

Jody G. Holthaus  
District Extension Agent  
Livestock and Natural Resources

### **Winter Cattle Care**

Sometimes during the Chiefs game or KSU football games I've been known to issue my instructions at the players. My 7-year-old granddaughter has told me more than once, that "they can't hear you Grandma". To which I have told her, "my yelling goes right into their earphones". Telling these little white lies, is something parents and grandparents have been doing for centuries. All you have to do is ask Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny!

Once my dad told my sister, that the cow trails in our pasture, were the Oregon Trail. My sister was gullible and was quick to share in geography class with her teacher. Of course, the teacher corrected the misinformation with my sister. We all know, that the Oregon Trail started in Kansas City Missouri, through Lawrence, at St Mary's Kansas headed north up to the Hollenburg station and then north to Nebraska, staying north and east of Salina, where I grew up. There is no way the Oregon Trail ruts were in our pasture west of Salina. My sister got over it and it made a great family tale!

Speaking of wild tales, everyone was expecting the winter of 2020 to be one of the worst, considering how the rest of our year went. I recently heard, the winter will be warmer and drier than normal. That is standing true at the moment.

Ensuring your herd has access to fresh, clean water is essential to their health. In the winter, battling frozen water buckets and tanks can be a challenge. By utilizing tank heaters, heated buckets or automatic waterers, water is kept ice-free and at a temperature the animal is comfortable drinking.

Products that utilize electricity, such as tank heaters and heated buckets, should be checked with a voltmeter to ensure there is no current running through the water. Any electrical current will deter animals from drinking from the water tank or bucket. By inserting one end of the voltmeter in the water tank and the other into the ground, you will get a reading that will indicate if there is a problem. Make sure to check this often. Cattle will drink 1 gallon of water for every 100 pounds they weigh, cows that are nursing calves will drink more.

Most animals need some shelter during the winter months, however their natural winter coats allow them to endure cold temperatures. Providing shelter or wind breaks that can be easily accessed by animals is key. Humans oftentimes are prone to making the winter environment for their animals too warm, which is unhealthy for animals.

Animals must maintain their energy reserves in order to endure cold temperatures. Before the weather gets cold, check out the body condition of each animal and adjust the nutrition they are receiving to adequately prepare them to thrive in winter conditions. It is critical to continue to watch body condition scores throughout the winter, as it may be necessary to increase the amounts of good quality feed and forages. Supplying adequate amounts of feed is essential in your herd's well-being through the winter months. If you have questions about your winter ration, give me a call. We can use the Brands computer program to see if you are missing something.

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

### ***Kansas Corn Management Publication***

A pretty good annual summary of K-State research on corn production is published each year in MF3208 – Kansas Corn Management. In advance of the 2021 edition here's another excerpt – this week on corn diseases.

The estimated average annual loss in production in Kansas due to disease is just under twenty percent. Approximately five percent of that comes from soilborne pathogens. Less than a half a percent is attributed to ear rot diseases and even foliar disease pressure only accounts for around two percent of the losses. The remainder – over 10 percent – comes from stalk rots.

The reasons for the differences are numerous. Most seed is pretreated with a fungicide that effectively reduces seed rot or seedling blights. In fact, most soilborne issues come from nematodes. Seed treatments are available, but damage reduction results have been inconsistent.

Foliar fungicide use has increased, meaning many diseases are held at bay either by genetics or a fungicide application. As average temperatures have risen, Southern rust challenges continue, causing yield losses from five to 30 percent as it establishes almost a full month earlier than in the past.

The four stalk rots of concern in Kansas are Fusarium, charcoal rot, anthracnose, and Diplodia. Weather factors heavily influence damage levels, resulting in small ears and lodging. Good best management practices are key: appropriate hybrid selection plus good weed management plus adequate fertility and disease control all tie together to reduce stalk rot issues.

For information, see MF3208 online: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3208.pdf> or request it or other corn disease management publications from any District Office.

