

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Soil Testing Hay Fields & Pastures

A number of these columns this summer encouraged post-harvest hay field evaluations. If you've done so, I hope they were greening up consistently and looking good. If you have not, it might be a good idea to do so. Some unevenness is starting to show up, and there have been a few reports of some foliage feeders that may not require attention, but should be monitored.

There have also been some concerns expressed this summer about production levels. In some cases, yields exceeded expectation while others were disappointing. If disappointed is the category you fall into, a soil test this fall *might* be a next step to consider.

If conditions are good (soil moisture doesn't always allow it...), fall is a great time for sampling. Doing so offers us the advantage of time for advance application planning, particularly if those applications are going to require 'economic adjustments' to make them work financially.

If pH levels are less than optimum, earlier results also provide the opportunity to plan for lime applications well in advance of next year's growing season. Unlike the relatively rapid response we see to nitrogen, pH correction to levels more conducive for plant response can take some time. Fall soil sampling can help us complete lime applications sooner than later.

In future columns, I'll outline some facets of a good soil sampling program. If you want to get a head start, drop me a line and we can discuss a plan to get you started.

Deciphering Carbon – August 22nd

The theme of this year's fall crops meeting (Thursday, August 22nd) in Oskaloosa will be Deciphering Carbon. We hear a lot about carbon intensity and carbon scores and even carbon markets, but what does it all really mean? Dr. Peter Tomlinson will be our guest for a Q and A session to help answer the common questions around carbon management and carbon programs.

The meeting will begin at 4:45 p.m. at the Colonial Acres Events Center in Oskaloosa with Taylor Insurance Services as our host. First State Bank and Trust is sponsoring a complimentary meal following Dr. Tomlinson's presentation. For meal count purposes, RSVP by Monday, August 19th via e-mail to dhallaue@ksu.edu or the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 863-2212.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Managing Early Weaning

“Early” is a relative term, no matter if we are talking about when the daily alarm clock goes off or in the case of this article, weaning calves. There are several factors that point to the possibility of at least looking at the option to wean spring calving calves sooner than what is considered “normal” this year. Even with a recent market dip, calf prices are red hot. Hot summer temps and a drier period have caused rapid forage quality decline, forcing managers to look at options to maintain pasture quality and cow body condition scores. Lower cost of gains in the feedlot setting might mean putting calves on feed sooner. All of these factors make it seem like this might be a timely topic for today.

Weaning calves at less than 180 days of age is often considered early, but is a proven strategy to reduce forage demands significantly. While this can be beneficial from a forage base and cowherd management standpoint, it often brings more management for the calf side of this equation. Two primary issues need to be managed during the weaning/transition process. Calves need to learn how to eat during the starting phase and adapt to the environment of a feed yard. Secondly, the rumen needs to adapt to feedstuffs that may be vastly different from what the calf was eating on grass.

Animal handling and acclimation to more human interactions can have a big impact on weaning success. Proper animal handling techniques and investing time in the pens with newly weaned calves can go a long way. Walking calves up to the bunk right after feeding encourages feeding behaviors and acclimates them to handling in one action. This practice also makes it easier to find and treat sick calves. Investing time and effort to improve cattle handling skills pays dividends.

Using starting pens designed for the calf can help manage cattle behavior and minimize stress during receiving. Large pens with lots of room per head facilitate calves spending more time walking the fence and reduce opportunities to find feed and water. Dust problems during dry conditions become worse and the risk of spooking also increase. Wide, shallow pen designs keep calves close to feed and water, increasing their opportunities to encounter feed and water. Temporary panels can be used to reduce larger pens into smaller, more-manageable sizes. If movable bunks or tanks are utilized, consider placing them perpendicular to the fence line to force calf interaction with feed and water sources.

Water is a critically important nutrient that is often overlooked. Water quality and quantity issues can lead to health problems and reduced dry matter intake. Calves might not recognize water sources in a facility upon arrival. The process of working calves to fresh, clean, water sources can be critical in starting calves off on the right foot. Using additional water tanks so that calves can see open water can help make sure that water intake is not limited.

