

July 17, 2026

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Soybean Insect Management: Pod Feeders

Leaf feeding insects in soybeans often *look* like they're doing more damage than they actually are. Damage by pod feeders, on the other hand, can go unnoticed but deserves scouting attention. Three problematic species are bean leaf beetles, stink bugs, and soybean podworm.

Bean leaf beetles pose a dual threat to soybeans – feeding on foliage *and* pods – but it's the latter we are most concerned about. Bean leaf beetles often feed on the lining of the soybean pod, and while this scarring may not seem like a huge issue, it can provide an entry point for diseases. Treatments may be economically justified if pod feeding results in the loss of three or more seeds per plant, pods are not completely dry, or beetles are not yet leaving the fields.

Stink bug pod feeding damage has been an increasing concern in recent years. Unlike the bean leaf beetle, it feeds on the seed itself rather than just the pod, causing potential yield losses and seed quality (shrunken/deformed) concerns as well. Control measures should be considered when 10 bugs per 30 foot of row are found.

Soybean podworm (corn earworm) is the most common larval pod feeding pest this time of year. They consume the developing seed, causing *direct* damage to the grain. Control measures should be considered when an average of one small worm per foot of row is detected.

Other insects (grasshoppers, etc...) may cause some level of pod injury as well, and scouting is key to making good treatment decisions. Simply seeing, the insect doesn't necessarily justify treatment, but it is a good indicator to implement scouting. For more information on scouting or treatment recommendations, check out the 2026 KSU Soybean Insect Management Guide available online at:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/soybean-insect-pest-management-2026_MF743 or upon request via any District Extension Office.

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Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Summer Heat Stress

County Fair season is in full swing, which typically means that summer's heat and humidity become oppressive, just to add to the atmosphere I suppose. Earlier in the year I spoke about the Kansas Mesonet Animal Comfort Index tool during cold weather, it is equally useful for monitoring heat stress. <https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/animal/forecast/> The best heat-stress strategy is preparation to avoid an animal health crisis.

Summer heat stress reduces livestock performance, reproductive efficiency and animal welfare. Extreme heat stress can even result in death. It isn't just temperature alone that creates heat stress. Humidity, direct sunlight, wind speed and the amount of nighttime cooling all influence the heat load that animals must manage.

Ruminants accumulate heat during the day and normally release most of it overnight as temperatures cool. Consecutive hot days become especially dangerous when nighttime temperatures remain above 70°F, which limits the amount of night cooling. This nighttime cooling effect is as important to monitor as daytime heat and humidity for heat stress, something the aforementioned tool easily illustrates.

Early warning signs include reduced grazing or feed intake, restlessness, increased standing and crowding around water. As heat stress progresses, breathing rate increases and animals may begin drooling or foaming at the mouth. Open-mouth breathing, extended tongue, labored breathing and/or isolation indicate severe heat stress and require immediate action.

Water consumption varies greatly by species and stage of production. A general rule of thumb is 1 to 2 gallons of water per hundred pounds of body weight. With heat stress, this can be on the upper end and easily double requirements. Before a heat event, check water supplies, flow rates and storage capacity of water systems to make sure water is not a limiting factor. Keep troughs clean and, when practical, shaded because animals drink less as water temperatures rise. Crowding can limit access, so provide additional tanks before extreme heat arrives rather than waiting until livestock are stressed.

Shade reduces the solar heat load and can lower respiration rates and body temperature and can increase feed intake and improve performance during the summer. Shade can interfere with good grazing distribution but can help reduce heat stress during the hottest parts of the day. Space needs vary by animal size and maturity. General recommendations per head are: Beef Cattle & Dairy Cows: 20- 40 square feet (mature cows may require up to 40-80 square feet to prevent bunching), Stocker/Feeder Cattle: 15 to 25 square feet, Sheep/Goats: 10 to 15 square feet. Structures should be high enough to allow airflow and large enough that livestock are not forced to bunch tightly underneath them.

Avoid working, hauling or moving livestock during dangerous conditions. Work animals early in the morning, not during the evening, when their internal heat load may still be near its daily peak. Use small groups, minimize time in holding pens and move quietly. When nights provide little cooling, postpone nonessential work. Flies cause bunching, increasing activity and heat load, so maintaining fly-control programs is important.

July 17, 2026

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Brown Spots in Your Lawn

As the summer heats up, many homeowners notice brown spots on their lawns. While there are many causes of discoloration in turf grasses, one common reason is a disease called Brown Patch. Brown Patch will affect all cool season turf grasses, making it one of the most widespread turf diseases.

