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Livestock and Natural Resources

Fenceline

By the time you read this, I will have retired. After 41 years, it's time! My older sisters, pushed for me to retire during the Pandemic, but I hung out for another year. Our retirement guru at K-State urged me not to listen to my sisters. She said I would know when it was time, and I feel like I know it's time now.

I started out in Nemaha County, ever thankful to the Extension board that took a chance on a very "green" girl. Walt Rottinghaus, in my interview asked me if I could crawl over a 5-wire barbed wire fence. I don't think you can ask that kind of question anymore! I really do appreciate them allowing me to start out in Nemaha county. Then I was able to come to Jackson county for the next 26 years and try some new stuff. When the Meadowlark District formed 15 years ago, I was once again working with Nemaha county folks, and a strange thing happened. The farmers I had worked with had retired and either their children or grandchildren were in charge!

My first farm visit, was with Ray and Jim Dobbins near Goff. I won't ever forget that visit. I think the area Agronomist was with me. In Nemaha county we had a 4-H Teens club, that refurbished that old air stream trailer into the "Titanic". We sold fireworks and did Pony Express Re-rides. We started the Mugwump camp at Rock Springs and some outings to Montana for a 4-H exchange. There are probably a lot more things I've forgotten about. Some of the 4-H'ers I worked with are now grandparents, making me question, where has the time gone?

Working with co-workers and Ag committees we did accomplish some things. We had weekly Ag marketing meetings for several years. I worked with the JCLA to do the Livestock Expo for many years. We had a multi-county, Steer futurity. We tried a preconditioned calf program, which led to the LMA Special auctions. We provided some good programs on Passing Down the Farm and Women in Ag events.

We built Water filters with school age children at many Ag festivals with the Soil Conservation Districts.

I've enjoyed working with our Crops and Horticulture guy, David Hallauer. We worked on Grazing schools and Tailgate Talks. More recently, I've concentrated on Harmful Algae blooms. I got KDHE involved, to do the Barley straw project and then with Will Boyer, Watershed Specialist, we've built some sand filters, for the really bad ponds. There's still more work to do, but I'm leaving it all in very capable hands.

So, I thank you for reading this column and the kind comments you have made through the years. I have several projects in mind, and of course, Keith is excited to have someone to open the gates! We have too many animals to travel too far, so you'll probably find me hanging out at home.

Oh, and my sisters, they suggested I be cremated and the remains put in a sand filter! Thanks everyone for the memories.

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

Soybean Maturity

Soybeans can be a tough plant to figure out. Sometimes they put out a lot of foliage and not a lot of beans. Sometimes they are loaded with pods and shorter than ever. Sometimes they look like they are still green but are at harvest moisture. It can make any sort of harvest ‘planning’ difficult at best.

What we do know is once soybeans reach 50-60 percent moisture (brown bean in the pod starting to shrink down a little/detached from the pod wall), moisture often drops more quickly than we might think – maybe as much as three percent per day. That typically means we reach ‘optimum’ harvest moisture (13 percent give or take) quickly – and then drop even lower.

That drop even lower may not seem like much, but it can easily end up with ‘lost bushels’. Work done at the University of Nebraska (<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/harvest-soybeans-13-moisture>) illustrates this loss comparing a 60 bushel per acre yielding soybean crop at 13 percent (no pounds lost due to moisture correction) versus a 60 bushel per acre soybean crop at 10 percent – essentially giving up two pounds per acre. Different yields and prices change the numbers, but the bottom line is: losing moisture in the standing crop equals lost bushels.

To get ahead of moisture loss, consider harvesting at higher moisture levels, even though the crop may not look dry from the road (soybeans are fully mature when 95 percent of the pods are at their mature tan color). Moisture increases with dew and higher humidity. Harvest in less dry conditions can help retain moisture plus reduce harvest losses, too (four to five beans per square foot is approximately one bushel per acre). If storage and drying is an option, consider harvest at a higher moisture and aerating down to 13 percent.

