

Jody G. Holthaus  
District Extension Agent  
Livestock and Natural Resources

## **Beef is Healthy for Us and the Environment**

One of my favorite conversations to have is this: if you were stranded on an island for one year, with plenty of water, what two things would you choose to eat/drink every day? My choice is easy, a hamburger with all the fixins and my diet Dr Pepper.

A 3-ounce serving of lean beef provides 10 essential nutrients in about 170 calories, including high-quality protein, zinc, iron and B vitamins. No other protein source offers the same nutrient mix. Furthermore, any one of the nearly 40 cuts of beef considered lean can be included as part of a heart-healthy diet to support cardiovascular health, according to recent research from Purdue University. Additionally, research has consistently demonstrated that the nutrients in beef promote health throughout life. In particular, the protein, iron, zinc and B-vitamins in beef help ensure young children start life strong, building healthy bodies and brains. Protein is also especially important in aging populations due to its ability to help build and maintain muscle. After 50 years of age, adults are at risk for losing muscle mass, leading to falls and frailty that affect their ability to age independently. “Research shows that beef can play an important role in promoting health and helping to prevent nutrient deficiencies,” said Shalene McNeill, Ph.D., R.D., Executive Director of Human Nutrition Research at the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff. “Most people already consume beef within established, science-based global dietary guidelines, so there is no reason to systematically reduce beef consumption. “Research recently conducted by the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service and The Beef Checkoff, and published in the journal *Agricultural Systems*, found that data commonly used to depict beef cattle’s environmental impact in the U.S. is often overestimated. The study, which is the most comprehensive beef lifecycle assessment to-date, evaluated greenhouse gas emissions, feed consumption, water use and fossil fuel inputs. In all these areas, beef’s environmental impacts were found to be less than previously reported. Specifically, the report found:

- Beef production, including the production of animal feed, is responsible for only 3.3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.
- Per pound of beef carcass weight, cattle only consume 2.6 pounds of grain, which is similar to pork and poultry.
- Corn used to feed beef cattle only represents approximately 9 percent of harvested corn grain in the U.S., or 8 million acres.
- On average, it takes 308 gallons of water, which is recycled, to produce a pound of boneless beef. In total, water use by beef is only around 5 percent of U.S. water withdrawals.
- Total fossil energy input to U.S. beef cattle production is equivalent to 0.7 percent of total national consumption of fossil fuels.

Not only does this data demonstrate that cattle’s environmental impact is less than often reported, thanks to cattle’s unique digestive system they can actually help mitigate food waste.

“Cattle are natural upcyclers, which means most of what cattle eat can’t be consumed by humans and would otherwise end up in the landfill,” explained Sara Place, Ph.D., Senior Director of Sustainable Beef Production Research for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff. “At the end of the day, cattle generate more protein for the human food supply than would exist without them because their unique digestive system allows them to convert human-inedible plants into high-quality protein.”

It’s also important to note that beef continues to become more sustainable in the U.S. thanks to innovation and production efficiencies. In the U.S. today, the same amount of beef is produced with one-third fewer cattle as compared to the mid-1970s, according to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. If the rest of the world were as efficient as the U.S., global beef production could double while cutting the global cattle herd by 25 percent.

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

### **Anthracnose on Shade Trees**

Cool, wet weather has reared its ugly head, resulting in our first reports of anthracnose fungal disease on shade trees this year. Common on sycamore and maple, the disease can also infect oak, ash, elm and others.

On older leaves, look for brown areas that tend to show up along the major veins on the leaf. Younger leaves may actually wither and turn black. If the leaf stems (petioles) are infected, you might even see leaf drop, even as the leaves look perfectly fine.

If the disease is severe, leaf drop can result in complete defoliation – but don't panic. If your trees are healthy, they should leaf out again in a few weeks with the overall health of the tree relatively unaffected. Trees have plenty of time to produce new leaves and make the energy reserves needed to survive the winter.

Because anthracnose seldom causes significant damage to trees in Kansas, chemical controls are usually unnecessary. Since the fungicides do not cure infected leaves, applying fungicides now will be of no value.

