

David Hallauer  
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

### **Soybean Sudden Death Syndrome – Management Practices**

When trying to manage any disease, an integrated approach is the best approach. Soybean Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) is no different and while management factors can be variable in their response, using them together might give you another leg up against this disease.

Variety selection is a great place to start. A multi-state (IA, MN, OH, WI) trial suggested almost a 10 bushel yield bump just by using a resistant variety over a susceptible one. Highly resistant varieties may not be a ready option, but they could be consideration on acres of concern.

Row spacing and population differences were part of work from K-State Extension Row Crops Pathologist Dr. Rodrigo Onofre. That work showed slight trends toward increasing foliar symptomology as populations increased while a comparison between 15- and 30-inch rows was less conclusive. More work is needed, but they might be something to consider in the future.

A Kansas Soybean Commission funded study by Dr. Onofre's team showed potential phosphorous fertility effects as well. Not only was a yield boost consistent as P rates increased from zero to 30 to 60 pounds per acre, but foliar SDS severity similarly declined as rates increased as well. While more research is also needed in this area, appropriate fertility levels are key to mitigating plant stress levels that in turn can help keep SDS levels in check.

You can't control the weather, but if high soil moisture levels occur within a few days of planting the risk of infection by the SDS pathogen increases. While worth noting, delaying planting is a practice likely most effective on our worst SDS acres due to the potential for yield declines if soybean planting is delayed too long. NOTE: rainfall or irrigation during the mid-late soybean reproductive growth stages (R3-R6) can also be a contributing factor to disease levels.

Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) is a completely different issue, but high populations of this nematode have been associated with increased severity of SDS. Any practice that reduces SCN (crop rotation, resistant varieties, etc...) might be a help for SDS levels as well.

Seed treatments including fluopyram and pydiflumetofen have demonstrated efficacy against SDS, consistently reducing severity and limiting yield losses as compared to many of our base seed treatments. For seed treatment ratings (for SDS and other seedling diseases), check out the Fungicide Efficacy for Control of Soybean Seedling Diseases reference available online (<https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/publications/fungicide-efficacy-for-control-of-soybean-seedling-diseases>) or upon request.

Continued work on SDS has included disease prediction tools as well. While too soon to know whether they have good accuracy, a knowledge of the most important SDS contributing factors can give you a pretty good idea. Drop me a line if you want to dig deeper into SDS management on your farm.

Ross Mosteller  
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

### **Trich Testing Bulls**

It is not an uncommon practice to conduct a breeding soundness exam prior to the breeding season on mature bulls. Knowing the motility and morphology of a herdsire makes logical sense to most cattlemen when discussing getting cows pregnant. But what about the possibility of disease that might be a causative issue in reproductive failure? Bovine trichomoniasis testing or “trich” as it is commonly referred to, is something that might need to be considered, especially if purchasing bulls who’ve been breeders or if you’ve experience reproductive issues within your herd in the past.

Trichomoniasis is a venereal disease that causes infertility, open cows, and occasional abortion in cows and heifers. Bulls carry the protozoa in their prepuce and transmit it to cows through breeding. Clean bulls can also become infected by breeding cows that are infected with trich. There are no clinical signs of infection in bulls and very few in cows. Bulls that are infected do not show systemic disease, swelling, drainage or any other sign that would lead to suspected infection.

The only way to identify infected bulls is for veterinarians to perform testing. This involves preputial scraping and diagnostic analysis to identify the presence of the organism in the preputial folds. Once infected, bulls remain infected for life. Because the organism lives in the preputial folds and is external to the bull's immune system so will not identify or respond to the organism to clear the infection. There is no treatment for trich, so infected bulls should be culled and sent to slaughter.

Bulls are the transmission route throughout a cowherd. When an infected bull breeds a cow, there is a high probability that the cow will become infected. Succeeding matings by other bulls in the herd transmit the organism to uninfected bulls, which is why it is common to find multiple infected bulls in a bull battery once a single trich-positive bull has been identified.

Trichomoniasis infection in the cow herd is often suspected when producers notice cows that should have settled early in the breeding season continually express estrus throughout the season. Cows will mate and conceive, but then later develop uterine infections and experience embryonic loss. Unlike bulls, once there is an infection, the cow's immune system will respond and clear the infection, but she will return to cyclicity only after the uterus returns to health, generally 60 days or more later.