Longer term, run some numbers using the link above. It might surprise you how much yield is lost due to moisture and may help guide maturity and planting decisions for 2022.

Preventing Sunscald

It’s barely fall, but already time to be thinking about sunscald prevention on younger and smooth barked tree species (fruit trees, ash, oak, maple, linden, willow, etc...) susceptible to sunscald and bark cracks. Preventative wraps should be applied in October/November and left on until next March.

Sunscald issues typically develop on the south/southwest side of trees during late winter after sunny, warm winter days heat the bark to relatively high temperatures, causing a potential loss of cold hardiness. Georgia research demonstrated that the southwest side of a peach tree trunk might be 40 degrees warmer than the shaded bark, resulting in cells becoming active at higher temperatures – and susceptible to lethal freezing when the temperature drops at night. Bark damage occurs in the way of sunken, discolored tissue in late spring that will eventually crack and slough off. Trees may well recover but require special care, including watering during dry weather.

Preventative measures for susceptible trees consist of light-colored tree wraps running from the ground to the start of the first branches. Apply now and remove in March before the wrap does damage to the tree.

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

Ways to Fend Off Overeating

Whether its game days on a Sunday afternoon or a family fest for the holidays, eating too much food can lead to weight gain and poorer health. Instead, take steps to eat better. Here are some simple strategies you can employ to help:

1. It's Ok to spoil your dinner. Eating before dinner may have been a no-no growing up, but eating a small snack before meals can help you avoid hunger. Being famished often leads to overeating. If you do choose to snack, make sure it's a healthy option such as a piece of fruit or small salad.
2. Pick healthy foods. At holiday feasts there is an abundance of delicious options available. For the best choices, go for lean meats, such as turkey. Load up on vegetables and fruits. Limit butter and high-fat salad dressings and gravies.
3. Stick to small portions. It's easy to overeat when the table is full of delicious options. To curb temptation, make up individual plates in the kitchen and avoid serving dishes from the table.
4. Savor each bite. Quickly clearing your plate can make you miss your body's cue that you're full. Enjoy conversation with your family and friends so that you're talking more than eating more.
5. Pass on alcoholic drinks. Alcohol won't make you feel full, but it may lower your will power to stop eating. Don't forget, those drinks have calories, too.
6. Get moving. To maintain a healthy weight, you need to lead an active lifestyle. After large meals make sure you don't skip exercise that day. Or find another activity you can do to stay active, such as a long walk or a family game of touch football.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark District
Family Life

Cleaning and Storing Canners

When canner lids are brought to an Extension office to have the gauge tested for accuracy, we see a variety of cleanliness in the way they have been stored. As canning season winds down, it's time to clean and store the equipment for next year. Here are some tips for pressure canners.

- Clean the vent and safety valve with a clean string or small piece of cloth through the opening. Check to make sure the safety valve is free of debris and operates freely. It's always a good idea to check the manufacturer's instructions. If a paper manual is not available most likely the company's website will have an online version.
- Check the gasket for cracks and food debris. The gasket is the rubber or rubber-like compound that helps seal the edges of the canner and lid to prevent steam from escaping. Gaskets are removable for cleaning or replacement. If needed, new gaskets can be ordered from the canner manufacturer or found at hardware stores. Some canners do not have a gasket and use a metal-to-metal seal so again check the manufacturer's directions.
- If the inside of canner has darkened, fill it above the darkened line with a mixture of 1 tablespoon cream of tartar to each quart of water. Place the canner on the stove, heat water to a boil, and boil covered until the dark deposits disappear. Sometimes stubborn deposits may require the addition of more cream of tartar. Empty the canner and wash it with hot soapy water, rinse and dry.
- Store the canner with crumpled clean paper towels in the bottom and around the racks. This will help absorb moisture and odors. Place the lid upside on the canner. It is not recommended to put the lid on the canner and seal it.
- Designate a clean, dry storage area for your canning equipment and utensils. Use storage boxes, stackable racks, and other organizer accessories to make a storage center. Next spring you'll be ready for another year.