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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Fall Armyworm Scouting

As hopeful as I am we'll avoid last fall's armyworm feeding onslaught, it's time to again be scouting for fall armyworm feeding. Known to feed on over 80 host plants, forage crops seem to be their hosts of choice for us in northeast Kansas this time of year.

Because they don't overwinter in Kansas, we sometimes have the luxury of early warnings from states to our south. While numbers stayed fairly low for most of the summer in Texas, pheromone trap numbers have recently increased, with offspring of flights detected there likely moving north. In fact, trapping in southwest Kansas in late July suggested increasing numbers as well, with adult moths likely active at least through southern Kansas.

Alfalfa, forage sorghum, and brome grass are the mostly likely crops requiring scouting. Damage may include ragged leaf edges and window-panning a result of larval feeding. For more information, check out our brome grass fact sheet at: www.meadowlark.kstate.edu/docs/crops-soils/Armyworms%20in%20Brome%20grass%202021.pdf .

Demonstration Plot Tour

Late summer is a great time to look at crop progress and make field evaluations prior to harvest. That's also what we intend to do at our 2022 Demonstration Plot Tour Thursday, August 18th. We'll discuss two soybean date of planting trials located in northern Jefferson County plus Phosphorous fertility work and a cover crop weed suppression project also located in the District.

The tour starts at 4:15 at the farm of Tom and Tracey Funk (17305 Marion Rd., Nortonville). Soybeans will be the focus, hitting on the aforementioned plots plus disease monitoring as the growing season wraps up. At 5:15, we'll switch to a corn, and a fertility update from KSU Nutrient Management Specialist Dr. Dorivar Ruiz-Diaz hosted by Taylor Insurance Services at the Colonial Acres Event Center (8998 US 59 Hwy/south edge of Oskaloosa). We'll wrap up with a sponsored meal courtesy of Union State Bank and Tarwater Farm & Home.

Please RSVP for meal count purposes by the end of business on Tuesday, August 16th, by calling the Meadowlark Extension District Oskaloosa Office at (785) 863-2212 or via e-mailing me at dhallaue@ksu.edu . Hope to see you there!

Are 'Free' Wood Chips a Good Thing?

From time to time, homeowners have the option of free wood chips from a tree service or municipality. While mulch *can* provide a lot of value in the landscape, there may be concerns about how they will work. Two common questions center around nitrogen tie up and termites.

If wood chips are used as mulch, there's no need for concern about nitrogen tie up. Mix them in the soil, however, and you could have a different story as the microorganisms that break down the chips require nitrogen in the process, often borrowing it from surrounding soil. If soil levels are above optimum, there's likely no problem. If not, issues may arise. Fortunately, they're not long term. When the raw organic material has been digested, the microorganisms die and release the nitrogen to surrounding vegetation once again.

Termite wise, use caution. Chips *can* be used by foraging termites as a bridge to structures even as they don't bother chips themselves (if they are three inches deep or less). To help offset potential issues, watch the depth of chips near buildings and leave a bare area several inches wide next to the house so termite activity is noticeable.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent
Livestock & Natural Resources

Forage Sampling and Analysis

Once a month I sit in on a Zoom meeting with Extension agents across the state and we discuss the current issues surrounding livestock production. Expanding drought across Kansas and the reduced inventory of forage resources continues to be a hot topic (*no pun intended*)! Meadowlark District continues to generally sit much better than the rest of the state, but the topic discussed today doesn't become less important, it may be even more so important, if you plan to market harvested forages to those in need of feed.

The old saying, "you can't manage what you don't measure" is especially true when it comes to forage sampling. There are generalities and average forage quality numbers from sources such as NRC; but the best way to formulate rations and/or sell forage is based on a representative forage analysis of the forage you have. Quality can vary widely, based upon fertility, timing of harvest, weather conditions, storage, to name a few. Collecting samples from similar "lots" of forage type, managed in the same way, is an important first step. Timing of sampling can create variability, but generally the closer sampling and testing is done to feeding or marketing, the more reflective it will be to the "lot".

Representative samples, taken from across the forage lot, will be important to increase accuracy of results. A minimum of 10-20 samples, mixed and then sub-sampled, is a baseline. Baled hay is bested sampled with a forage probe, coring directly perpendicular to the surface of the bale. Many different types of probes are available, with our Extension offices offering probes for check-out. Loose or hand samples can be taken for silage and standing forages, with the same sample/sub-sample process used. These higher moisture samples need to be processed quickly to get accurate results, without spoiling. Results can take several days to weeks to get back; depending on the testing service, delivery options and time of year.

