

David Hallauer  
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

### **Brush Control Season Begins: Buckbrush**

While it *can* grow to over six feet tall, buckbrush seldom reaches more than three to four feet tall in pastures. That shorter stature plus the fact it's one of the first brush species to get going in spring can catch us off guard, and before we know it, we're past its optimum control window. That window is open now, providing a control opportunity for this species and its aggressive creeping underground root system before it gets any further ahead of us.

Herbicide options include products containing 2,4-D or 2,4-D plus aminopyralid or picloram (restricted use). Timing is important. Application should be made after plants are fully leafed out, but before leaves get too mature and form a waxy cuticle as they turn from a lighter to a darker green shade. While it might be tempting to wait until other species enter their optimum control window for one pass control, herbicide efficacy can be compromised if plants get too well established. Multiple herbicide applications will likely be required.

An integrated approach can be of longer-term value with options including livestock, prescribed fire, and mowing. Goats are preferred over cattle. Prescribed fire in warm season grass stands can have some value - if we can burn for two to three consecutive years - but are more difficult in cool season stands. A single mowing may only encourage resprouting, with multiple mowing passes required to make a dent in the stand. Removal of root systems (newly established plants are relatively easy to pull out) might be an option if stands are small.

The bottom line: buckbrush isn't likely controlled with one pass - mower, herbicide, etc... - and requires an integrated approach over time. Early spring will be our best opportunity for control this season and this species deserves attention sooner than later. For specific herbicide recommendations, pick up a copy of the *2026 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide* from any District Office or online at [https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/item/2026-chemical-weed-control-for-field-crops-pastures-rangeland-and-noncropland\\_CHEMWEEDGUIDE](https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/item/2026-chemical-weed-control-for-field-crops-pastures-rangeland-and-noncropland_CHEMWEEDGUIDE) . When applying herbicides, always read and follow label directions.

Ross Mosteller  
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

## **Euthanasia**

Boy howdy, talk about a tough subject to tackle! Most livestock producers at some time will be required to end the life of an animal, so while it is tough, it is important to talk about. I've spent most of my week working with a team of agents and specialists from across Kansas, learning how to train first responders to address livestock emergency situations. The unfortunate reality is that in accidents or natural disasters involving livestock, euthanasia is something that needs to be addressed.

Euthanasia is defined as a good death - "eu" which means well + "thanatos" which means death. The death of the animal should be painless and stress free. It is the responsibility of all livestock producers to either have the skills and equipment to accomplish this or to know someone who does. Those of us involved in livestock production understand the "ancient contract" between humans and animals and don't take lightly the responsibility for their care.

The decision to euthanize an animal should be based on the welfare of the animal. Euthanasia should be used to relieve suffering and pain. Also, it should be used when there is no hope for improvement in the animal's condition or when additional treatments will not change the outcome. Some common reasons for euthanasia are severe fractures, uncontrollable pain, animals too weak for transport, paralysis, and terminal illness.

Livestock producers have three euthanasia options: injectable solutions, gunshot, and captive bolt (CB). Injectable euthanasia solutions provide a rapid loss of consciousness and death. With the regulatory rules associated with narcotics, livestock producers wishing to use this method would need the services of a veterinarian. In addition, this method will require proper disposal of the carcass since scavenging animals may become sick and/or die from ingesting the carcass.

Gunshot is one of the more common methods of euthanasia used on ranches and farms. When used properly, gunshot provides a quick and humane death. Producers using this method need to be aware of the dangers of firearm use. Research done at Kansas State University is now widely adapted industry standard on right sizing gunshot euthanasia.

Captive bolt is another option, although not as common in the field as it is at harvest facilities. With proper placement, captive bolt causes immediate loss of consciousness. However, death is not definite. To assure death, another step will be necessary such as exsanguination, use of a pithing rod, or use of saturated solutions to stop the heart such as magnesium sulfate or potassium chloride. Administering these solutions requires the ability to give intravenous injections. Livestock producers, who use gunshot, or CB methods for euthanasia, must have a thorough understanding of the anatomical sites for proper placement of the gunshot or CB.

When a producer uses either the gunshot or captive bolt method, the animal should collapse immediately. The producer may observe some slight muscle twitching. Following unconsciousness, the producer will need to confirm death. Confirmation of death includes lack of corneal reflex (applying pressure to the eye with no blink), dilated and fixed pupil, lack of pulse, lack of breathing, lack of response to a firm toe pinch, graying of the mucous membranes, and/or failure to detect respiratory sounds or heartbeat with a stethoscope.

