

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Soybean Drydown

One day they're all green – the next they're not. Your eyes aren't deceiving you: soybean drydown happens faster than you might think, often even faster than corn.

Depending on weather, we might see corn drydown rates ranging from one percent in late August to less than half a percent as we get into October. In contrast, soybean drydown rates can reach as much as three percent per day. Iowa State work noted almost flat moisture levels (60 percent during the de-greening period) that dropped rapidly as pods turned to a mature color at the beginning of R7 (full maturity). At this point, dry matter accumulation is complete, and seed moisture decreases rapidly – three plus percent per day in the first 12 days after maturity in the ISU study. Former KSU Agronomist Dr. Ignacio Ciampitti saw much the same with drydown starting at 58 percent moisture decreasing to 12 percent in just 15 days. There are obviously lots of variables at play, but the take home is: it happens faster than you might think.

What difference does it make? In many cases, maybe it doesn't. If moisture drops to 13 percent and stays there, maybe it's not worth thinking about, but what if it goes still lower?

Work from the University of Nebraska quantified the economic effect of moisture losses in a study where moisture samples were collected from 115 truckloads of soybeans at elevator delivery. Their work found close to 20 percent were below ten percent moisture and almost forty percent were below 11 percent. Two percentage points doesn't seem like much until you find out those two percentage points (11 vs. 13) represent a three plus percent yield loss.

While there *is* value in harvesting at higher moisture, it's impossible to harvest every acre at optimum moisture. That's when doing a few little things may help at least a little.

One might be to harvest at moisture levels. Soybeans are fully mature when 95 percent of the pods are at a mature tan color, likely with some leaves still left on the plant and maybe sitting at a 14/15 percent moisture level. It will require some harvest equipment adjustments (even throughout the day as conditions change) and slower harvest speeds, but if adjustments can be implemented without causing other economic losses, they could be a consideration.

We can also try to coordinate harvest efforts to capture overnight moisture. This can also help reduce the shattering losses we often see when warm windy afternoons drop soybean moisture levels to even to eight or nine percent. The losses *can* add up. Four to five beans on the ground per square foot equals almost a bushel per acre in losses.

There's a lot to think about during harvest. Soybean harvest moisture may not be high on your list, but if we can minimize moisture (and shattering) losses, it might deserve at least a little greater consideration.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Stress Reducing Product at Weaning

Having recently sent two students off to college for the first time as a parent, I now get why the cow bawls at separation time! As we reach the time of year when spring born calves are weaned, questions circulate around how to make the weaning process easier on cow and calf alike. A question that sometimes pops up in the office is about the use of a commercially available product designed to ease this process. In Extension we are not in the business of product endorsement, but a newer product is on the market and creating discussion. I ran across an article by Oklahoma State University livestock area specialist Brian Freking that addresses this topic well, so have chosen to use his article for my submission this week. Good luck with fall weaning.

Have you considered using a product such as maternal bovine appeasing substance (mBAS) aka FerAppease® during weaning. The management key points listed in the bullet list below for fence line weaning have been fairly broadly accepted as a stress minimizing, management technique. Could cows on the opposite side of the fence still provide enough appeasing substance (pheromone) to keep calves calmer? Fence Line Weaning Benefits include the following:

- Calves stand next to fence within eye site and smell of cow
- Process shown to range from 48 to 72 hours
- Normal separation ranges from 7-10 days (old system)
- Calves gradually separate via grazing within 48 hours
- Less vocalization

Scientists have been investigating reducing stress in cattle for decades. Current published information shows promise for the use of mBAS. Journal of Animal Science, 2020, Vol. 98, No. 9, 1-10 provides results from Reinaldo Cooke Texas A&M University providing a detailed project report from this product. Growth rate from day 0 to 28 was greater ($P=0.05$) in mBAS versus control calves (2.21 lb/d vs 1.87 lb/d, respectively; SEM = 0.125) and did not differ ($P=0.23$) from day 28 to 42 between treatments. The key consideration is calves tend to adjust quicker to eating during the stressful first week after weaning. Calves eating routinely coincides with better immunity therefore less of a need for treatment for respiratory complexes. Cortisol concentrations, a biomarker of chronic stress, have been shown to be reduced in calves treated with mBAS.

