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Planning for Corn Diseases

Corn at the V10 growth stage is adding a new leaf every two to three days. At V14, we're two weeks from flowering. It's that time of year when we feel like we can almost see the corn growing throughout the day – increasing the need for focus on our disease management program.

Scouting should be step one. While the disease pyramid is the same for all diseases (host plus pathogen plus environment), the environmental piece of the equation is quite different for each pathogen. Scouting helps us determine which pathogen is an issue when. If some guidance would be helpful, the *Crop Protection Network* has numerous resources about individual diseases and now includes a disease lookout tool: <https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/crop-lookout> that allows you to select a disease of concern and see what findings of that disease reports have been confirmed across the country. It's not a substitute for individual field scouting but *can* help provide a heads up about what might be on the horizon.

When a fungicide is needed, product selection is important as we try to balance efficacy and economics. Fungicide selector information also on the *Crop Protection Network* includes ratings and recommendations from trials conducted across the corn growing region of the country. Check out a list of links to those tools on our Meadowlark Extension District Agronomy Blog at <https://blogs.k-state.edu/meadowlarkagronomy/> or reach out and we can discuss further.

Stay vigilant. Last year, early Tar Spot finds didn't develop as quickly or as severely as they have in the past. Southern Rust on the other hand, reared its ugly head quickly and with vengeance, causing losses after some early fungicide applications had waned in effectiveness. Scouting, disease knowledge, and appropriate fungicide use are all important parts of a sound corn disease management program. These *Crop Protection Network* tools can be a great help.

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Ross Mosteller
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Livestock Fly Control Management

Flies and fly control in livestock is a buzzing topic (bad pun intended) each summer through fall. The three main fly species affecting livestock are: stable fly, horn fly, and face fly. With all the discussion of New World Screwworm (NWS) in the news of late, it seems prudent to discuss judicious fly control measures. Appropriate use of fly control measures will be important to have effective defense against NWS, should it rear its ugly face in Kansas, but beyond that it makes good management sense to avoid potential resistance.

Several methods can be used to aid in fly control, including; dust bags, pour-ons, injectables, fly tags, back rubbers, feed ingredients such as insect growth regulators (IGR) and some natural products like garlic and essential oils, insecticide strips placed on mineral feeders and/or ear tags are all tools. Each fly control method has advantages and disadvantages which should be considered.

Dust bags and back rubbers (oilers) are good fly control methods, but livestock must be forced to use them. A common approach is to place them near mineral tubs, water tanks or gateways to aid in use. Sprays and pour-ons are another effective method to control flies, but they must be reapplied frequently and varied by product. Oral products are also an effective fly control method; however, consistent intake is critical to maintain control. Flies can travel between ranches, and this may minimize effectiveness if neighbors are not using IGR. Don't forget that wildlife can serve as a refugia for flies as well.

Fly tags can be an effective control method. There are three main active ingredients for fly tags: pyrethroids, organophosphates, and avermectins. It is generally recommended that the active ingredient of the fly tag should be alternated, within a prescribed plan, to aid in minimizing resistance. Fly tags should be applied as late as possible to aid fly control throughout the summer months.

Use of garlic, essential oils and other natural products has gained attention within the last decade. Research results vary, but there is some indication that this could be an alternative to conventional fly control methods and aid in reducing insecticide resistance.

Several fly control methods are available with advantages and disadvantages to each. Economics and feasibility of use for the operations must be considered. Different operations may require varied management tools. For example, feedlots versus pasture operations may need vastly different fly management approaches. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to fly control, and in some instances, multiple tools may need to be used to achieve desired control.

When considering fly control management options, make sure to read product labels carefully and follow them exactly! Some insecticides are only labeled for certain fly species. You should never use products off-label, unless directed through extra-label use by a veterinarian. Keeping every tool available as a viable option is critical and this will only be able to happen if fly control products are used judiciously according to the label. To learn more visit: <https://entomology.k-state.edu/extension/human-and-animal-health/livestock-pests.html>

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Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

No news article this week.

Teresa Hatfield
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Fiber: A Simple Nutrient with Powerful Health Benefits

Getting more fiber in your diet might be one of the simplest ways to improve your health—yet many people overlook it. Think of fiber as a quiet “superpower” that supports your digestive system and overall well-being. Despite its benefits, most Americans do not get enough fiber in their daily diets. General guidelines suggest consuming about 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories, which equals roughly 25–30 grams per day for most adults.

What Is Fiber?

