

David Hallauer  
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

### **Fall Armyworm Update**

A couple weeks ago I shared information on our fall armyworm trapping network and the moths we had been capturing. Fortunately, moth numbers have held steady or declined – but that doesn't mean scouting isn't necessary, particularly as reports of feeding injury has increased.

Scouting can be difficult when larvae are small. Start by looking for windowpane injury a result of tiny larvae chewing off a single layer of the plant's cells but not through the entire leaf. If you see 25-30 percent of plants exhibiting windowpane injury, increase scouting frequency. Larvae are often found hiding around the plant's base during the warmer parts of the day. As larvae grow, feeding will increase with damage becoming more apparent.

Scout recently harvested fields first. Armyworms prefer tender growth and this young growth is also the least able to handle feeding pressure, requiring attention to new regrowth first. Damage will continue until larvae reach maturity and move on to their next growth stage.

If you find damage, but no larvae, continue scouting. Stands in good condition with good growing conditions (adequate moisture/moderate temperatures) will likely respond with new growth. It may be slower to regrow than we'd like, but with luck, adults will move on to lay eggs elsewhere and plants can recover. That new growth will still be susceptible to future feeding, however, and may tolerate less damage after another feeding than it did the first. Watch it closely.

We're fortunate across many parts of the area to have decent moisture with good post-harvest regrowth allowing for stands to tolerate at least *some* level of feeding. It doesn't hurt to keep an eye on stands, however, particularly if moisture conditions deteriorate.

### **Pre-Plant Wheat School**

Wheat may not be a huge part of our NEK crop rotations, but under the right circumstances, it can fit economically *and* be a fit as a rotation crop as well. Our August 28<sup>th</sup> Pre-Plant Wheat School is going to focus on where that 'fit' might be as we host K-State Wheat Specialist Dr. Romulo Lollato and Plant Pathologist Dr. Kelsey Anderson Onofre for a rapid-fire morning focused on new research in wheat production.

We'll kick off at 9:30 Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at the Woolsoncroft Events Center at 1615 Branch St in Seneca with presentations by Dr. Lollato, Dr. Onofre plus a report on a local wheat variety trial from Ag Partners Agronomist Kevin Bergman. We'll hit on a lot of topics in a short time and get you on your way before noon.

If you can attend, please drop us a line to let us know by Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> so we can plan for refreshments courtesy of Ag Partners Coop. You can do so by calling the Seneca Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 336-2184 or e-mailing me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu).

Ross Mosteller  
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

## **Silage Management to Maximize Feed Value**

Mid-August signals the start of a new school year, ending of hot summer weather in sight and silage chopping time, especially corn silage. Not every livestock operation utilizes silage as part of their feeding strategy, but for most dairies and beef feedlots, silage is a major feed component and critical part of the operation. South Dakota State University Extension (SDSU) has released a study that discusses ways to manage and maximize silage quality for livestock feed. It seems like timely information to share now.

It doesn't matter if the crop is corn, sorghum, alfalfa or small grain, ensiling provides a method to preserve the crop in a palatable form that provides flexibility to livestock producers. However, to optimize nutrient capture, the entire harvest and storage process must be well-managed. Everything, including hitting harvest moisture targets, managing cut length, and achieving the correct bunker or pile density, is important in achieving a rapid pH drop and preserving crop nutrients. Perhaps the most important step is the use of a cover to limit oxygen infiltration into the silage pile.

Anyone who has covered a silage pile well knows this process takes labor, one thing that is nearly always in short supply. First, the tarp needs to be put in place, followed by tires or other method to secure the tarp in place. So, it is not surprising that farmers have sought out methods that reduce the amount of labor required or decide that the losses are acceptable and do not cover the pile at all.

SDSU Extension Specialists (led by Sara Bauder and Kiernan Brandt, along with Warren Rusche) set out in 2022 to test how much loss could be occurring following these strategies. Each of these treatments were tested using corn silage with or without an inoculant applied. The silage was allowed to ensile for 104 days before being opened, sampled, and analyzed. They conducted a silage storage experiment in laboratory silos using four different covering strategies:

1. no cover
2. covered with CDS syrup (*condensed distillers solubles, a by-product of ethanol production*)
3. covered with white-black plastic
4. covered with white-black plastic plus an oxygen barrier film

Inoculation did improve fermentation in the silos that were covered with one of the two forms of plastic. However, inoculated silage stored in uncovered silos, or when covered with CDS syrup, was no better than uninoculated. The combination of white-black plastic plus an oxygen barrier did result in greater lactic acid content, indicating improved fermentation compared to white-black plastic alone. However, organic matter recovery was similar between the two forms of plastic covering.

