

July 24, 2026

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Maximizing Sericea Control

Sericea lespedeza is a tough one. Drought tolerant. Vigorous root systems. Plenty of seed production that can last in the soil for a long time. Thinking about 'control' can be overwhelming, but it can be slightly less so if you consider some best management practices.

Apply to actively growing plants. Actively growing means it's growing well *now* with the ability to *continue* good growth after application. If plants are not actively growing (new leaves early in the season; buds/blooms later), delay applications until better conditions resume.

Consult product labels for appropriate carrier gallonages with a few rules of thumb in mind:

- Use a minimum of three gallons per acre by air (increasing to five gallons for denser populations.
- Use a minimum of 10 gallons per acre for ground applications, with increases to as much as 20 gallons per acre for dense stands.
- Spot treatment applications should cover plants with solution – without it dripping off.

Read labels for application timing recommendations. Products containing triclopyr or fluroxypyr are often suggested for use during vegetative growth/prior to bloom or may call for higher rates at later plant growth stages. The metsulfuron products may allow for later applications, and some active ingredients have no activity at all against sericea. Choose the right product at the right time for optimal results.

Don't discount integrated management approaches. Grazing (typically with goats) can help reduce seed production. Mowing, followed by herbicides, can increase control by allowing application to more tender regrowth. In native grass systems, fire at different times of the year can either help suppress seed production (late summer) or increase seed germination to produce plants more easily controlled by herbicide applications later.

Know your resources. There's an entire page in the 2026 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide dedicated to the control of sericea lespedeza. Pick up a copy at any District Office or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu and I'll send you a link. Local Noxious Weed Departments are also a great resource, with information on everything from products and rates to adjuvants and timing.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Hair Shedding and Heat Tolerance

Last week we discussed summer heat stress, and this week will take a deeper dive into one of the factors of heat stress in cattle – hair coat. This might not be a topic given much consideration for many, but when summer heat rolls in, slick hided animals (or maybe those that aren't) come to the notice of an astute livestock manager. Hair/hide color also has effects on the animal's ability to withstand heat.

The ability to shed the winter coat is a trait gaining attention, with some breed associations even working on EPDs for this trait. Slick-coated cattle have improved tolerance to heat, better reproductive rates and typically wean heavier calves. There is evidence indicating slick-coated cows carry fewer flies. If fescue is the primary forage base, slick coated cows suffer less fescue toxicosis.

Hair shedding has moderate heritability, indicating that when selection pressure is applied, the result will lead to cattle that slick-off winter haircoats earlier each spring. Hair shedding scores can be taken monthly from March to July. In most regions of the country, it is recommended that the herd be evaluated during the month of May. This time seems to correlate with when most cattle have initiated the process of shedding and when most variation occurs within the herd for our region.

Hair shedding scores are based on a scale of 1 to 5 with a 1 being completely slick in appearance. While there is variability between shedding patterns among animals, cattle tend to shed from front to back and top to bottom. Hair shedding scores can be taken on both sexes and animals of all ages. It is recommended to take scores on yearlings during their first spring. Pictures of each hair shed score can be viewed at: https://guidelines.beefimprovement.org/index.php/Hair_Shedding

Producers can use hair coat shedding scores as a culling tool to reduce heat stress in their herds. Hair coat shedding is repeatable from year to year. Cattle that have a shedding score of 4 to 5 in May should be considered for culling in areas that have higher heat and humidity. Keep in mind that there are populations where hair retention is a desirable trait, such as in exhibition focused animals. That said, there can be markets for both sides of this equation given the operations organizational structure.

Data collected by seedstock breeders should be reported to their respective breed association for possible use in genetic evaluations. One example of this is Angus Genetics International has implemented a Hair Shedding EPD. A lower numerical value for Hair Shed (HS) EPD in the Angus breed indicates earlier shedding of the winter hair coat each spring.

Although hair shedding has traditionally been associated with heat stress and fescue toxicosis, recent research shows this quick and easy phenotypic assessment of cattle could be a trait of even more economic importance. With its moderate heritability, combining this score with a hair shedding EPD or score on bulls would result in positive genetic progress over time.

