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### **Tell your story**

In the United States today, 98% of US Consumers are generations removed from production agriculture. Additionally, their understanding or perception of animals, is generally from their pets or visiting the local zoo. As Producers, we don't always understand what these consumers are thinking about when seeing production agriculture. Yet there is always a lot of emotions and passion involved in hearing the discussions around food production and agriculture. All of us know the things around our lives that we are involved with every day, but those things outside our lives can be shades of gray which can be confusing. So, how do we bring the degrees of separation from consumers to today's agriculture and food production together? We all must be involved in these conversations. For years, consumers buying beef at the meat counter had it pretty simple. You purchased the cuts or products you wanted for your family. Soon, USDA added a Quality Grading system and we started look for Select, Choice or Prime when making those choices. Plus most of the time we purchased what our family liked for meals. Today consumers have more choices at the meat counter and on grocery shelves than ever before. Beef is labeled: Natural, Organic, Grass-Fed, Grain-Fed, Antibiotic Free, No Add Hormones, Humanely Raised, and the list goes on. These labels become confusing with promotions, advertisements, news articles, social media and online resources. Everyone is trying to grow their market share of consumer dollars. The information about these labels have a tendency of being biased to the sponsoring organization, which only adds to the confusion and effects the consumer's confidence in their food supply. Nebraska Extension pulled together a team of over 65 specialists, educators and assistants from Nutrition Education, Agriculture and Youth Development to focus on programming around this issue of consumer confidence in the food supply. Consumers were asked about what influenced food choices, food safety concerns, and where do they find information on foods. There were 1200 surveys completed which was a response rate over 25%. In the rural state of Nebraska, the top three influencers for food purchases based on answers very important or important are Taste (95%), Price (84%) and Nutritional Value (83%). We might think that these influencers might change in national research, yet the International Food Information Council Foundation (IFICF) in an annual survey mirrors the data with Taste, Price and Healthfulness. When NASIS asked about food safety concerns based on answers of very concerned or concerned, Foodborne Illness (79%), Chemicals in Food (76%), Carcinogens (74%) and Pesticides (71%) and the IFICF data names the same top four only. Further analysis of the data about food safety concerns would indicate with an even distribution of responses across the level of concerns that consumers may have confusion about these areas of concerns due to lack of information they know about the topic or issue. So where do consumers get information about food? The Nebraska data shows the consumers acquiring their food information from food labels and websites. Friends and Family are listed third for food information. Though 8% of consumers say they get food information from social media and blogs, might be confusing because they may associate these with websites. Farmers and Ranchers also are not the top go to point for information on foods they produce, which can be linked to the lack of transparency throughout the food system. The national survey also showed 38% of Millennials site their top food resource is friends and family. This information gives us some direction of where to start the conversations.

Somehow, we must learn the balance point of how to be in that non-defensive conversation with our consumers. Steps to telling OUR Beef Story: 1) Know The Facts and Science of Cattle and Beef 2) Don't Bury Them in the Science 3) Find Common Ground or Interest 4) Build Trust By Having Open Discussions 5) Tell YOUR Beef Story.

David G. Hallauer  
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### ***Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) – Correlation to Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN)***

KSU Plant Pathologist Doug Jardine recently continued his summer ‘field tours’ and has started to pass on an increasing number of reports of soybean Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS). For us here in northeast Kansas, it’s presence along the Kansas River Valley is common place. Increasingly, however, it’s become an issue in upland acreages as well.

SDS tends to be most severe on well-managed soybeans with a high yield potential. It also tends to be more prevalent in fields that are planted early when soils are cool and wet, exhibiting compaction or are infested with soybean cyst nematode. If you are seeing SDS, take a look at the situations in which you are finding it, and determine what can be done to help alleviate issues for next year. In particular, it might be a good time to look at SCN issues.

Soybean cyst nematode and Sudden Death Syndrome are to some degree tied together and to another degree unrelated. While you can’t manage SDS by selecting varieties with good SCN ratings (good SCN varieties could still be susceptible to SDS), the presence of SDS *is* strongly correlated with the presence of SCN. In other words, where SDS is present, soil samples should be taken to determine the level of SCN present and how it will need to be managed.