Diets for starting calves need to be palatable and nutrient dense. Long-stem prairie hay is the traditional roughage of choice, because calves recognize it as feed, it stimulates saliva production and makes a good transition for the rumen. However, prairie hay alone does not have enough energy or nutrients to support calf health and weight gains. Combining roughage with concentrate feeds helps calves achieve a positive energy balance more quickly. Don't go cheap on this diet, it could be costlier in the long run.

Additional feed related management considerations include the following. Feed two times a day to stimulate appetite and offer more opportunities for calves to eat fresh feed. Avoid using self-feeders, including hay rings, to more accurately monitor intake. Being too aggressive with feed deliveries in the starting phase can lead to intake swings and increased health problems. Reasonable daily dry matter intake targets for calves would be 0.75 to 1% of bodyweight the first two days to about 2.5% of bodyweight after 14 days on feed. Avoid using high-moisture corn or supplements containing urea during the receiving phase.

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Roundup-Branded Herbicides: Active Ingredient Changes

It was recently announced that Roundup herbicide is changing its formula, and you may be wondering how much of an impact this will have. K-State Research and Extension's Pesticide Safety Coordinator, Frannie Miller, offers the following explanation and advice for anyone who plans to use Roundup products: "For decades, herbicide products sold under the trade name *Roundup* contained the active ingredient glyphosate. Glyphosate-containing products are labeled for non-selective control of broadleaf and grassy weeds in landscape situations. Now, many *Roundup*-branded herbicides available to consumers no longer contain the active ingredient glyphosate. Glyphosate has been replaced with active ingredients, such as diquat, fluazifop, imazapic and triclopyr. Trade names for these products include: *Roundup* Extended Control, *Roundup* Weed and Grass Killer – Exclusive Formula, and *Roundup* Dual Action."

These active ingredient changes have created confusion for consumers regarding where and when these products can be applied. Undesirable injury may occur if these active ingredients are inadvertently applied to landscape beds or vegetable gardens, as they cannot be used in the same manner as products containing glyphosate. It is important to note that these products control different weed species and have different application rates than previous products. This illustrates why reading and reviewing the label of any purchased herbicide is extremely important.

Moving forward, consumers and applicators must be aware of the active ingredients in the *Roundup* products they purchase, as they may change. Be sure to carefully read and follow the labels. For more information about this topic, consult the Extension publication "[UPDATE ON ROUND-UP BRANDED HERBICIDES FOR CONSUMERS](#)" from the University of Tennessee.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Medicare Open Enrollment is Just Around the Corner

Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15 through December 7, and even though this seems like a long time away, there are some things you need to be aware of before it begins. Medicare Open Enrollment allows you to change your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Plan. These changes will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

Look for your current plan provider's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC). You should receive this notice by the end of September. They send notices to people with a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Part D Prescription Plan. Keep an eye out for any changes to your plan, which could include:

- **Formulary Changes:** Check the list of medications to ensure that they are covered by your plan in 2025.
- **Premium Changes:** How much will you pay monthly for your plan next year?
- **Deductible Changes:** Has your plan's deductible gone up? Do you have to pay the deductible on all your medications or just brand-name drugs?
- **Changes in Co-pays and Co-insurance:** How much will you pay at the pharmacy when you pick up your medication?
- **Provider Network:** Is your healthcare provider and pharmacy still in the plan's network? Is there a more cost-effective pharmacy in your area?

Please review this notice carefully. During the annual open enrollment period, you can change your Part D or Medicare Advantage plans for the next calendar year. Even if you are pleased with your current plan, shopping and seeing what is available doesn't hurt.

Medicare offers an online comparison tool called the Plan Finder at www.medicare.gov. The Plan Finder allows you to enter your medications, sort through the available plans, and organize them from least expensive to most expensive. The plan choices at the top of the list are your most cost-effective options. When using the plan finder, accurately enter your medication dosage and how often you use it. Also, enter the correct type, such as tablet or capsule; this can affect how much your medication will cost. If you have created a Medicare account on the website, you can use the drug list from your account to prepopulate your medication list for the Plan Finder. Don't wait until December 7 to start exploring your options.

If you need help sorting out your options, contact your local SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) counselor for unbiased information about Medicare. SHICK counselors are trained to provide answers to your Medicare questions; they do not sell insurance products. If you live outside the Meadowlark Extension District, you can find a local SHICK counselor by calling 1-800-860-5260.

