

February 19, 2021

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

No news from Jody.

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

Sulfur Management in Brome

Last week, I shared information on sulfur research for corn– but it isn't the only crop that will respond to applications of this 'fourth major nutrient'. For producers managing forage systems that include brome grass, sulfur can be an important nutrient consideration as well.

A two ton per acre brome crop is estimated to remove approximately eight pounds of sulfur. Work in Kansas has shown consistent forage yield responses to sulfur applications even when soil organic matter levels are greater than three percent since the cooler growing season for brome often limits early season sulfur release from organic matter. So while the response you see may not be large – often less than ten percent – applications of up to 15 pounds per acre of actual sulfur under high level management systems can result in some decent yield responses.

Remember: while sulfur is often called the fourth essential nutrient, it is still considered a *secondary* nutrient. That doesn't mean it's not important, but it does mean balancing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium first will provide greater brome yield responses than reducing any of the 'big three' and applying sulfur instead. Sulfur should be given consideration only after balancing other nutrient needs – including necessary lime applications if pH levels are low.

Looking Ahead Lawn Calendar – Cool Season Grasses

The benefits of a healthy turfgrass stand are well documented: reduced weed pressure, better drought stress, etc... Many of the practices we should implement to maintain a healthy stand should be done in the fall. Fertilizer applications and even weed control often give us the best 'bang for our buck' when done then versus in the spring. That doesn't mean there aren't still things we can do this spring, however, to give us a better opportunity for a healthy lawn.

Start with weed control. March is a great time to spot treat broadleaf weeds as you see them. Treatments are best performed on days with temperatures above 50 degrees and when rainfall will not occur within 24 hours of application.

April is typically the month for redbud trees to bloom – and that means crabgrass preventer applications. Since crabgrass preventers need to be watered in to the root zone, plan to apply at least a quarter-inch of water with the application.

If you are thinking of an application of fertilizer, think May - but only if you typically receive enough natural moisture or can provide irrigation to keep turf from going dormant in the summer (if not, fall might be a better time). Got grubs? May is also grub treatment time for products containing imidacloprid or chlorantraniliprole. Water in with a quarter inch of water.

It might be just a little early to get started on some of these chores, but it's never too early to plan. Mark the calendar today for a healthier turfgrass stand this summer.

K-State Garden Hour Webinar Series Off and Running

The K-State Garden Hour webinar series is off and running. Live webinars are held from noon to one on the first and third Wednesday of each month, with presentations recorded for later viewing. Sign up once to get registered for them all at <http://ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour>

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

Easy Meals for Two or Just for You

Do you feel like it just isn't worth the time it takes to prepare a meal for only one or two people? Do you find yourself settling for less healthy frozen dinners or take-out food more often than you would like? If so, you are answering "yes" to these questions. You may be selling yourself short. Try experimenting with the following tips designed to help you find the inspiration to prepare and enjoy healthy meals.... even when cooking for one or two. Remember, our health is important, and **YOU** are worth the effort!

Healthy Cooking: How to get started—

*Make a plan. Take time to jot down the week's menu and a shopping list. You'll find it makes your grocery shopping easier and ensure that you have everything you need when you're ready to cook.

*Stock your pantry. Keep canned vegetables, bean, fruits on hand for quick and healthy additions to meals. Consider whole grains, such as brown or wild rice, quinoa, barley, and pasta. Dried foods are easily portioned for one. More suggestions for pantry staples can be found at:

<https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/ME3516.pdf>.

*Take advantage of your freezer. Buy in bulk and freeze into smaller quantities that you can thaw and cook for one or two meals. You may be surprised to learn that you can freeze foods, including breads, meats, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts and seeds. Freezing keeps food fresh longer and helps prevent waste. For the best quality, freeze foods while it's fresh. Many items are sold in convenient re-sealable packages so you can use just what you need. More tips for staple items to keep in your freezer can be found at: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3517.pdf>

*Prepare one-dish meals. For quick and simple cooking, choose a dish that serves as the whole meal. Look for dishes that include items from several food groups, such as meats, whole grains, legumes and vegetables. Healthy examples include beef, barley and vegetable stew, chicken, vegetable and rice casserole, turkey and bean casserole, and vegetarian chili.

*Cook a batch and freeze into single portions. For example, make a casserole or stew and freeze the extra into individual-size servings. Then take out only the amount of food you need. You will need to experiment so that you don't have more leftovers than you can use. Be sure to write the date and contents on packages and move older packages forward as you add food to your freezer.

*Cook once, use twice. Plan meals so that you can use the extra food in new dishes. For example, cook rice as a side dish for one meal, then use the remainder in a casserole. Bake chicken for a meal and use the leftovers in sandwiches or soup, or toss with greens, dried fruit and nuts for a tasty salad. Or make a meatloaf mixture and bake some as meatloaf and use the rest for meatballs that can be frozen and eaten later.

*Shop with convenience in mind. There will be days when you don't have the time or don't want to cook. So, plan ahead and keep on hand ready-to-eat, low-fat, reduced sodium canned soups and healthy frozen meals or prepackaged single-serving foods. The latter can be pricey, so stock up when you find a sale.

Healthy cooking: Making it fun—

Finding inspiration may be one of the biggest challenges when it comes to cooking for one.

Fortunately, you can find a multitude of cookbooks about cooking for one or two people. Some even provide practical advice on such things as selecting healthy foods, planning menus, shopping and reading food labels.

Don't be afraid to mix things up and try a nutritious snack instead of a traditional meal when you're short on time or energy. For example, make a smoothie by blending fresh, frozen or canned fruit with low-fat yogurt or milk with ice. It's a great way to use up overripe fruit. Other snack-turned-meal ideas are corn muffins served with apple and cheese slices, or fat-free refried beans mixed with salsa, a small amount of low-fat sour cream and baked tortilla chips.

Finally, why not treat yourself to company from time to time? Invite friends or relatives over to sample some of your home cooking. Or start with a cooking club---it's a great opportunity to try new recipes and have fun in the kitchen.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark District
Family Life

Never too late: Eating right is good at any age

The recently released Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, provide direction for living healthy through all life stages, birth through adulthood.

Karen Blakeslee, food safety specialist, K-State Research and Extension, said the guidelines, announced in December 2020, mark the first time the governmental agency has devoted chapters to each life stage, including sections on infants and toddlers and women who are pregnant or lactating.

“We all can make changes to our dietary pattern that can be beneficial at any stage of life, infancy to older adulthood. The Dietary Guidelines take a lifespan approach to meet dietary needs at any age. Good nutrition during the first year of life helps set the foundation for healthy habits as children grow.”

Blakeslee champions the phrase from the Dietary Guidelines, ‘Make Every Bite Count,’ as a way to good health throughout life. She offers four guidelines:

Eat a healthy diet throughout every life stage.

Choose nutrient-dense foods that fit your personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budget.

Eat foods from each food group that are nutrient-dense and within calorie limits.

Limit added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and alcoholic beverages.

She notes that those four principles can help reduce the incidence of chronic diseases that affect about 60% of Americans.

“Be intentional when making food choices to make every bite of food be the best that it can be for you. Food should be the primary source of nutrients, and including a variety of foods, each day helps meet your personal nutritional needs. Nutrient-dense foods have little to no added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium.”

She notes that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 are not intended to be a rigid prescription for eating right, but they are a guide to make personal choices to meet your nutritional needs.