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Sericea Lespedeza is a noxious weed in Kansas. Besides being obnoxious and stubborn and the most dreaded weed, it is very costly to try and control. At one time it was planted in the south for forage, I guess because nothing else would grow there. The problem here is, it won't quit growing and spreading. The plant produces tannins that give animals a bitter taste and can bind up protein, goats don't seem to mind the tannins and will consume the plants.

Not long ago, I was doing some companion grazing with goats, to try and control Lespedeza. I was training the goats to the shock collars to keep them within a specific area. That project is in the books now, coming up we will have a first-hand look at how goats attack this weed.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. We will be hosting a pasture field day at Bob and Henrietta Area's pasture, 17221 R4 Road, Mayetta Kansas. They have contracted with Barnyard Weed Warriors, a rent-a-goat grazing operation located in Longton Kansas. Mary Powell the owner/operator will be conducting the biological control of Sericea Lespedeza with 70-80 head of goats for one week.

We will observe the grazing, discuss the process and talk about Sericea Lespedeza control. Anyone is welcome to attend. There is a \$5 registration fee, collected that evening. If there is threatening weather that evening, please call ahead. If you would like more information, please contact me at 785-364-4125 or email [jholthau@ksu.edu](mailto:jholthau@ksu.edu).

Sericea lespedeza was first planted in the United States in 1896 by the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station. Little study or use of sericea lespedeza was done until 1924 when the USDA secured seed from Japan and planted it at the Arlington Experiment Farm in Virginia. Its perceived value at the time for erosion control, hay, wildlife cover and food, and seed production was generally accepted. Sericea was first used as a protective cover for sites with poor soils. It was not widely used for pasture until the late 1940s. Sericea lespedeza is adapted to climatic conditions extending from Florida to Texas, north to Nebraska, and east to the Atlantic Coast, through the states of Michigan and New York. It grows best where annual precipitation is 30 inches or more and has survived winter temperatures of – 17degrees Fahrenheit.

David G. Hallauer  
District Extension Agent  
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

### ***Watching the Grass Grow***

As hay harvest winds down and we change focus, grass regrowth might be a low priority. That could be a mistake for forage managers. Now might be a good time to watch grass grow.

Wet weather delayed haying for many, meaning cool-season forages (brome/fescue) are just now growing again post-harvest. Unfortunately, neither temperature or moisture this time of year are typically optimum for growth, meaning the growth of those cool-season grasses can be slowed. With that delay comes a prime opportunity for weeds to get a foothold. Maybe this year will be the exception, but it's still a good idea to monitor stands for post haying/grazing recovery, to make sure weed pressure isn't getting out of hand.

It's a good time to monitor for insect pressure as well. With any luck, forages will recover quickly, negating any insect feeding that may occur. On numerous occasions over the past decade, however, armyworm feeding pressure has been greater than the rate of grass recovery. When that happens, photosynthetic capacity of the grass plant is reduced. If enough leaf area is removed, recovery can be delayed even further. Scout for insect feeding pressure until ample leaf area has returned to allow it to withstand feeding pressure.

The period from now through frost is critical for forages. Plants are at work to make sure they have enough root reserves for winter. Anything (like the above) that could slow recovery could also reduce stand vigor. If you want your stand going into winter in the best shape it can be, now really is a good time to watch the grass grow.

### ***Tailgate Talk III Reminder***

Don't forget to RSVP for All About Water, the topic of our Tailgate Talk III hosted by Jim and Susan Phillips on Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 p.m. one and a half miles east of the junction of Highways K-4 and K-16 northeast of Valley Falls. We'll discuss options for moving water from point A to point B in an effort to add value to your grazing system. To help with the sponsored meal from the Jefferson County Conservation District, please RSVP to the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District by Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> by calling (785) 863-2212. You can also RSVP via e-mail to me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu).

### ***Tomatoes Not Ripening?***

Temperatures may have moderated, but their effects on tomatoes have not. Optimum temperature for tomato growth and fruit development is in the 85 to 90-degree range. Get much above that and the plant reallocates resources to water movement and survival over fruit development. Once temperatures get back in to the mid-90s and below, ripening will speed up. The high temperatures can affect the color as well, since red pigments don't form properly above 95 degrees, leaving fruit more orange than red in color.

If you want to offset heat issues to a degree, pick tomatoes as they start to turn color. Nothing will be gained by leaving them on the plant, and fruit placed in a cooler environment (75-85 degrees F) will ripen more quickly with better color.

July 26, 2019

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

Cindy will be out of the office on extended leave after the death of her husband. Thank you for your understanding. We all look forward to her return and her articles.

July 26, 2019

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

No news