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Look out for Iron Chlorosis

This time of year, it is really easy to spot trees with iron chlorosis. Take a drive through any neighborhood, and you will usually see at least one or two trees with this ailment – generally pin oaks. Iron chlorosis is the term we use for iron deficiency in plants. Chlorosis refers to a lack of chlorophyll, the part of the leaf responsible for its green color, and trees need iron to create chlorophyll. Iron chlorosis means that the leaf is turning yellow because it does not have enough iron to form all the chlorophyll it needs. Since trees rely on chlorophyll to photosynthesize and produce food for them, a tree with iron chlorosis will slowly starve, weakening the tree and possibly leading to death of the tree.

Iron chlorosis is easy to spot because the veins of the leaves usually stay green while the rest of the leaf turns yellow. It can affect all types of plants, but it is most common on pin oaks. If you notice your tree has this issue, you may think that your soil needs more iron. Generally, our soils have sufficient iron, the problem is that plants cannot access it. When your soil pH is higher than 7.2, the iron becomes insoluble and plants cannot pick it up.

To remedy iron chlorosis, there are several things you can try. If your tree needs immediate rescue, you will want to spray the leaves with iron sulfate or iron chelate solution. We call this a foliar application, and it is fast acting but temporary. After you spray the tree, the leaves should absorb the iron and turn a darker green. However, the iron will not move beyond the leaves that you spray it on. That means when the leaves fall off in autumn, new growth next spring will have the same issue. Therefore, we only recommend a foliar application if you are worried about your tree surviving the season.

For a longer-term solution, you can do either a soil treatment or a trunk injection. While lowering the pH of the soil would be ideal, it is unlikely that you can lower the soil pH significantly to depths of 18-24 inches, where tree roots are. Instead, you can add iron sulfate or chelated iron to the soil around it. In most of the Meadowlark District, chelated iron will be superior as it works in higher pH soils. If your soil is above 7.2, you will want chelated iron with EDDHA, which, although more expensive, will not become immobile in high pH soils.

If you have bare ground around your tree, you can add the chelated iron to the soil. If you have a lawn, you will want to deep feed the iron either with liquid injection using a hydraulic sprayer, or by drilling holes 15 to 18 inches deep around the canopy and adding the iron. This soil treatment is usually effective for 2 to 3 years.

The last option is trunk injection. This is best done by a professional arborist who can use the proper drill to minimize tree injury and knows the right depth to drill the holes. These applications usually last several years as well.

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Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

New Medicare GLP-1 Bridge Program May Help Lower Medication Costs

GLP-1 medications are a class of drugs used to treat conditions such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and other health concerns. Their popularity has grown significantly in recent years, particularly for their effectiveness in promoting weight loss.

For people enrolled in Medicare Part D, these types of covered by Medicare Part D medications prescribed solely for weight loss are generally not. Part D plans typically cover GLP-1 medications only when they are prescribed for other approved medical conditions.

Beginning July 1, 2026, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the Medicare GLP-1 Bridge Program, a short-term nationwide demonstration project designed to help eligible Medicare beneficiaries access certain GLP-1 medications for a flat monthly copayment of \$50.

The Bridge Program covers the following medications:

- Foundayo® (tablet)
- Wegovy® (injection or tablet)
- Zepbound® (KwikPen® only)

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for the Medicare GLP-1 Bridge Program, you must:

- Have Medicare Part D coverage through either a stand-alone Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage plan that includes prescription drug coverage.
- Not be eligible to receive a GLP-1 medication through your current Medicare drug plan.
- Not have type 2 diabetes, moderate-to-severe sleep apnea, or fatty liver disease.
- Be at least 18 years old and meet **one** of the following criteria:
 - Have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or higher.
 - Have a BMI of 30 or higher and either certain types of heart failure, difficult-to-control high blood pressure, or chronic kidney disease (stage 3a or higher).
 - Have a BMI of 27 or higher and either prediabetes or a history of heart attack, stroke, or blocked arteries in the arms or legs.

How to Enroll

If you think you may qualify, talk with your doctor about whether a GLP-1 medication is appropriate for you. Your doctor can determine if you meet the program requirements and, if appropriate, send a prescription to your pharmacy.

The pharmacy will need your Medicare ID number to process the prescription. Once your eligibility is confirmed, your doctor must submit the required documentation to Medicare for approval. After approval, you can pick up your medication from the pharmacy and pay \$50 for a one-month supply.

The Medicare GLP-1 Bridge Program is currently scheduled to continue through 2027.

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

No news article this week.