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Pasture Weeds

With all of these rains, places that usually look like the Sahara Desert are now looking like jungles. We are blessed to have the rain and forages in our pastures, but I wouldn't be human if I couldn't find something to complain about! It seems that as the grass has grown with all the rain, so has the pasture weeds. Weeds and brush are never ending in the pastures. Fall can be a good time to control problem weeds in pastures and hayfields. However, during extremely dry weather or periods of slowed plant growth, effectiveness of herbicide applications may be reduced.

Summer annuals such as: horseweed, common ragweed, giant ragweed, lambs quarter, yellow foxtail and velvetleaf can be partially controlled through regular clipping or mowing. If herbicide applications are used, control is best when annuals are actively growing in the spring or fall. Problem biennials such as: bull thistle, musk thistle, burdock and poison hemlock will respond to herbicide treatments similar to annuals.

While perennials are best controlled when weeds are in the bud to bloom stage, woody brush found along fence rows and in pastures is best controlled when actively growing and fully leafed. Prior to spraying for weeds it may be helpful do some investigation into what contributed to weed establishment. If hay and pasture management doesn't change, we may likely end up in the same situation later.

Companion grazing of small ruminants, sheep or goats, will help in the fight against weeds and brush. Of course, if you are considering adding some to your farm, fencing and predator control are two issues to consider. You won't have to worry about competing for grass, as they tend to eat the "stuff" cattle won't eat.

Goats can be the heroes — converting weeds and invasive brush into meat and milk. They readily eat, and thrive on, pigweed, ragweed, poison ivy, dock, sedge, black locust, autumn olive, mulberry, wild roses (briars), blackberry brambles, honeysuckle and many other undesirable plants. Some of these plants contain good nutrient/ protein levels and have greater nutrient values than pasture grasses. Some plants that are toxic to cattle can be safely eaten by goats, including hemlock, poison oak, yellow star thistle and several species of mustard. Plants that are toxic to cattle that won't harm sheep include leafy spurge, tall larkspur, tansy ragwort and pine needles.

David G. Hallauer
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Germination Testing for Cereal Crops

Any discussion about cereal crop seeding rates should include at least some consideration of germination levels. Leaving it as an unknown can wreak havoc for the seeded crop.

For wheat growers, germination testing could become very important this year due to the head scab (*Fusarium* head blight) issues we experienced. Because of its effect on seed quality, the disease is known to cause germination issues. For that reason, a germination test for wheat seed is highly recommended, with results best interpreted by a professional.

Those seeding cover crops may want to consider germination testing as well. It's the only way to know if you are getting close to a desired viable seeding rate, and can help eliminate a potential cause of emergence issues should they arise.

For an official seed germination test (\$17.00), send a two-pound sample to the Kansas Crop Improvement Association located at 2000 Kimball Ave. in Manhattan (66502). A sample submittal form can be printed from the KCIA website at: www.kscrop.org/seed-lab.html. Results are usually available in ten days to two weeks, so plan ahead for sample submission.

Home testing is an option as well, using a simple method involving paper towels, a rubber band, and a plastic bag. If done correctly, you can have results in 10 to 15 days.

If you are selling seed, make sure you are doing so according to the Kansas Seed Law. You can find it online at: <https://www.kscrop.org/seed-law.html>.

Tall Fescues for Turf

With September just around the corner, some homeowners may have cool season turf reseeded on their mind. With so many fescue varieties available, which one should you use?

It depends first on whether you are reseeding or over seeding. If you are over seeding, try and get the same variety or blend you planted last time. If you don't, you can end up with different textures, colors, or growth rates that can cause consistency issues in the stand. If seeding only a section of the lawn that you want to match the rest of the lawn, stay with what was used before.

If you want to completely reseed an area or don't care how it matches, your options are numerous. Our standby cultivar has been K-31 – with good reason. It's hardy. It holds green color well. Traffic doesn't seem to bother it much. It's well adapted to our climate. Unfortunately, it also grows quickly and can become coarse.

If you want to take a look at a little higher quality of turf, consider the ratings taken from the National Turfgrass Evaluation Trial. They help rank varieties based on color, greenup, quality and texture. The highest rated ones from 2012-2017 include: Rebounder, Michelangelo, Traverse 2, Black Tail, Reflection, GTO, Thor, Paramount, Temple, Valkyrie LS, Avenger II, Technique, 4th Millennium SRP, Rockwell, Titanium 2LS, Rowdy, Regenerate, Leonardo, Falcon V, Firebird 2, Terrano, Maestro, Grande 3, Bloodhound and Hot Rod.

They may not end up being what you want to plant - large open areas still do well planted to K-31. If you are wanting to give something new a try, any of these would be good options.

August 23, 2019

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

Cindy will be in the office next week!

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Shots for Safety

As you get older, your doctor may recommend vaccinations to help prevent certain illnesses and to keep you healthy. Talk with your doctor about which of the following shots you need. And, make sure to protect yourself by keeping your vaccinations up to date. Here are suggestions from the National Institute on Aging.

Flu, short for influenza, is a virus that can cause fever, chills, sore throat, stuffy nose, headache, and muscle aches. Flu is very serious when it gets in your lungs. The flu is easy to pass from person to person. The virus also changes over time, which means you can get it over and over again. That's why most people should get the flu shot each year. Get your shot between September and November. Then, you may be protected when the winter flu season starts.

Pneumococcal disease is a serious infection that spreads from person to person by air. It often causes pneumonia in the lungs, and it can affect other parts of the body. Most people age 65 and older should get a pneumococcal shot to help prevent getting the disease. It's generally safe and can be given at the same time as the flu shot.

Tetanus is caused by bacteria found in soil, dust, and manure. It enters the body through cuts in the skin. Diphtheria is also caused by bacteria. It is a serious illness that can affect the tonsils, throat, nose, or skin. It can spread from person to person. Both tetanus and diphtheria can lead to death. Getting a shot is the best way to keep from getting tetanus and diphtheria. Most people get their first shots as children. For adults, a booster shot every 10 years will keep you protected.

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox. If you had chickenpox, the virus is still in your body. It could become active again and cause shingles. Shingles affects the nerves. Common symptoms include burning, shooting pain, tingling, and/or itching, as well as a rash and fluid-filled blisters. Even when the rash disappears, the pain can stay.

Common side effects for all these shots are mild and include pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given. Before getting any vaccine, make sure it's safe for you. Talk with your doctor about your health history, including past illnesses and treatments, as well as any allergies. It's a good idea to keep your own shot record, listing the types and dates of your shots, along with any side effects or problems.