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Calculated Risks

These days we are in a quandary, do you hold a public meeting or not? When we are trying to distribute some educational information that might help people with their farms, family, or landscapes, we don't want to send them home with exposure to Covid-19.

I came across a handy website that estimates the risk of going to a public event. Developed by Georgia Tech, this event risk assessment planning tool can help you decide whether or not to attend. You can enter the number of participants from 10 to 10,000. This tool uses the number of cases reported in the last 14 days in each of the counties. Two students made technical development, Aroon Chande, a doctoral candidate in Bioinformatics at Georgia Tech, and Seolha Lee, a master's student from Georgia Tech and the School of City and Regional Planning. This is just a handy tool to figure out if it's worth the risk to attend something in person. You can find the map here: <https://covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/>.



[COVID-19 Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](https://covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/)

This map shows the risk level of attending an event, given the event size and location. The risk level is the estimated chance (0-100%) that at least 1 COVID-19 positive individual will be present at an event in a county, given the size of the event.

covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu

Nutrition is a key element in the weight gain and immune response of weaned calves. Milk is rich in energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals, and needs to be replaced with high-quality forage and possibly supplement to maintain preweaning nutrient intake. Fortifying the pre and postweaning diet with vitamins and minerals can contribute to improved immune function and reduced postweaning sickness. Unlimited access to fresh, clean water is essential for weaned calves. If the postweaning water source is unfamiliar, make accommodations to familiarize the calves. Allowing the water source to overflow for a brief time may help calves find the water.

If calves are allowed to continue grazing after weaning, consider the nutrient content of the forage. Nutrient content declines in the native range in the fall. Weaned calves grazing native range in the fall may require supplemental feed depending on the targeted weight gain. The appropriate weight gain postweaning depends on management objectives for the calves. Introducing calves to the supplement before weaning allows them to become familiar with the supplement and decreases the time required to achieve the desired intake of the supplement postweaning. Calves moving from grazing to a dry lot for weaning must learn to eat from a bunk. Bunk space needs to be adequate (1.5 - 2 ft/head) for the number of calves being weaned. Adding fill dirt around bunks and water may be necessary to ensure small calves can reach water and feed. Reduced intake typically results in poor weight gain and depressed immune function. Therefore, maintaining feed intake is crucial. Feeding long stem, high-quality grass hay the first two or three days postweaning works well to start calves on feed. It is familiar to them, and the large particle size helps maintain rumen function. After two or three days, begin adding some energy feeds to the diet. The diet can be delivered as a total mixed ration, or the energy feed can be top-dressed on the hay. Fermented feeds such as silage should be avoided until calves are eating well because it is not highly palatable to them. Additionally, energy is important, but energy sources high in starch such as corn, should be limited to 50 percent or less of the dietary dry matter.

Traditionally, calves are weaned between 180-240 days of age. However, early weaning (100-150 days) may be considered to improve cow body condition or improve pasture conditions during the forage shortage. Providing palatable, familiar, nutrient-dense feed and a familiar, accessible water source as well as employing a solid health management program is critically important.

David G. Hallauer
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Harvest Safety

Harvest has begun and will soon be in full swing. It's an awesome time of year, and potentially dangerous time as well. Fortunately, a few preventative steps might help.

I read an article last fall from an Extension Educator in Nebraska with experience as a firefighter and EMT. One of the discussions by his department during harvest was the increase in fire calls resulting from residue buildup around engine/exhaust systems and concealed drive belts/pulleys. It's a good reminder to make sure dust/debris is regularly removed from machines and to check electrical systems to reduce sparks that can ignite debris, fuel, etc....

When harvesting, start on the downwind side of the field. In case of fire, flames will be pushed towards the harvested portion of the field, reducing potential damage. Carry a cell phone and know your service levels so emergency contacts can be made. Knowing field location is extremely important for the entirety of the harvest crew. Field locations should be able to be relayed to emergency personnel using local road numbers and letters.

Have fire extinguishers in the combine cab, one accessible from the ground, and another in equipment or a service truck nearby. In case of fire, don't hesitate to use it after calling 911.

Road safety is important, as well. Think about how many vehicles you encounter moving from field to field? Do you have working flashers, lights, and adequate slow-moving vehicle signs? It may seem logical for those of us in an agricultural community to slow down when we see farm equipment. Still, that slow-moving vehicle may only be another obstacle to pass on the highway for someone who doesn't understand.

Having a plan cannot be stressed enough. Lots of moving parts make up a harvest operation. Combine. Tractor and grain cart. Semi. Auger. Grain Bin or Elevator. All have their own moving parts and hazards. Have a plan to make sure all are operated safely, and that plans are in place should an accident occur. We don't like to think about it, but we need to.

Take care of yourself. Avoid replacing sleep with an energy drink or a meal with a candy bar. Take regular breaks to stop, stretch, and move around. Taking care of yourself physically can also help you stay more alert and prevent you from making unsafe or time-wasting mistakes.