One common question raised is how long does this product last? The current recommendation is that it will last approximately 14 days. Therefore, utilizing this type of technology would require a precondition period of approximately 45 days to see a return on investment (ROI). As always **Read Label Directions** but currently it calls for a dosage rate in adult cattle to be 5 ml to the Nuchal skin and second 5 ml application to the skin above the muzzle. For calves, apply half the dose on the same locations. There is no slaughter withdrawal period.

Administration of mBAS to beef calves may be a strategy to alleviate some of the physiological and behavioral stress responses elicited by weaning.

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Fall Armyworms in the Lawn

Lately one of the most common questions I receive is about fall armyworms. If you are not familiar with them, they are caterpillars that feed primarily on grasses, corn, and sorghum, although they can attack other plants too. This means they can cause severe damage to lawns. Young worms are $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long, while older armyworms are around 1.5 inches long. The color can vary but is usually dark brown with a light stripe down both sides of their body. There is also an upside-down Y on the top of their head between their eyes. After they pupate, they turn into brown moths, about 1 inch long.

Fall armyworms cannot actually survive our Kansas winters. In most states they die off in the winter, only surviving in Florida and southern Texas (and countries to the south). When our weather gets warmer in the spring, the moths start to move north out of these areas, laying eggs and creating more caterpillars that will feast on our lawns and crops. It takes about 25 days per generation, so Kansas usually sees 2-4 generations of fall armyworms depending on our weather patterns. This might not seem like much, but a female fall armyworm can lay up to 1000 eggs, meaning the populations grow quickly.

Fall armyworms do not usually kill grass but go for new tender blades of grass. You may notice patches of grass withering and browning as they feed. If there is a large population, they can cause brown areas to appear in your lawn within a day. A large population may also mean they run out of food and may start to eat down near the base of the plant where the grass is tougher. However, they tend to move on to new areas of a lawn rather than eat a plant down to the base. This means that grass will likely regrow, especially if it gets rain or irrigation to help encourage a flush of new growth.

If you have a bad infestation of fall armyworms, you may consider using an insecticide on your lawn to kill them. Options include cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide), permethrin (38 Plus Turf, Termite & Ornamental Insect Spray; Hi-Yield Garden & Farm Insect Control; Eight Yard & Garden RTS) and Spinosad (Conserve, Monterey Garden Insect Spray, Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew, Natural Guard Spinosad) and Dylox (BioAdvanced 24-Hour Grub Control) are commonly available materials registered for control of fall armyworm in turf. Spray treatments have greater and quicker contact efficacy than granular applications. Granular treatments require irrigation or rain to activate the insecticide from the dry granular carrier. Professional lawn care service personnel have access to additional materials (such as Scimitar and Deltamethrin) which may have more persistence than homeowner products.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Medicare Marketing: What Agents Can and Can't Do This Fall

Medicare Open Enrollment is just a few weeks away. Medicare beneficiaries need to understand the marketing rules that insurance agents and the companies that sell insurance that works with Medicare must follow. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services enforce rules to protect you from misleading and aggressive tactics.

Reviewing your Medicare options for the next year is always a good idea, but keep in mind that agents and brokers do not have to have your personal information to give you a quote. Below are some do's and don'ts to remember when interacting with an agent.

They can't:

- Come to your residence uninvited to sell or endorse anything.
- Call you unless you're a plan member or have given them permission to contact you.
- Require you to speak to a sales agent to get information about the plan.
- Offer you cash (or gifts worth more than \$15) to join their plan or give you free meals during a sales pitch for a Medicare health or drug plan.
- Ask you for payment over the phone or online. The plan must send you a bill.
- Sell you a non-health-related product, like an annuity or life insurance policy, during a sales pitch for a Medicare health or drug plan.
- Make an appointment to tell you about their plan unless you agree. During the appointment, they can only try to sell you the products you agree to hear about
- Market their plans or enroll you during an educational event like a health fair or conference.
- Advise you without using specific plan names.

If you plan on meeting with an agent, the agent must follow specific rules. They must give you plan materials, tell you about plan options, and how to get more information. They will provide you with an enrollment form and collect the completed form. They cannot charge you a fee to process your enrollment form. They cannot try to steer you toward a particular plan. They cannot pressure you into joining a specific plan or pressure you into signing an enrollment form before you are ready to do so.

The Annual Enrollment Period is a vital time for Medicare beneficiaries to make informed decisions about their healthcare. If you have questions or concerns about marketing practices, contact Teresa Hatfield at K-State Extension-Meadowlark District, 785-364-4125 or thatfield@ksu.edu.