While most cows will clear the infection and go on to conceive and carry a calf to term, there is a danger that individual cows can develop a carrier state and serve as a continual reservoir of infection in a positive herd. This potential for a carrier state is why it is recommended to cull any open cows in a positive herd to slaughter-only channels, along with the infected bulls. There is no reliable test for trichomoniasis to screen for carrier cows.

Trichomoniasis is a reportable disease in Kansas. As such, bulls that change ownership or possession within Kansas must meet one of the following criteria:

- Non-virgin bulls or bulls 18 months or greater must either - Be tested for Trichomoniasis by a Trich-certified veterinarian and be certified negative within 60 days prior to change of ownership or possession, with no subsequent exposure to female cattle, OR be sold for slaughter destination.
- Virgin bulls younger than 18 months of age may change ownership or possession without a negative trich test if the owner signs the Kansas Bull Status Affidavit verifying the bulls have not been sexually exposed to breeding-aged females.
- Virgin bulls 24 months of age or younger that originate from a herd with a herd management plan approved by the animal health commissioner shall not be required to be tested for Trich and certified negative prior to changing possession or ownership.

Trichomoniasis is a devastating venereal disease that can move through a herd silently until it is too late. The investment in identifying and removing infected bulls before the breeding season is a small price to pay to avoid reproductive failure of the cow herd. All that said, testing mature bulls is a good place to start for most herds with mature breeding bulls.

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Laura Phillips  
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

No news article

Teresa Hatfield  
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

### **Making Medications More Affordable for Medicare Beneficiaries**

If it feels like your medications are taking a bigger bite out of your budget, you're not alone. Older adults typically use more prescription drugs than any other age group, and about 40% of Medicare beneficiaries take five or more medications. Many prescriptions treat chronic conditions and, while generics are often affordable, brand-name drugs can cost hundreds of dollars each month, even for people enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. These high costs sometimes lead individuals to skip doses or stop taking medications altogether.

#### **Extra Help (Low-Income Subsidy) Program**

One valuable resource for lowering prescription drug costs is Extra Help, also known as the Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program, offered through Social Security. This program can significantly reduce:

- Prescription drug copays
- Monthly Part D premiums
- Annual deductibles

Individuals who qualify will pay no more than \$5.10 for generics and \$12.65 for brand-name medications.

The Extra Help program is available to Medicare beneficiaries with limited income and resources:

- Individuals: Income up to \$23,940; resources up to \$18,090
- Married couples: Income up to \$32,460; resources up to \$36,100

People who are already enrolled in Medicaid, a Medicare Savings Program, or SSI qualify automatically. You can apply for Extra Help online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

#### **Upcoming \$2,100 Out-of-Pocket Cap (Beginning 2026)**

Starting in 2026, Medicare Part D will include a new annual out-of-pocket cap of \$2,100. Once beneficiaries reach this limit, they will pay nothing for covered medications for the remainder of the year. This new cap aims to provide financial protection to people who take high-cost or multiple prescriptions.

#### **Medicare Prescription Payment Plan**

Another option to help manage upfront drug costs is the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan. Many beneficiaries face higher expenses early in the year as they work to meet their deductible. This plan spreads out-of-pocket prescription costs evenly across the calendar year, making expenses more predictable and manageable.

All Part D plans must offer this option. Interested beneficiaries should contact their prescription drug plan directly. Payments are made to the plan—not at the pharmacy.

If you want to learn more about these programs or have questions about Medicare, please contact Teresa Hatfield at the Meadowlark Extension District at 785-364-4125 or email [thatfield@ksu.edu](mailto:thatfield@ksu.edu).

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

### **Keeping Food Safe During a Power Outage**

At the time of this writing, we are predicted to have high winds, tornados and other damaging weather events. While I hope that it misses us, we at some time will have storms that may result in power outages. Power outages happen for various reasons. Severe weather can certainly be a top cause. The challenge is deciding what food is safe to keep or what should be tossed.

First of all, some general guidelines:

- Keep the appliance doors closed to keep the appliance cold as long as possible.
- Never taste food to determine its safety after a power outage.
- Keep an appliance thermometer inside the refrigerator and freezer.
- Discard any perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, milk, fish, eggs, deli items or leftovers after 4 hours without refrigeration.
- Frozen foods that contain ice crystals or are still below 40°F can be saved.

Any questions concerning food safety and power outages, contact Cindy at the Oskaloosa Office at 785-863-2212. If in doubt throw it out is a good general rule to go by if you are not sure if your food is safe.