

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

Cell phones, what were we thinking? I've never been too fond of talking on the phone, anyway. Sometimes it's nice to go outside and get away from the phone, so WHY take one with you? Granted it's been nice to have cell phones to keep track of the teenagers' in my life, in the past. They can be useful to find out when the spouse will be home, but when they don't answer it's quite frustrating. I will have to admit the younger generation is addicted to them. Taking away the cell phone is now worse punishment than taking away their keys! Maybe I do like cell phones?

Bawling calves. Heard any lately? There's been considerable research on the best method to wean calves. Complete removal, fence line weaning and more. Whatever method you choose, it should best suit your needs and minimize weight loss, sickness and stress.

Weaning calves is mostly about common sense. Provide palatable grass hay, start them off slowly on grain, if you want them to gain. Provide salt and mineral and keep a watchful eye, for sickness. Pre-weaning vaccinations are preferred. If not done then, vaccinate the day of weaning. Your vet can help you with your health program, but usually they are given Blackleg, IBR, BVD and RSV. The vet might suggest de-worming, lice and grub control.

Don't mix cattle from different sources, if you can help it. Weaning is a big stress on calves. Too bad they don't have cell phones to call their mommas.

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Tree Planting Window Now Open

Think about the soil conditions in your landscape right now. Cool air temperatures of late haven't changed soil temperatures all that much, meaning they are likely nice and warm. Moisture levels have been replenished to a slight degree.

Now think ahead to soil conditions in the spring. Coming out of winter, soils are typically fairly cool well in to spring time. This last year was certainly an exception, but, some springs bring significant rainfall as well, leaving soils low in oxygen levels.

Which environment sounds more conducive to planting a tree? In most cases, the warm, moist soils associated with fall tend to encourage growth much more than cool, low oxygen soils that do the opposite. Add to that, the fact that fall root growth generally means a tree can become established a number of months before a spring-planted tree does, giving it a greater ability to handle some of those less than ideal spring conditions and summer stresses as well.

If you want to try a fall planting, the window is open from now until late October. In most years, this allows plenty of time for the roots of *most* trees to become established before the ground freezes. Exceptions would include beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows, and dogwood. These trees don't produce enough root growth in the fall and should be planted only in the spring.

Fall planting isn't a stress/maintenance free program, however. The tops might be dormant, but the roots are still growing, meaning soil moisture levels are still important. Soil should be moist, but not soggy. To keep trees in good condition, water as needed this fall and even during the winter months as we see some warm/dry spells. Consider mulch as well. It helps reduce soil moisture loss while slowing soil cooling, ensuring that root growth continues for as long as possible.

The fall planting window is also a great time for planting Conservation Trees from the Kansas Forest Service. These container-grown seedlings are available through October 15th. Check out program details and order online at: http://www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees/

Cindy S. Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
FACS

Change Can Be Good but Bittersweet

As I sit here writing this news column, this is the end of an era. What I am I talking about...well, starting on Monday, September 24, the Meadowlark Extension District Office at Oskaloosa will be moving out of the courthouse and into our new location at 100 East Washington in Oskaloosa. I would add that our emails and phone numbers will remain the same the only thing that is changing is where we are physically located.

While the thought of moving to a new location is exciting, it also is a little bittersweet as we have been going through old files and reflecting on the many, many programs, events and activities that have occurred while being located in the courthouse.

I came to Jefferson County in 1985 and at that time we didn't even have computers. In fact, I didn't have computers in college—now that's old! At that time, we used to hand-write out all our newsletters and news columns. I am still apologizing to our office professional, who was Betty Barnes at that time, for reading and making sense of all those scribbles!!!

While we are on the subject of Betty, one story I remember from our son, Derek, who was young enough to be in a car seat at that time, as we were driving by the courthouse he said, "look mom there's Betty house as he pointed at the courthouse!" Yes, at times it may have seemed like we as employees "lived" at the office, it has been and will remain a "special" time and place for our office to be located.

What is more special is the many, many families, volunteers and youth that I have had the pleasure to work with over the past 33 years. Thinking back what has been more special is getting to know people on a personal level, along with their families, children and often extended family members through various extension connections. It has been wonderful for them to come in our office and share their "joys" and, yes, some "sorrows" within their families, children or even in their communities. We hope that will still continue at our "new" location. Nothing is changing other than where we will physically be housed.

So please, stop by our "new" office and stay in touch! Yes, some change is good and some can be bittersweet, but we still are here to serve the Meadowlark District in the same way that we always have. With this change comes more space and visibility to better serve all of you!

We will look forward to see you all soon and I guess I need to get busy and finish packing up more files. Our new office will be located at the corner of Highway 59 and 16, where the doctor's office was located. We would also like to thank everyone for their understanding and patience as we transition to our new location. We will be in the process of moving the week of September 24 through September 28 and closed to the public on September 27 and 28. We will be open again on Monday, October 1.

So it maybe the end of an era, but the beginning of a "new" time with many exciting extension programs and events to come! See you all soon!

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Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

No news from Nancy today