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate that your body cannot fully digest. There are two main types of fiber, and both play important roles in maintaining good health:

- **Soluble fiber** dissolves in water and forms a gel-like substance in the digestive system. It helps slow digestion and can be found in foods such as oats, barley, beans, lentils, nuts, and some fruits and vegetables.
- **Insoluble fiber** does not dissolve in water. Instead, it adds bulk to your stool and helps food move through the digestive tract. Whole grains and many vegetables are good sources of insoluble fiber.

Why Fiber Matters

Including the right amount of fiber in your diet offers a wide range of health benefits:

- **Supports digestive health**
Fiber helps promote regular bowel movements and can prevent constipation by adding bulk to stool. It may also help reduce the risk of digestive conditions such as diverticulitis.
- **Promotes heart health**
Fiber can help lower cholesterol levels, which may reduce the risk of heart disease.
- **Helps manage blood sugar**
By slowing digestion, fiber helps prevent sharp spikes in blood glucose levels.
- **Aids in weight management**
High-fiber foods help you feel full longer, which may reduce overeating and support healthy weight goals.
- **May lower cancer risk**
Fiber has been linked to a reduced risk of certain cancers, including colorectal cancer, due to its positive effects on gut health.
- **Reduces risk of chronic disease**
Diets rich in fiber are associated with a lower risk of conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

How to Add More Fiber to Your Diet

If you are not used to eating fiber-rich foods, start small and build gradually to avoid digestive discomfort. Here are a few simple ways to increase your intake:

- Choose whole grains like brown rice, oatmeal, and whole wheat bread
- Add beans, lentils, or peas to soups, salads, and side dishes
- Snack on fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds
- Include a variety of plant-based foods in your meals

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As you increase fiber, remember to drink plenty of water. Fluids help move fiber through your digestive system and prevent discomfort.

Small Changes, Big Impact

Adding more fiber to your daily routine does not have to be complicated. By making a few simple changes, you can support your digestive health, lower your risk of chronic disease, and improve your overall well-being.

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Cindy Williams
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Are Picky Eaters Picking Apart Your Family Meals?

As a mother, I understand the desire to make sure your children are getting all the adequate nutrition they need. And with childhood obesity on the rise, the spotlight on parents and how they feed their children is now more intense than ever before.

Experts caution parents about making mealtimes stressful. Well-meaning parents can often do more harm than help by forcing their children to eat---even if it's nutritious foods. So, what're parents to do when their children won't eat? The best thing, really, is to just relax and follow these tips:

- Be patient if your child wants to eat the same food repeatedly. This is called a "food jag." And it doesn't usually last long enough to cause harm. If the food that the child eats repeatedly is healthy food, then allow them to eat it until the food jag passes.
- Allow your child to explore foods. If they aren't ready to taste it yet, allow them to just look at it. It is normal for them to want to touch or smell food on their plate before they are willing to taste it.
- Introduce only one new food at a time. Let the child know whether the new food will be sweet, salty or sour.
- Seat a reluctant taster beside a friend, brother or sister who is a good eater, especially when new food is introduced.
- Encourage your child to at least taste food but never force or bribe them to eat it. In my house, we have the "two bite" rule. All new foods must get two bites (our child gets to choose the size of bite) before he can say he doesn't like it.
- Serve an unfamiliar food with familiar ones. This will increase the likelihood that the child will start the new food. For example, serve a peanut butter sandwich made with one piece of white bread and one piece of whole wheat bread.
- A child's "No" doesn't always mean no. Continue to offer new food and don't give up. Many young children must be offered food 10 times or more before they will take a bite, according to research.
- Serve food plain, because many children like foods that they can easily recognize.
- Respect the "no foods touching" rule if that is important to your child. That's important to your child, and you might want to buy special plates with dividers.
- Remember that most children prefer bright colored foods with interesting textures.
- Don't become a "short-order cook." Expect a picky eater to eat what the rest of the family eats. Offer the same foods to the whole family but always serve at least one food that everyone will eat.
- Trust your child's appetite. Forcing them to clean their plate encourages overeating.
- Read stories about food to and with your child. They may be more likely to try a food that has been introduced in a story.

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- Include your child in meal planning, grocery shopping and food preparation whenever possible. Even the most finicky eater is more likely to try the food they helped prepare. This sense of ownership creates interest and curiosity to help “sell” that first bite.

Also, instead of pouring the parenting energy into what the child does or doesn't eat during mealtimes, focus the energy on the togetherness of the situation. Mealtimes are a chance for families to talk about their day, express ideas and opinions, and just catch up on each other's lives. Don't let children's food fears derail this special time.