Euthanasia is sometimes the difficult choice livestock producers must make. If the producer decides to euthanize the animal, they should be thoroughly trained in the proper use of the euthanasia method. Euthanasia needs to be painless and stress free. For more information on euthanasia of livestock, producers should contact their veterinarian or speak to trained Extension agents.

Laura Phillips  
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

### **It is Time to Fertilize Warm-Season Grass**

Do you have a warm season lawn? If so, it's about time to fertilize it! The best time to fertilize your lawn is when it is actively growing. For warm-season grass, like bermuda grass, zoysia grass, and buffalo grass, that time is now. As our days start getting hotter, these warm-season grasses start to take off!

When you fertilize your lawn, you mainly want to focus on nitrogen. Phosphorus and potassium should only be added to lawns when a soil test indicates it is needed. Nitrogen, however, can be applied annually. The amount of nitrogen you apply depends on the type of grass, and what you want from your lawn.

Bermuda grass needs about one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet every four weeks between May and mid-August. You do not want to apply more than 4 pounds of nitrogen total in a year. Either slow or quick-release nitrogen will work for these applications.

Zoysia grass, however, requires less nitrogen. Zoysia grass is prone to developing a thick thatch that can impair its growth. To help avoid this, do not apply more than 2 pounds of nitrogen in a year. The best approach is applying  $\frac{3}{4}$  to one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in two applications: one in June and one in mid-July. Slow-release nitrogen is preferable for these applications.

Buffalo grass will survive without supplemental nitrogen but providing it will improve the color and density of the lawn. To enhance your buffalo grass, apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet sometime between now and early June. If a darker green is desired, follow the same fertilizer recommendations as zoysia grass, not applying more than 2 pounds total.

Make sure not to apply fertilizer to your warm-season lawn past August 15<sup>th</sup>. If these grasses receive fertilizer late in the summer, it will stimulate new growth that will be susceptible to damage from cold fall temperatures.

If you have questions or concerns about your lawn fertilization schedule, or if you would like to get a soil test done, contact us for more information.

Teresa Hatfield  
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

### **Speak Up at the Doctor's Office**

Going to the doctor is rarely something we look forward to. It often comes with anxiety—especially if you're not feeling well or are worried about a health concern. Doctors and other healthcare providers play an important role in our lives, and to do their jobs well, they need clear and complete information from us. That's why knowing how to make the most of your medical appointment is so important. Clear and honest communication is key.

Before your appointment, take a few minutes to organize your thoughts. Think about the most important questions or concerns you want to discuss. Are you experiencing a new symptom? Do you have questions about medication or treatment? Writing down your questions ahead of time can help ensure nothing important is forgotten. Prioritize your list, placing the most important items at the top. Don't wait until the end of the visit—or for your doctor to bring up the topic—to ask your key questions.

During your appointment, speak up if you don't understand something. Medical information can be confusing, and it's okay to ask your doctor to explain it in a different way or use everyday language. Taking notes can be helpful, and if questions come up after you get home, call the office for clarification rather than waiting until your next visit. Before leaving, make sure all of your questions have been answered.

You may also want to consider bringing a trusted family member or friend with you to your appointment. Two heads can be better than one. Let your companion know what you hope to accomplish during the visit—they can help by taking notes or reminding you of questions. Remember, however, that the appointment is between you and your doctor. Don't hesitate to ask for some private time if needed.

It's also important to keep your doctor up to date. Share a current list of all medications and supplements you are taking and let them know if you've seen other healthcare providers, such as specialists, or if you've been to the emergency room. Be sure to mention any changes in appetite, weight, sleep, or energy level, even if they seem minor.

The National Institutes of Health recommend the following tips to help you get the most from your doctor visits:

- Write down a list of questions and concerns before your appointment.
- Consider bringing a close friend or family member with you.
- Speak openly about how you feel, even if something seems unimportant or embarrassing.
- Ask questions until you fully understand the answers.
- Take notes or ask your companion to take notes for you.
- Ask about the best way to contact your doctor (phone, email, patient portal, or health app).
- Remember that other members of your healthcare team, such as nurses and pharmacists, can also be valuable sources of information.

Your health is important, and you deserve to clearly understand the information and guidance you receive from your healthcare providers. With a little preparation and open communication, you can make the most of your medical visits and take an active role in your own health care.

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

No news this week.