Resource: [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov)

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

Getting Your Child Off to a Great Start at School

Summer is winding down; it's time to think about school again. As you pick out new clothes and backpacks, here are some back-to-school preparations that can make a real difference in your child's health and academic success this school year.

1. Get your child on a good sleep schedule with good sleep habits. During the summer, we often let our children stay up late. To avoid a grumpy child when school starts, begin the school sleep schedule a week before school begins. Children need 8-10 hours of sleep every night, so count back from when they need to wake up to find the right bedtime. Switching to a school routine may not be easy but healthy sleep habits will help them in the classroom this school year.
2. Plan healthy lunches and snacks. Use the end of summer to talk with your child about healthy foods they can bring to school. If they get to pick their healthy foods, they are more likely to eat it.
3. Make an appealing homework place and decide on a routine. They should have a quiet, well-lit, pleasant place to do their homework. For younger children, it should be where you can easily supervise, but not necessarily in the middle of family chaos. Decide together when your child will do homework. You can always change it up later if it doesn't work out but have a plan.
4. Plan activities and downtime. It's important that your child be active, so signing up for a team sport or other physical activity can be a good idea. Be sure that there is enough time for homework and sleep. This is crucial for your child's mental health. Your child needs time to relax and play no matter what their age.

These may seem basic and simple but can get lost in the shuffle. These simple tasks can be very effective when families do them. So, give them a try. You'll be glad you did.

Why Does Home Canned Corn Turn Brown?

If sweet corn browns during canning, it usually means that the temperature required for canning is too high for the sugar levels in the corn variety. This caramelization has become more of a problem as newer varieties of corn get sweeter and sweeter. You cannot, however, safely reduce the heat or processing time needed for canning corn; you can freeze that corn or find a locally grown variety that is recommended for canning. Though not an immediate safety concern, you might want to consider refrigerating these jars and/or consuming them more quickly since they may not maintain the best quality for long.

Heather Roenne
District Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development

Empower Young People to Find Their Spark

CLOVER by 4-H is an online learning platform that brings 4-H exploratory learning right into the hands of learners. This platform encourages youth to follow their curiosity to find their spark. Clover by 4-H is a free, impactful learning program that is geared toward youth aged 5-18. It is designed to engage through interactive elements that combine learning and gamification.

The first step in discovering and exploring the activities is to go to the 4-h.org/clover website. There are several public activities courses that can be accessed without creating an account; however, once an account is created, the door to over 260 activities and courses opens wide. These range in all subject areas - breeds of dogs, rockets to the moon, public speaking, duct tape wallets, budgeting, crafting, cooking, coding, and career exploration! Each course has a recommended grade range. It is easy to select interests and filter course offerings to suit each learner. Parents are encouraged to create parental accounts and follow learning activities along with their children.

All of the activities have a basic online web design and an option to download pdf versions. This allows lessons and materials to be printed out and enjoyed without the internet. It is important to make education available to everyone.

Many of the courses have an interactive experience option. This allows the learner to engage more fully with the material through video and gamification. Information is learned through completing tasks, viewing videos, and earning badges. Gamification is bringing the fun of online gaming and education together for a richer online learning experience. It combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning.

While promoting learning, CLOVER helps with goal setting strategies and cultivates a growth mindset and positive youth development. These are the steps to explore CLOVER.

1. Go to the online website: 4-h.org/clover Once here you will select the Get Started button.
2. Select your age from the three options. Youth under the age of 13 must have a parent or caregiver add them to the adult account. This is a safety feature built into the platform to promote safe online use. Youth 14-18 may create accounts. The third age option is for adults.
3. Select interests: This is a filter that can be revisited at any time and helps to provide activities and courses that spark the interest of the youth.
4. Select an activity: There are so many content areas to choose from, and they are divided by age and duration. For example, I want to learn about monarchs. There are lessons around entomology, monarch migration, and metamorphosis. There is so much to learn and so much to imagine.
5. Once activities are completed, you earn completion badges. There is even a leaderboard to add to the gaming vibe.

4-H has wonderful community and project clubs with enrollment opening on **October 1**. If you would like more information on how to join a local 4-H club reach out to your local K-State Extension Office or go to the meadowlark.k-state.edu website. CLOVER by 4-H is an online option to open the door for exploration and curiosity. It is an opportunity for all youth to find their spark.