After harvest is an excellent time to soil sample for the soybean cyst nematode. Sampling the soil in a known infested field is very similar to collecting a soil fertility sample. With a soil probe and bucket, walk a ‘Z’ or ‘W’ pattern across the field, collecting cores from directly in the row, since that is where the nematodes are most likely to be found. Sample to a depth of six to eight inches, collecting a total of 18 - 24 cores. Mix the soil thoroughly, and place a pint jars worth into a re-sealable, gallon-size plastic bag. Samples can be taken to any Meadowlark Extension District office for shipping. Don’t get sampled this fall? Don’t worry. Cysts are present throughout the year, so sampling can take place at any time.

### ***Give Cool-Season Grasses a Boost***

Our first cool season turf fertilization opportunity arrives just as we turn the page in to September. If you could only fertilize your lawn once a year, this would be the best time to do it.

As cool season grasses enter fall, stands naturally begin to thicken via tillering (forming new shoots at the base of existing plants) and spreading by underground stems called rhizomes. Fall fertilization can really help with that process.

Apply one to one and a half pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet using a quick-release nitrogen source (most of them are quick release or a combination of quick and slow release – either should be fine).

A second window of opportunity comes in November, with the purpose of helping grass green up earlier next spring. This application can provide the nutrients needed until summer. Again, use a quick-release nitrogen formula applied at the rate of one-pound actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

Cindy Williams  
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Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

## Many Benefits of Eating Fruits and Vegetables

Eating fresh vegetables is one of the best things about a Kansas garden, summer is not the only time you can enjoy them. When you pick vegetables at their prime, with careful handling you can prepare and store them so they hold their fresh qualities all year long. You can also maintain the flavor, texture and nutritional values.

Here are some tips on how you can enjoy fresh vegetables from the garden or farmer's market throughout the year.

Prepare vegetables—begin by washing the vegetables thoroughly. Lift the vegetable up and down under running water using your hand or a vegetable brush to clear the dirt from the skin. As you are washing, look for inferior vegetables or overly mature ones and lay them aside to consume with your next meal or the next day. Blanch the vegetables in hot water to stop the natural enzymes from destroying the fresh flavor and remove any bacteria from the surface. Cool the vegetables quickly by submerging the vegetables into cold water. Blanching and cooling should take about the same amount of time, it's a very quick process.

Pack vegetables—choose a food grade freezer container to pack the vegetables into meal-size portions proportionate to the size of your family. Pace the vegetables firmly to avoid air space---which can lead to freezer burn. When packing butterbeans, peas or snap beans, you should cover the vegetables with water. Leave about ¾” to 1” space at the top of the container to allow for expansion while freezing. Immediately place the vegetables in the coldest part of your freezer and store at zero degrees or below.

Now you have it---fresh tasting vegetables that can be enjoyed throughout the year---even in the cold of winter.

Some other benefits of fruits and vegetables, in a recent study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition had participants who were mostly overweight or obese take part in three classes and 11 interactive phone calls designed to teach them only how to cut down on sugary beverages. After six months, they not only reduced their intake of sugary beverages by a third, but they also cut their intake of total added sugars by a third and daily calories by 285. Plus, they improved their overall diet quality.

For example, maybe they started eating slightly more fruits or vegetables or whole grains. The researchers suggested that this is an example of how healthy changes in behavior may “cluster” and how one dietary improvement can lead to others. So, consider making just one healthy change to your diet. You may be surprised to find that it will help lead to other healthy changes.

Smokers who are trying to quit can eat more fruits and vegetables to help kick the habit. Researchers also state that the healthy foods can help smokers stay tobacco-free longer.

The study surveyed 1,000 smokers aged 25 and older across the country. Those who ate more fruits and vegetables were three times likely to stay tobacco-free at least 30 days. They also waited longer to have a cigarette.

Why? Fruits and vegetables increase satiety. Higher fiber intake also increases fullness. And, fruits and vegetables make the taste of tobacco worse.

August 30, 2019

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

No News from Nancy