Harvest *should* be an enjoyable time of the year. Take measures now to make *sure* it is.

Overseeding Cool-Season Grass Lawns

If your tall fescue lawn ended the season thinner than desired, consider a September overseeding using this 'simple' recipe.

Start by mowing to a one-and-a-half-inch height – removing clippings. Check the thatch layer to make sure it is less than three-quarters of an inch

In small areas, use a rake to roughen soil before seeding. In larger areas, use a verticut machine run in both directions to cut furrows in the soil. A core aerator (three to four passes for adequate holes) can be used instead, with each core providing an excellent environment for seed germination/growth while increasing water infiltration and decreasing compaction.

If the area is large, use six to eight pounds of seed per thousand square feet. For thickening, use a half rate. While you're seeding, apply fertilizer according to soil test or use a starter fertilizer at a rate as suggested on the bag. Water in and maintain moisture through fall.

Cindy Williams
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Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

What do Toyota and Honda have in common with rice? They are named after the grain.

Toyota's name can be broken down to "toyo," meaning "abundant," and "da," meaning "rice field," "honda," translates to the phrase "original rice paddy." Who knew!

Rice is the main staple in more than 100 countries worldwide, according to the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture. This is because it is a low-cost high-calorie grain. It is accessible to almost all people and thus a vital base of many diets.

In each region of the world, rice reflects the local taste preferences and cooking styles; risotto in Italy, paella in Spain, jambalaya in the southern U.S., coconut rice in Colombia, steamed rice in China, rice and beans in Mexico, and sweet rice in Portugal, to name a few.

Along with being low cost and high in calories, whole grain rice is high in fiber, magnesium, selenium, manganese, and vitamins B1 and B6. There are thousands of types of *Oryza sativa*, the most common species of rice. The two main ways rice is categorized is based on size and color.

The length and width of the rice grain determines if the rice is long, short, or medium grain. To tell rice by color, you have to see if the rice is whole, like "brown" rice, or refined like "white" rice. Rice also can be black, shades of red, and even purple.

Here are a few interesting varieties you might not be familiar with.

*Basmati—a long aromatic rice grown in the foot hills of the Himalayas in India and Pakistan. It is fluffy when cooked.

*Sant'Andrea—a long/medium variety of risotto rice and is quite small grains. It is a great variety for beginners as it is hard to overcook! It is used in puddings.

*Carolino—a short-grain grown in Portugal and remains firm and tender when cooked and is used for stews and seafood dishes.

*Japonica—a short grain rice grown in California as this colorful variety is used in Japanese and Caribbean cuisines due to its firm nature and stickiness.

*Ribe—a short versatile variety used for boiling, steaming, or pilaf in a range of dishes using liquids.

*Arborio—a medium grain rice that is wider in size and has a high starch content. It is slightly chewy and sticky.

Of the over 40,000 varieties of rice worldwide wild rice are not in the same family as *Oryza sativa*. Wild rice is actually a species of grass and has 30% fewer calories, 40% more protein than white rice and is predominantly grown in North America and China.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

End of Summer Cleaning

Want a great start to next summer? Spend some time now returning warm weather gear to its best possible state before you store it away. Here are recommendations from the American Cleaning Institute®.

Musty beach towels: Launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. Add a small amount of fabric softener to the final rinse. Machine-dry thoroughly.

Sandy sleeping bag: Turn the bag inside out. If the sand is damp, let the bag air out until the sand is dry. Shake the bag to remove as much loose sand as possible; then brush or vacuum away the remaining residue. If the bag is soiled, follow the sleeping bag's care label instructions.

Muddy tennis shoes: Let the mud dry completely. Then take the shoes outside and bang the soles together to remove as much of the dried mud as possible. Using a solution of warm water and hand dishwashing liquid and an old toothbrush, scrub gently to remove the remaining dirt. For stubborn dirt marks, scrub with a nylon pad. Wipe with a damp sponge or damp paper towels. Stuff the tennis shoes with clean paper towels and let them air-dry.

Grungy plastic tablecloths: A wipe-down with a soapy sponge may clean the top of the tablecloth, but not the flannel backing. To clean the whole thing, machine-wash, using the gentle cycle. Machine-dry on the delicate cycle for about 15 minutes. This is just enough time to remove the creases caused by machine washing, but not long enough to harm the vinyl. If the cloth is still damp, line-dry.

Grubby molded-resin outdoor furniture: Clean with a mild detergent and water. Avoid abrasive powders, chlorine bleaches, and silicone cleaners.

Soiled outdoor cushions: Acrylic, polyester, and cotton fabrics should be spot-cleaned by sponging with a solution of liquid dishwashing detergent and lukewarm water. Rinse and air-dry.

Dirty plastic pool toys: Mix 3/4 cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of warm water. Soak the prewashed toys for five minutes. Rinse and then air-dry. If the toys aren't used during the winter, store them in a closed container so they'll stay clean and dust-free.