

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Fall Armyworm Scouting

The combination of increasing Fall Armyworm moth trap numbers to our south and a delayed hay harvest getting back into full swing is one worth keeping an eye on. Many soon to be harvested fields will be covered in tender regrowth that could be attractive to the northward migrating moth, and while there's no guarantee they will become an issue, being prepared is never a bad thing. Timely scouting is one key to being prepared.

In short, the fall armyworm's life cycle lasts approximately a month depending on temperature and other factors. The larval feeding stage makes up about two weeks of that time, and while feeding only lasts a short time, the damage can be great, particularly as larvae reach the end of their feeding period (when they are also more difficult to control). Early on, however, their damage is minimal and their tendency to hide around the base of plants means they will be difficult to see from afar – or sometimes even when we walk stands.

One fall armyworm indicator sometimes mentioned is bird feeding in stands. Birds *will* feed on fall armyworm larvae, but they feed on other insects in fields as well and aren't the most reliable indicator. They also don't tend to flock to fields until larvae are larger and likely already doing significant damage (and potentially even too large to control). It *might* be an indicator – but there are better ones.

A better indicator is leaf windowpaning. Early larval feeding occurs on the underside of the leaf blade and often doesn't penetrate the upper leaf epidermis. Feeding instead leaves tiny, white 'windowpanes' in leaf blades or a fuzzy white appearance to leaf tips. When walking fields, if you note 25 to 30 percent of plants with windowpaning, fall armyworm larvae are likely at work. Look around the base of plants for small larvae and initiate daily scouting to monitor pressure. These small larvae are going to exponentially increase in size (and food requirement) in a very short time and timely management via insecticides, harvest, etc...will be key.

Early season scouting can be tough. It's almost impossible to predict where moths might congregate and it could take a couple of generations before numbers are high enough to readily notice them. The task list is long this time of year but consider making fall armyworm scouting at least a small priority. An ounce of scouting really can result in pounds of saved forage

June 26, 2026

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Read and Follow the Label

As cases of New World Screwworm (NWS) continue to be reported in Texas, this pest continues to garner attention from lots of sources. I've been participating in the Tuesday Zoom sessions hosted by the K-State Department of Agriculture Economics discussing NWS. These have been timely and informative, and interested parties can reference them at: <https://agmanager.info/news/recent-videos>

Sessions have focused on the appropriate, timely and judicious response to any potential NWS infestations in Kansas. There will inevitably be "home remedies" and off-label approaches to prevention and/or any control measures. It can't be overstated that with the limited tools available, appropriate use of Conditionally Approved or Emergency Use products will be a MUST! Prophylactic, mass treatments, before there is a problem with NWS, may make a bad situation worse should infestation occur.

Dr. Brian Lubbers, KSU College of Veterinary Medicine, reviewed the three types of USDA approvals for animal health products and reminded participants that in NO CASE is going off-label acceptable. Producers are highly encouraged to work with your herd health veterinarian to develop a plan. Here is a quick reminder of the types of approvals for label use.

Approved Use. This one is the most straightforward and common label seen, termed "Label Use". This means that products can be utilized strictly in the manner evaluated and authorized by USDA as found on the label. There are NO approved use products for NWS, but there has been some Conditional Approval and Emergency Use authorization.

The Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act (commonly called the "MUMS Act") helps FDA ensure that innovative treatments are available for small populations of animals and species that have few drugs approved for them. This law added provisions to increase the availability of drugs for minor species and for minor uses in a major species. This has opened the door to Conditional Use.

Conditional Use. Conditional use approval allows a needed animal drug to be legally available in a faster timeframe than full approval, after the drug is shown to be safe and has a reasonable expectation of effectiveness when used according to the label. This greater access to critical animal drugs gives more options for treatment with uncommon conditions, serious or life-threatening diseases, or diseases without adequate therapies.

Emergency Use. Under the FDA Emergency Use Authorization authority, the government can permit the use of unapproved animal drugs—or unapproved uses of approved drugs—during significant public health or national security emergencies affecting livestock. This allows products to be used for a specific health reason and under specific guidelines.

Recently both injectable and topical products have received either Conditional or Emergency use authorization in the fight against NWS. I can't over emphasize enough the fact that producers need to work within the guidelines of these uses, under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian and only when deemed necessary to do so. While panic is not necessary, this is a situation to monitor with the most up-to-date information found at: screwworm.gov

June 26, 2026

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Become a Master Gardener

Calling all gardeners! This September the Meadowlark District will resume our Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program. If you love to garden, or if you have never gardened but always wanted to, this is the program for you.

The Extension Master Gardener program, or EMG, is a staple of K-State Research and Extension. The program offers extensive horticulture training on topics ranging from lawn care and to soil fertility, to common plant diseases. These topics are supplemented with hands-on gardening practice and volunteer work. Beyond the learning experiences, EMG programs actively work to embed themselves in their communities and create collaborative and welcoming environments.

The EMG training runs from September through November with a total of 40 hours of training. Each session is taught by different specialists from K-State who share their expertise with our groups. All trainings are recorded and posted online for those who cannot participate in real time. After training, all Master Gardeners complete 40 hours of volunteer work, focusing on educating and inspiring others in their community.

You can email lauraphillips@ksu.edu or call any of our offices to learn more about the program or sign up.

June 26, 2026

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Level 2 to Begin July 23 in Seneca

If you are looking to take steps for better health and live in or around Nemaha County you are invited to join us for the upcoming Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Level 2 program. Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is a program designed to help maintain and improve strength in older adults and is offered by the Meadowlark Extension District.

Classes will begin on July 23 at 10:00 a.m. with an orientation to the program at the Meadowlark Extension District Seneca Office, located at 1615 Branch Street. Sessions will be held twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for eight weeks, providing participants with a consistent and supportive environment to build strength and improve functional fitness.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is an evidence-based strength training program designed especially for older adults. Level 2 builds on foundational movements by adding new exercises and challenges to further improve muscle strength, balance, and mobility—key components for maintaining independence and reducing the risk of falls.

Importantly, participants do not need to have taken Level 1 to enroll in Level 2. Exercises will be adapted to meet a variety of fitness levels, making the program accessible for both returning participants and those who are new to strength training. Instructors will offer modifications and guidance to ensure each individual can participate safely and comfortably.

Participants can expect:

- Structured, progressive strength-training exercises
- Guidance from trained Extension staff
- A supportive group setting that encourages consistency and motivation
- Activities designed to improve everyday function, such as lifting, reaching, and walking

Research shows that regular strength training can help older adults maintain independence, improve bone density, prevent falls and enhance overall quality of life. This program provides a safe and welcoming opportunity to gain these benefits while connecting with others in the community.

Space is limited, and registration is required. Weights will be provided.

For more information or to register, contact the Meadowlark Extension District Seneca office at 785-336-2184 or contact Teresa Hatfield at thatfield@ksu.edu.

Take the next step toward staying strong, healthy, and independent—join us this July!

June 26, 2026

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

No article this week.