Organic matter losses were considerably greater, however, for uncovered silos and those covered with CDS syrup. In fact, using syrup was numerically worse than doing nothing at all. Silage inoculants improved fermentation when used in covered silos but were ineffective in uncovered silos or when syrup was used. Farmers spend too much time, money, and resources to produce feed for their livestock only to lose it to spoilage. To best preserve nutrient value, there are no shortcuts. Every step needs to be taken to the best of our ability, and that includes using research-proven silage harvest management, like appropriate pack, inoculation and using effective covering methods.

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Laura Phillips  
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

No News Article

Teresa Hatfield  
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

## Myths of Grief

Grief, the complex emotional response to loss, is a universal experience that touches the lives of countless individuals. Everyone goes through the grieving process differently. How you experience grief can also change based on your relationship with the deceased, how they died, and the role they played in your life.

Dr. Erin Martinez, K-State Research and Extension Specialist, dives into the myths about grief and how society views grief. Dr. Martinez shares that misconceptions and myths often cloud society's understanding of grief. You may have been introduced to the five stages of grief at one point or another. Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross presented the five stages of death in her book *On Death and Dying*. The stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 2005). Over time, the stages have been misunderstood. In this article, Dr. Martinez shares with us four myths surrounding grief.

### 1. **Myth: Grief Follows a Linear Path:**

Many people mistakenly believe that grief follows a predictable and linear path, with stages that must be experienced in a specific order. The stages of grief were to help provide a framework for those experiencing grief (Kübler-Ross, 2014). However, grief is unique to each individual, and there is no prescriptive progression through the stages often portrayed. Grief is unique to each individual. Grief does not adhere to a rigid timeline, and individuals may experience various emotions and reactions that change over time. Each person's grief journey is unique, and no one-size-fits-all model exists.

### 2. **Myth: Grief Should Be Kept Private:**

Another prevalent myth surrounding grief is that it should be kept hidden or dealt with privately. Society often expects individuals to "move on" quickly or suppress their grief. Sharing one's feelings and experiences with trusted individuals or support groups can provide comfort and validation and facilitate the healing process.

### 3. **Myth: Time Heals All Wounds:**

The notion that time alone can heal grief is a common myth. While the intensity of grief may change over time, the healing process is not only dependent on the passage of time. Active engagement with grief, such as seeking support, processing emotions, and finding meaning, is crucial for healing and growth. It is not the mere passage of time but how individuals navigate their grief that leads to acknowledgement of what the loss means to them.

### 4. **Myth: Grief is a Solo Journey:**

Grief can be an isolating experience, and many individuals feel alone in their sorrow. However, there is value in connection and community during the grieving process. Seeking support from friends, family, or grief support groups can provide a sense of belonging, understanding, and shared experiences. Surrounding oneself with compassionate individuals can help alleviate feelings of isolation and foster healing.

By challenging misconceptions about the nature of grief, we can foster a more empathetic and supportive society. Recognizing the unique and individual nature of grief, promoting open expression, and encouraging community support can facilitate healing and growth for those experiencing loss.

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

### **It's Apple Season!**

As fall approaches, apples are starting to ripen and soon be harvested. Today, there are over 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States. So how can you tell when an apple is ripe?

To select apples at peak maturity, look for these signs:

- **Color change:** As apples mature, the skin color at the stem and calyx basin at the bottom of the apple turns from an immature green to a light-yellow color. Some apples will develop a red skin color before they are ripe, so that's not a reliable indication of maturity.
- **Flavor:** this is a good guide if you are familiar with the apples you have and know how they should taste. Even if you do not know the characteristic flavor of the kind of apple you have, you can still sample slices of a few apples and decide if they have a sweet flavor. If the apples are not ready to harvest, they will taste starchy, store them for a period to see if they become sweeter.
- **Flesh color:** As apples mature and starches change to sugars, the flesh changes from a very light green to white. You can see the difference when you cut a thin slice and hold it up to the light.
- **Days from bloom:** The number of days from bloom is a reliable guide for general maturity time, though weather conditions will have some influence. Some kinds of apples and approximate days from bloom to maturity are Johnathan—135, Delicious—145, Golden Delicious—145 and Winesap—155.
- **Seed color:** The seeds of most apples change from light green to brown as the fruit ripens. This indicator should be combined with other changes, since it is not absolute.

Preserve apples as soon as possible after harvest. If any apples must be stored, keep them in a cool, dark place. They should not be tightly covered or wrapped up; a perforated plastic or open paper bag, basket or wooden crate are good choices. If kept in the refrigerator, apples should be placed in the humidifier compartment, in a plastic bag with several holes punched in it or in a zipper-type vegetable bag to prevent loss of moisture and crispness. Apples should not be placed close to foods with strong odors.