### ***Pine Wilt***

Any time you see a dying pine tree, it's easy to pin it on pine wilt and assume the worst. As we've shared the last couple of weeks, that isn't always the case – some things are natural and others can be treated. Even so, pine wilt continues to be a major detriment to pine stands, particularly Scots pines. Left unchecked, other diseases can end up leading to pine wilt as well.

Pine wilt typically shows up in the fall as trees wilt and die in a short time. Needles turn gray-green then yellow to brown, sometimes branch by branch, and sometimes affecting the entire tree all at once. It's quick devastation.

Since pine wilt is caused by a nematode vectored by a beetle, treatment requires a multi-faceted approach. When pine wilt is confirmed, remove affected trees at ground level and chip/burn by April first before beetles emerge. Wood should not be used for firewood.

Provide stress alleviation measures. The beetles are attracted to drought stressed trees, so watering during dry periods can help. Remember: evergreens use a lot of water in winter, too.

Consider preventative injections. They aren't completely effective, but research on several products showed decreased infection. They are not curative and can't reverse effects.

For information on tip blight and other pine diseases, request L722 - Pine Diseases in Kansas from a District Office or online: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/l722.pdf>. For a video, see our three-part pine disease series on the Meadowlark Extension District Facebook page or our website, <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/> under "Informational Videos".

Cindy Williams  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

### **Online Christmas Shopping: Beware of Thieves**

For many shoppers, Cyber Monday kicks off the holiday season. For some online thieves, 'tis the season to take advantage of having so many people shop online at once. They steal shoppers' personal information and package it as their own. Some might call this a total Grinch move.

The IRS and its partners in the Security Summit advise taxpayers to take these simple steps to protect their identities, financial accounts, computers and mobile devices. People should:

\*Shop at sites where the web address begins "https," the "s" is for secure communications over the computer network. This is an added layer of protection when sharing credit card numbers for a purchase. Note: scam sites also can use "https," so shoppers should ensure they are shopping with a legitimate retailer.

- Not shop on unsecured public Wi-Fi. This helps to prevent thieves from eavesdropping. Instead, use secure home Wi-Fi with a password.
- Use security software for computers and mobile phones, and keep it updated. Make sure anti-virus software has a feature to stop malware and there is a firewall that can prevent intrusions.
- Not hand out personal information. Phishing scams, imposter emails, calls and texts are the number one way thieves steal personal data.
- Not open links or attachments on suspicious emails.
- Use strong, unique, yet easily remembered passwords are safest for online accounts

Nancy Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

### **Using Frozen Foods**

While fresh vegetables can be a risk for foodborne illness, there have been instances where frozen vegetables have been linked to foodborne illness outbreaks.

It is important to handle frozen produce properly to prevent the spread of germs to your food and kitchen. From research, the USDA found:

When preparing the frozen corn for a salad, almost all participants in the study failed to follow the manufacturer's instructions to check that it reached a safe internal temperature of 165° Fahrenheit. A food thermometer is the only safe way to know if it reaches that temperature.

Even if you are preparing a cold salad, frozen produce must be cooked first.

Inadequate handwashing is a contributing factor to all sorts of illness, including foodborne illness. It is important to follow proper handwashing steps before, during and after preparing frozen food to prevent germs from transferring from your hands to your meal.

There are five steps for proper handwashing: wet, lather with soap, scrub for 20 seconds, rinse and dry. Many people fail to rub their hands with soap for a full 20 seconds.

Although frozen products may appear to be pre-cooked or browned, they should be handled and prepared no differently than raw products and must be cooked. Frozen products may be labeled with phrases such as "Cook and Serve," "Ready to Cook" and "Oven Ready" to indicate they must be cooked.

Always use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of your frozen meat and poultry products to determine whether they are safe to eat. Beef, pork, lamb and veal (steaks, roasts and chops): 145° Fahrenheit with a three-minute rest time. Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb and veal): 160° Fahrenheit. Poultry (whole or ground): 165° Fahrenheit.

Following these food safety recommendations can help decrease the risk of foodborne illness in your home.