

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

Christmas Memories!

The older you get the more you think back on your childhood Christmas memories. I think mine was the year I got my pony. I was quite the horse crazy little girl and even though there were plenty of horses on our place, there was not one that belonged to me. I begged for a pony, which would be a far stretch for my dad, since we had Quarter Horses and a pony, well that meant special treatment.

So after Christmas eve supper, we started to open our presents, my parents insisted I open the first package. Inside was a lead rope and a note that told me the halter was in the barn. I started to run out of the house and was quickly summoned back to get a coat on. I ran into the kitchen to the cupboard that held our work coats and ran smack into a sorrel pony. My dad, who couldn't contain himself, was supposed to have the pony on the back porch, but instead brought her into the kitchen. It is a wonder my mom got over that!

I named her Dolly and she turned out to be a great pony that gave rides to me, my cousins and eventually my nephew and niece. She was a great pony! Oh the magic of Christmas.

I hope you made some magical Christmas memories.

Heading into 2020 I'm hoping you have perfect vision for your agricultural interests. For many calving season is quickly approaching and for others it is still a few months away. I hope you will consider Body Condition scoring your cows at calving.

Body condition scores (BCS) describe the relative fatness or body condition of a cow herd through the use of a nine-point scale. A body condition score five (BCS 5) cow is in average flesh and represents a logical target for most cow herds. A BCS 1 cow is extremely thin while a BCS 9 cow is extremely fat and obese.

Body condition score (BCS) of beef cows at the time of calving has the greatest impact on subsequent rebreeding performance. The postpartum interval is the length of time from calving to first estrus (heat) after calving.

For a cow to maintain a 365 day calving interval, she must rebreed by 82 days after calving (283 day gestation + 82 day postpartum interval = 365 days). On the average, cows that calve in a BCS 3 or 4 have difficulty exhibiting their first heat by 80 days after calving. Whereas cows that calve in BCS 5 or 6 tend to exhibit heat by 55 days after calving and; therefore, have a better opportunity to maintain a 365 day calving interval. Although cows that calve in a BCS of 7 have a short postpartum interval, it is not economical to feed cows to a condition score of 7.

Thin cows at calving (BCS 4 or thinner) produce less colostrum, give birth to less vigorous calves that are slower to stand and these calves have lower immunoglobulin levels, thus impairing their ability to overcome early calf-hood disease challenges. This illustrates the importance of targeting mature cows to calve in a BCS of at least 5. Because 1st-calf-heifers have only reached about 85% of their mature weight after calving and require additional nutrients to support growth, they need to be fed so they are a BCS of 6 at calving.

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

Effect of Late Planting Dates on Corn Yield

2019 didn't provide ideal planting conditions for many producers, pushing planting dates later into the 'ideal planting window' than we typically like. The results were a mixed bag.

Late planting is a consideration, however, for producers looking at alternative strategies for dealing with high heat and often limited moisture during the critical pollination to early grain fill growth stage. Dr. Kraig Roozeboom and Dr. Eric Adee recently finished year two of trials comparing planting dates, with mixed results.

At the dryland site in Ottawa, both years showed yields maximized by April plantings, with May plantings more variable and typically lower. Later May and early June plantings, however, yielded similarly to the April plantings. The take home message: in situations where water is a limiting yield factor, delayed planting may have some value if it keeps corn from being at sensitive growth stages during hot/dry weather.

Water was not the limiting factor at the irrigated Kansas River Valley Experiment Field west of Topeka. Two years (2018/2019) of results both suggested that April and early – mid May plantings maximized yield over later plantings.

For a full summary of the 2018 trials, see Kansas Field Research 2019 available online at: <https://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7774&context=kaesrr> or request a copy of the results from your local District Office. 2019 results will be posted later this spring.

RSVP's Due Soon!

RSVP deadlines for upcoming meetings are just around the corner.

January 14th is the RSVP deadline for the Nutrient Management/Soil Health meeting scheduled for January 23rd in Holton. Contact Brian Boeckman at the Jackson County Conservation District at 785-364-3329, extension 136 to get signed up.

January 17th is the RSVP deadline for the KSU Soybean Schools on January 22nd in Atchison and Marysville. Online registration is available at: <http://bit.ly/KSUSoybean>.

RSVP's for the upcoming Farm Bill Education Meetings is requested, but not required a day in advance of the meeting you plan to attend. Meetings will be held at 10:30 and 1:30 each day on January 14th in Holton, January 15th in Seneca, and January 16th in Oskaloosa.

All meetings are free. Information is available online under Events section at www.meadowlark.k-state.edu or by contacting a District Office or myself at dhallaue@ksu.edu.

Conservation Trees from the Kansas Forest Service

The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and vary from eight to 18 inches (species dependent) and are offered as bare root or container-grown. Approved uses include windbreaks, wood lots, wildlife habitat, timber plantations and streambank plantings. They may not be used for landscapes or grown for resale. All items are sold in units of 25 plants.

Orders are accepted through May 1, with shipping beginning in mid-March. Wildlife bundles and tree planting accessories are also available. For details and an order form, go to: <http://kfs.mybigcommerce.com/> or contact a District Office.

January 3, 2020

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

No news from Cindy this week.

January 3, 2020

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

No news from Nancy this week.