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

4-H Champion Recipes Announced

It has been a long-standing tradition that after the fair and with the approval from 4-H members, that I share their “winning” food recipes. Again, this year is no exception. The process of being selected as the Overall Champion and Overall Reserve Champion foods begins with the member receiving a purple ribbon in their respective food entries.

All purple ribbon foods are then considered for class champions for their levels. Then all judges come together to help select the class champions. Once that is done, all level champions are put together (four levels of foods based on the age of the members) to select the Overall Grand Champion and Overall Reserve Foods winners. What I am sharing with you now is the recipes for the Overall Champion and Overall Reserve Champions.

Selected as the Overall Grand Champion foods this year comes from an 8-year-old member of the Winchester 4-H Club. Kenzie Aspinwall is the daughter of Lindsay and Rob Aspinwall and lives at Nortonville. She has been in Foods for 2 years and is also enrolled in Food Preservation, Agronomy, Horticulture, Clothing, Woodworking and Visual Arts. Kenzie’s winning recipe was Icebox Butter Horns. Kenzie shared with me that this is a great recipe to leave in the refrigerator and bake as needed.

Icebox Butter Horns

1 (1/4 ounce) package yeast	1 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons warm water	6 cups flour
2 cups warm milk	3/4 cup melted butter
1/2 cup sugar (or 3/4 cup, to taste)	1/2 cup melted butter (for the tops)
1 egg, beaten	

Directions:

1. Dissolve the yeast in the water in a large bowl.
2. Add the milk, sugar, egg, salt, and half of the flour. Beat together until smooth.
3. Add the 3/4 cup melted butter, along with the remaining flour.
4. Place in a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and put in your fridge overnight.
5. The next day (or at least 6 hours later, if you’d like to make them in the morning for supper) punch the dough down. Shape as desired. Let rise in a warm place until doubled; about 1 hour.
6. Bake in preheated 350°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Immediately brush with melted butter. Awesome warm, cold, or leftover.

Kenzie also shared this is a good basic dough for could be used for cinnamon rolls and etc. Note: for a butter horn shape, make a 12-inch circle of dough, cut into triangles, and roll from the big end towards the little end. Makes 15-30 rolls.

Our Overall Reserve Champion winner comes to us from a 15-year-old member from the Prosperity 4-H Club of Valley Falls. Lauren Conser is the daughter of Holly and Andy Conser of Valley Falls. Lauren is a 9-year member and has been involved in the following projects: Dog Care and Training, Leadership, Meat Goats, Breeding and Market Goats, Photography, Clothing and Visual Arts. Lauren’s winning recipe was a Lemon Chiffon Cake.

Lemon Chiffon Cake

2 1/4 cups cake flour	1 1/2 cups sugar, divided
1 teaspoon baking powder	1/2 teaspoon salt
8 large egg whites, room temp.	7 large egg yolks
1/3 cup vegetable oil	1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup lemon juice	1 Tablespoon lemon zest
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Take out a 10-inch tube pan and set aside. Do not grease pan.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, 3/4 cup sugar, baking powder and salt.
4. In another medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, vegetable oil, milk, lemon juice, lemon zest and vanilla extract until smooth. Set aside.
5. In a large bowl, beat the egg whites until very foamy.
6. With the mixer on high speed, gradually stream in the remaining 3/4 sugar. Continue to beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks, 3-5 minutes.
7. Add one-third of the egg white mixture to the egg yolk mixture and whisk to combine. This will lighten the batter. Add in another third of the egg white mixture and fold in, using a spatula, until the egg whites are well-combined. Add in the remaining egg white mixture and fold it in until no streaks of egg white remain. Pour batter into prepared pan.
8. Bake for 50-55 minutes, until the cake springs back when lightly pressed and appears to be set.
9. Take the cake out of the oven and immediately flip the pan upside down, standing it up on its “feet” or carefully placing the pan over a bottle. Cool the cake completely before up-righting the cake. Run a thin knife around the edge of the pan to loosen the cake, then transfer it to a cake stand to serve. Store leftovers in an airtight container.

Thank you to Kenzie and Lauren for sharing their “winning” recipes with us.