### **NOTE to Editors: if this article is *not* of local interest, feel free to omit. Thanks! DGH Meadowlark Extension District Wheat Variety Plot Tour**

The 2019 Meadowlark Extension District Wheat Variety Plot Tour will be held on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, starting at 9:00 a.m. Our hosts will be plot cooperators Doug and Leonard Edelman, with this year's plot located northwest of the intersection of W and 184<sup>th</sup> Roads, approximately one mile west of Sabetha on 184<sup>th</sup> Rd.

This year's plot consists of 12 entries (SY Benefit, Everest, WB 4269, SY Wolf, LCS Mint, WB 4303, SY Grit, Zenda, LCS Chrome, SY Monument, WB Cedar, and Karl 92) from four companies, with multiple new varieties to view. We'll discuss growth characteristics and yield performance of each entry with Dr. Stu Duncan, K-State Research & Extension, NE Area Crops & Soils Specialist.

Refreshments will be available starting at 8:45 a.m., courtesy of the Kansas Wheat Alliance and Meadowlark Extension District. For information (or in case of inclement weather), contact the Seneca Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at 785-336-2184 or e-mail David Hallauer at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu). Hope to see you there!

### **Tailgate Talk I - Save The Date**

Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> will be the first of our three-part Tailgate Talk forage management series. We'll start at 5:30 with a light supper sponsored by First State Bank & Trust and held at Swearngin Angus Ranch. More details to follow next week or contact the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 863-2212 or e-mail me at [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu).

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

### **May is National Strawberry Month**

Spring is here! Strawberries are a deliciously sweet fruit that is often eaten during this time of year. Did you know that strawberries are actually the first fruit to ripen in the spring?

Here are some interesting facts about strawberries:

- \*Strawberries are a member of the rose family and are not actually a “berry”, but a “false fruit” because the tiny seeds are carried on the outside of the fleshy part of the fruit and true berries carry the seeds within the fruit.
- \*California is the leading producer of strawberries in the nation; it produces an amazing one billion pounds of strawberries each year.
- \*The American Diabetes Association has identified strawberries as one of the top 10 superfoods for a diabetic meal plan because they have so many vitamins, antioxidants and dietary fiber. Antioxidants, fiber, and phytochemicals have been shown to reduce total cholesterol levels.

When selecting and storing strawberries, keep the following in mind:

- \*Select strawberries that have a bright glossy appearance and maximum red color development.
- \*Avoid strawberries with signs of spoilage, shriveling, mushiness or dull appearance.
- \*The best storage temperature for strawberries in the home is about 32° F to 36° F.
- \*Store strawberries in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator.
- \*Keep strawberries packaged in closed plastic clamshell containers or place fruit in a partially opened plastic bag to maintain high humidity.
- \*do not wash berries until just before eating or preserving. Washing will add moisture and will cause the berries to spoil more rapidly.
- \*Strawberries can only be stored for up to 7 days under the best conditions. Shelf life also depends on how ripe the fruit was when purchased or picked.

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

## **Staying Independent**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [has released a new tool, \*My Mobility Plan\*](#), which provides resources and tips for older adults to help manage their health to maintain mobility, make their homes safer to prevent falls, and consider alternative transportation as they age so they can stay safe, mobile, and independent longer.

One in four adults now age 65 will live to 90 and older. As we get older, physical changes can make it harder to get around and do things we want or need to do such as driving, shopping, or doing household chores.

You might not have mobility problems now, but you could in the future. While it may not be possible to prevent all of these changes, there are actions you and your loved ones can take today, and as you age, to help keep you safe and independent tomorrow.

Staying healthy and managing chronic conditions help maintain your mobility. Get a physical checkup each year. Some health issues may increase your risk of falling such as leg weakness and balance problems.

Review all your medicines with a doctor or pharmacist. Certain medicines can have side effects that can change your ability to drive, walk, or get around safely.

Follow a regular activity program to increase your strength and balance. Strength and balance activities, done at least three times a week, can reduce your risk of falling. Other activities, like walking, are good for you, but don't help prevent falls.

Get a medical eye exam each year and address any issues. Good eyesight is about more than 20/20 vision. For example, you need to see well in the dark to drive safely at night.

The CDC resource includes a plan to stay safe at home and includes a checklist to help prevent falls. The other section is about staying mobile in your community. The four-page *My Mobility Plan* document can be found online at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).