out, etc...) tend to be fairly effective, so long as you choose a day that is 50 degrees or higher (the better the weed is growing, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots). Products can be used even in colder temperatures, but the killing process will be slowed.

Some of the newer products on the market (Weed Free Zone or Speed Zone) contain yet another active ingredient in addition to those mentioned previously - carfentrazone. The advantage to these products is the quicker response than previously mentioned products, particularly as temperatures move below 50 degrees.

As with any herbicide products, always read and follow label directions. Make sure product is not left in sprayers overnight when freezing temperatures are predicted to avoid damage to application equipment.

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent
FACS

Cooking Dry Beans Safely

Tis the season for soups and you might consider using a crock pot for this purpose. Another popular soup ingredient is beans. Slow cookers are convenient for cooking a variety of foods. But, then cooking certain dry beans in a slow cooker, it could be toxic.

The problem isn't bacteria, but a compound called "phytohaemagglutinin," also called PHA, or kidney bean lectin. Lectin is a type of protein that performs many functions in both plants and animals. But some types of lectin, including this one, can be toxic at high levels.

If this lectin isn't destroyed by thorough cooking, you'll be sorry. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's "Bad Bug Book," eating as few as four or five improperly cooked red kidney beans can cause severe vomiting within a few hours, followed by diarrhea.

Although some cases have required hospitalization, people normally feel better within three to four hours after symptoms start. That's one reason why there aren't many recorded cases of this particular foodborne illness in the U.S. People usually begin to get over the illness just about the time they might think of contacting their doctor.

Other types of beans also contain PHA, but it's a much more concentrated in red kidney beans. For example, the unit of measurement for the toxin is called "hau" for hemagglutinating unit." Raw red kidney beans have anywhere from 20,000 to 70,000 hau, but that drops to 200 to 400 hau when the beans are fully cooked—not enough to be a problem. White kidney beans, or cannellini beans, contain only about one-third of the toxin as red kidney beans. Broad beans, or fava beans, contain just 5 to 10 percent of what's in red kidney beans.

The FDA recommends these steps for preparing dry red kidney beans:

*Soak beans for at least five hours in water. Change the water periodically, but it's not necessary for safety.

*Drain the beans from the final soaking water.

*Boil beans in fresh water for at least 30 minutes. Note: This toxin is destroyed when boiled at 212 degrees F for 10 minutes, but scientists recommend 30 minutes to be certain the beans reach the proper temperature for the amount of time necessary. Don't use a slow cooking: It likely won't get hot enough.

Adding Lavender to Food

Lavender is often used in soaps, perfumes and in home decor. But have you tried it in food?

English lavender is for culinary use. French lavender is used in cosmetics. While purple is the common color of lavender, varieties range from vivid purple to almost pink. Lavender blooms are used for cooking and baking. The blooms should be crushed to release the fragrant oil. Here are some tips:

*Lavender is an anti-microbial and should not be used in yeast bread.

*Fat brings out the lavender flavor.

*When infusing liquids, use fresh or dried lavender. Do not boil lavender in liquid, it will become bitter. Squeeze the lavender to get more flavor.

*Lavender has a strong flavor, so a little goes a long way!

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Apple Cider: A Fall Favorite

A glass of cold apple cider or a mug of hot cider is a fall treat this time of year!

People have been enjoying cider since at least 55 BC, when Romans arrived in England and found locals drinking a cider-like liquid. Later, English settlers introduced cider to America by bringing apple seeds specifically for cider production.

In the United States, fermented alcoholic apple juice is called “hard cider,” while freshly pressed, non-alcoholic cider is called “sweet cider.” Cider is made from fermenting apple juice, which relies on natural yeast present in the apples for fermenting.

Fresh or unpasteurized apple juice or cider can cause food borne illness from bacteria, such as *E. coli* 0157:H7 or Salmonella. Harmful bacteria must be killed by a pasteurization process prior to drinking the cider.

To pasteurize, heat cider to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit, 185 degrees Fahrenheit at most.

Measure the actual temperature with a cooking thermometer. It will taste less ‘cooked’ if it is not boiled. Skim off the foam that may have developed and pour the hot cider into heated, clean and sanitized plastic containers or glass jars. Refrigerate immediately.

To freeze, pour hot cider into plastic or glass freezer container, leaving 1/2-inch headspace for expansion. Refrigerate until cool and then place in the freezer.