Brown Patch causes roughly circular patches of - you guessed it - brown grass that can appear seemingly overnight. It can also cause tan lesions with black outlines on the individual blades of grass. Brown Patch is caused by a fungus known as *Rhizoctonia solani*. Our Kansas summers provide favorable conditions for Brown Patch, as it thrives in hot, humid weather.

Proper lawn care can prevent the appearance of Brown Patch or reduce its severity. When applying fertilizer, use only what the lawn needs, as excessive nitrogen from fertilizer will promote Brown Patch. Never fertilize when a Brown Patch is active. Avoid watering your lawn in the late afternoon or evening, as the water will not get a chance to evaporate before the sun goes down, allowing for moisture to stay on your grass longer. If the Brown Patch is severe, some home fungicides can fight Brown Patch. If your lawn has Brown Patch, start by practicing good lawn care, and reach out to our extension office for more care tips and fungicides available in your area.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Good Fats Great Health

We've all heard that we should watch how much fat we consume, but not all fats are bad for us. In fact, some fats are essential for good health. Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are two types of healthy fats that our bodies need but cannot produce on their own. Because of this, we must get them through the foods we eat. Without enough of these essential fatty acids, our bodies cannot function properly, which may lead to various health problems.

Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are classified as polyunsaturated fats. These healthy fats can help lower levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Unlike saturated fats, polyunsaturated fats are typically liquid at room temperature.

Food Sources of Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids

Many nutritious foods contain these beneficial fats, including:

- Fatty fish such as salmon, trout, sardines, tuna, herring, and mackerel
- Flaxseed and flaxseed oil
- Walnuts and chia seeds
- Vegetable oils such as safflower and canola oil
- Tofu
- Eggs

Health Benefits

Omega-3 fatty acids offer numerous health benefits, especially for heart health. They are an important component of cell membranes and play a key role in supporting brain, heart, eye, and skin health. Omega-3s also help reduce chronic inflammation throughout the body.

Research shows that Omega-3 fatty acids can lower triglyceride levels and may help increase HDL ("good") cholesterol, contributing to a lower risk of heart disease and stroke. They may also help reduce inflammation associated with conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, and asthma. Eating just one 3-ounce serving of fish each week can support heart health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The benefits extend beyond heart health. Omega-3 fatty acids support healthy vision and may help lower the risk of age-related eye conditions such as macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. They can also promote healthier skin by helping reduce inflammation associated with conditions such as psoriasis, dermatitis, and eczema.

Small Changes, Big Benefits

Making a few simple changes to your diet can have a significant impact on your overall health. Including foods rich in Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids is an easy and delicious way to support your heart, brain, eyes, skin, and overall well-being. Healthy fats are an important part of a balanced diet—and they are fats.

July 17, 2026

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

Help Prevent the Spread of Cyclospora!

It is all over the news and social media about Cyclosporiasis which is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, also known as *Cyclospora*. People can become infected by consuming food or water that contains the parasite. Help prevent Cyclosporiasis with these tips for handling fruits and vegetables:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling raw fruits and vegetables.
- Gently rub fruits and vegetables under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking.
- Scrub firm fruits and vegetables with a clean produce brush under running water.
- Fruits and vegetables labeled “prewashed” don’t need to be washed again at home.
- Cut away damaged or bruised areas on fruits and vegetables before eating or prepping.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within two hours.

Learn more at: www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis/#cyclospora#prevention#foodsafety

There is a large multistate outbreak with reports that Kansas has had cases reported near Kansas City, Wichita and Topeka. Public health officials are interviewing people linked to this outbreak to find out what foods they ate before getting sick. A specific food item has not yet been confirmed as the source. Investigators are collecting as much information as they can to solve this outbreak.

Cyclosporiasis is not usually life-threatening, however some people can become very ill and require hospitalization. If you have symptoms of cyclosporiasis, contact your healthcare provider right away. Some of the symptoms include:

- Contact your provider if you develop watery diarrhea, especially lasting more than a few days, along with fatigue or loss of appetite.
- You may need to specifically request testing for *Cyclospora*. Routine stool tests don’t always screen for this parasite.
- Symptoms usually begin about one week after becoming infected (ranging from 2 days to 2 weeks or more).
- Without treatment, symptoms can last anywhere from a few days to a month or longer.
- If you have symptoms, stay well hydrated.

Those most at risk are the very young, the aged and those with weakened immune systems- (taking cancer treatments and other chronic diseases). If you are in doubt, check with your health care provider.