

August 13, 2021

Jody G. Holthaus  
District Extension Agent  
Livestock and Natural Resources

No news this week

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

### ***Tailgate Talk – August 25<sup>th</sup>***

With any luck, the recent ‘invasion’ of fall armyworms will leave us a little bit of forage to talk about at our rescheduled Tailgate Talk on August 25<sup>th</sup>. We’ll briefly discuss fall forage maintenance and management, touching on how armyworm damage might affect forage stands as they get ready for fall dormancy. After that, the evening’s focus will be on alternative water sources and why you might need them from Meadowlark Extension District Livestock and Natural Resources Agent Jody Holthaus and KSU Water Quality Specialist Will Boyer.

This fall’s Tailgate Talk will be Wednesday evening, August 25<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 p.m. We’ll meet at the farm of Henry and Tracy Hill family located a quarter mile east of the intersection of 254<sup>th</sup> and S Roads (south side of the road) northeast of Holton for a light supper sponsored by the Jackson County Conservation District at 5:30 with the program to follow.

To get an accurate meal count, participants are asked to RSVP to the Holton Office of the Meadowlark Extension District by calling (785) 364-4125 or e-mail me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu). RSVP is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/tailgatetalk2021>. Bring a lawn chair and some insect repellent – we hope to see you there.

### ***Fall Armyworms – Brome***

Armyworm damage has reared its ugly head yet again this fall. The hatch likely occurred three to four weeks ago, as many stands have worms an inch long or greater. At this growth stage, their feeding is heavy and damage is characterized first by windowpanes in plant leaves, and then removal of leaves altogether, often leaving little more than stubble in their path as they move across fields.

Fortunately, larvae an inch or greater in length are reaching the end of their feeding cycle. Unfortunately, vigilance is still needed. There is the potential for at least one more generation this fall. In areas where forage regrowth has been slowed – by grazing/harvest/armyworm feeding/etc..., noticeable damage may again occur. If damage is heavy and larvae are still small, control options may deserve consideration. If stands are in good shape and good growing conditions persist, stands may well recover without additional attention.

For more information about armyworms in brome, including stand damage remediation, check out armyworm flyer on our District Crops & Soils page at: <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/docs/crops-soils/Armyworms%20in%20Bromegrass%202021.pdf>.

### ***Fall Armyworms – Turfgrass***

Pastures and hay fields aren’t the only grasses affected by fall armyworms. Turfgrass stands can see heavy injury as well. Like forage stands, damage starts out slight, but gets worse in a hurry. Fortunately, fall armyworms seldom kill grass, often moving on to feed on tender adjacent grass blades rather than eating all the way to the ground. If the stand is healthy, a flush of new growth should soon reappear (rain and/or irrigation will speed up the regrowth process).

If insecticides are considered, consider products with active ingredients like carbaryl, cyhalothrin, permethrin, and spinosad registered for control of fall armyworm in turf. Spray treatments will have greater and quicker contact efficacy than granular applications. For more information, request a Fall Armyworm fact sheet via e-mail or from any District Office.

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

### **Harvesting Fruits and Vegetables Can Be Tricky**

Sometimes, harvesting fruit and vegetables in Kansas can be a waiting game. Gardeners often need to be patient and look for key indicators to know when some of the more popular fruits and vegetables are ready to be harvested, according to Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham.

Knowing when to harvest crops is a key to enjoying them later, said Upham, who shared some thoughts on what to look for.

#### **Apples:**

Upham said apples mature over a long period of time depending on the variety. “Some varieties, such as Lodi, can mature in July, while others mature as late as October or even November.” he said.

Some tips for knowing when to pick apples include:

- Days from bloom. For some common varieties, the number of days after the tree blooms to when the apples should be read include: Jonathan-135; Delicious-145; Golden Delicious-145; and Winsap-155. Weather conditions may influence those guidelines.
- flesh color. As apples mature and starches change to sugars, the flesh changes from very light green to white. Cut a thick slice and hold it to light to determine if the flesh is white.
- Seed color. The seeds of most apples change from light green to brown as the fruit ripens. This indicator should be combined with other changes.
- Color change. As apples mature, the skin color in the areas of the stem and the bottom of the apple turns from immature green to a light-yellow color. Some apples turn red over the majority of the fruit before they are ripe, so this is not a reliable indication of maturity.
- Flavor. Sample a few slices and decide if they have a sweet flavor. If they are not ready to harvest, they will taste starchy or immature. If apples have fallen before they are ripe, store them for a period to see if they become sweeter.

#### **Pears:**

Most pear cultivars should not be allowed to ripen on the tree, but rather picked while still firm and ripened after harvest. Upham said pears ripen from the inside out. “Waiting until the outside is completely rip will often result in the interior of the fruit being mush and brown.” He said.

Home gardeners can look for these cues to determine when pears are ready to be picked:

- Color. The fruit’s background color-known as its ‘ground’ color-changes from dark green to light or yellowish green when ripe.
- Attachment to the tree. The fruit should part easily from the branch when it is lifted and twisted.

- Corking over the lenticels. These are the fruit's breathing pores. Initially, they are white to greenish white, but turn brown as the fruit nears maturity. Lenticels look like brown specks on the fruit when it is ripe.
- Smell and taste. When pears are ripe, you should be able to smell the characteristic aroma.

**Squash:**

Upham said summer squash is harvested while immature, but winter squash (including Acorn, Hubbard and Butternut) is harvested in the mature stage when the rind is tough and seeds have developed.

“We normally think September is the time that winter squash is harvested, but harvesting too early leads to fruit that shrivels and rots,” Upham said.

He notes that color and rind toughness are the two most important characteristics indicating when winter squash is ready.

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“Winter squash changes color as it becomes mature,” said Upham, noting that Butternut changes from light beige to tan; acorn starts deep green but forms a ground spot that is orange when ripe; and Hubbard is gray or orange when mature. Winter squash should also have a hard, tough rind, Upham said. “This is easily checked by trying to puncture the rind with your thumbnail or fingernail. If it easily penetrates the skin, the squash is not yet mature and will lose water through the skin, causing the fruit to dry and shrivel.”

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Nancy Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

**No news this week.**