So, what should a producer be looking at testing for? The major items are protein and energy content, but a wide array of testing options exist. Relative Feed Value (RFV) is a good test to run that gives a snapshot view of forage quality and is often a standard value used to market forage. Testing for toxic issues such as nitrates and/or prussic acid, are also popular test options. If checking for these issues, nutrient analysis should be conducted as well, since the fixed cost of postage is already involved. Again, our offices can help you with determining what test to run, laboratories to use, help with interrupting results and balancing rations.

A couple good resources to learn more about forage sampling and analysis are: [K-State Forage Facts Notebook](#), [Oklahoma State Publication](#) and [National Forage Testing Association](#) which can be found on the Meadowlark Extension District website, under Livestock and Natural Resources. Another resource or two that might be helpful on the marketing side are: the [Kansas Direct Hay Report](#) and [The Kansas Hay Exchange](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS: Something new I'd like to include in this news column is a listing of upcoming events. Registration links will be updated on the website mentioned above. Please reach out if you need additional information or have questions.

August 16-17: KSU Risk & Profit Conference, Manhattan. August 22-26 Virtual.
Registration by August 12 is \$175/day, \$225 two days, \$55 virtual.

August 18: Forage Field Day, Salina, 8:00 am. No registration fee.

August 25: KLA/KSU Ranch Management Field Day, 3:00 pm, Westmoreland.
No registration fee.

September 29: KSU Beef Stocker Field Day, 9:30 am, Manhattan. Registration is \$25 by
September 15, late registration \$35. Visit with me if you need a ride!

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent
Family and Community Wellness

Brain Lapse or something more serious?

Have you ever walked into a room and didn't know why you came in? Have you ever forgotten someone's name, but it is right on the tip of your tongue, and then you remember their name a few hours later? I always have trouble keeping tabs on my cell phone. I have even left it at work a few times. These problems happen to all of us. As we get older, however, we start to worry if memory lapses could be more serious.

Changes to our brains usually start in our 30s, but most of us don't notice them until we hit our 50s or later. Some age-related changes are normal, but it is not normal if cognitive impairments start to impact daily living. A variety of factors can cause memory issues. Some of which are not related to the diseases such as Alzheimer's. If you notice changes you are concerned about, consult with your health care provider.

Memory problems could be related to conditions that have nothing to do with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Certain medications can impact our memory. Many of these medications are needed to maintain our overall health. You should check with your doctor if you are concerned these medications are affecting your memory. Because older people tend to metabolize drugs more slowly, the dosage you took when you were younger may not be the appropriate dosage now. Some medications that could cause memory loss include sleep aids, pain medications, antihistamines, antidepressants, muscle relaxants, and antipsychotics. Polypharmacy, taking multiple medications to treat one or more conditions, can also cause side effects that affect your memory.

Other health issues can also impact your memory, such as thyroid dysfunction, sleep apnea, depression, low blood sugar, kidney or liver disease, and alcohol abuse. Sometimes even hearing and vision loss can cause us to have problems with our memory.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, ten factors indicate warning signs of Alzheimer's disease:

- A person has memory loss that disrupts daily life: forgetting recently learned information.
- Challenges in planning or solving problems: following a recipe or keeping track of monthly bills.
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks: driving to a familiar location or forgetting the rules of a game.
- Confusion with time or place: forgetting where you are or how you got there.
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships: problems judging distance and determining color or contrast.
- New problems with spoken or written words: trouble naming a familiar object or using the wrong name.
- Misplacing things, losing the ability to retrace your steps to find things or accusing others of stealing.
- Decreased or poor judgment: poor grooming habits
- Withdrawal from work or social activities, such as hobbies, church, or sports
- Changes in mood and personality: becoming confused, anxious, suspicious, or easily upset.

Keep your brain active by being social. Socializing keeps your brain working by conversing with other people. Other ideas to keep your brain busy include reading a book, listening to music, limiting how much T.V. you watch, picking up a new hobby, getting plenty of exercise, eating your fruits and veggies, and getting plenty of sleep (at least 7 hours). Remember, it doesn't hurt to keep your brain muscle active; you need to use it just like your other muscles. In other words, keep your mind nimble.

*Your brain uses 20% to 30% of the energy (calories) you take in each day

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Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness

No article this week.