

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

Accurate Forage Sampling

The October fifth USDA Hay Market Report for Northeast Kansas showed steady prices even as movement remains low. Price per ton for large round bales of native grass hay hovered around \$60, while brome was closer to \$95 and alfalfa at \$150.

Pricing of these forages is based on a number of different factors, with quality likely being the largest. Even within a forage class, quality numbers can differ significantly. According to ‘book values’ for brome grass hay, protein values from pre-bloom to mature may drop as much as 10 percent and energy values as much as four percent. Those value changes – and our ability to know what we have – or what we’re buying/selling – can make the time and effort it takes to get a good forage sample well worth it.

One challenge with a forage sample is getting a small sample for submission representing *tons* of the actual hay crop. Variations in hay quality are seldom an issue at the lab testing level, but are instead due to extreme variations that can occur in sampling procedure.

Start by sampling by individual forage lot, with a lot defined as forage harvested from the same location/field/farm from the same cutting of like maturity/rain damage/weed pressure/etc... within a 48-hour period. Do not combine hays of different qualities/cuttings.

Use a forage sampling tool to get a good cross section of the forage package. We have core samplers available from any of our District Offices you can check. Collect at least 20 cores per sample (less than 20 will result in greater variability) from widely separated bales/stacks representative of each identified lot. Large and small rectangular bales are collected from the center of the ends of bales. Large round bales should be sampled on the rounded, tight side at waist height. Cores should be collected from a depth of 12 to 15 inches, avoiding weathered portions of the bale that will not be fed. Mix cores in a clean, plastic pail and place the entire sample in a heavyweight plastic bag, sealed tightly to retain moisture. Sampling should be done as closely to feeding as possible.

Samples should be shipped immediately to a lab of your choice to prevent moisture loss and microbial deterioration. Mail samples early in the week to minimize shipping time to the lab and avoid shipping over weekends/holidays.

For additional information on forage sampling, including equipment or testing labs, contact any Meadowlark Extension District Office.

Working Garden Soil in the Fall

One of the (few) helpful aspects of a dry fall is the opportunity it provides to work garden soils. Spring can be too wet, making soil preparation difficult without damaging soil structure. Fall gives us better soil moisture contents for fall tillage – plus time for freeze/thaw action to ‘correct’ mistakes our tillage operations may make.

There are other advantages as well. Incorporating garden debris reduces survival rates of overwintering insects and helps reduce disease issues as well while increasing organic matter. If you want to add additional organic matter, fall is a great time. Lots of material is available and there’s lots of time for it to break down prior to spring.

Avoid over doing tillage. You should end up with grape nut size or larger particles. Working until you have dust means you’ve gone too far and soil structure has been destroyed.

October 8, 2021

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

No news from Cindy.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Skin Care and Aging

Our skin changes with age. It becomes thinner, loses fat, and no longer looks as plump and smooth as it once did. Veins and bones can be seen more easily. Scratches, cuts, or bumps can take longer to heal. Years of sun tanning or being out in the sunlight for a long time may lead to wrinkles, dryness, age spots, and even cancer.

Many older people suffer from dry spots on their skin, often on their lower legs, elbows, and lower arms. There are many possible reasons for dry skin, such as not drinking enough liquids, spending too much time in the sun, being in very dry air and losing sweat and oil glands which is common with age. Dry skin also can be caused by health problems, such as diabetes or kidney disease.

Here are some ways to help dry itchy skin. Use moisturizers, like lotions, creams or ointments, every day. Take fewer baths and use milder soap. Warm water is less drying than hot water. Try using a humidifier to add moisture to a room.

Older people may bruise more easily than younger people. It can take longer for these bruises to heal. Some medicines or illnesses may also cause bruising. Talk to your doctor if you see bruises and don't know how you got them, especially on parts of your body usually covered by clothing.

Over time, skin begins to wrinkle. Things in the environment, like ultraviolet light from the sun, can make the skin less elastic. Gravity can cause skin to sag and wrinkle. A lot of claims are made about how to make wrinkles go away. Many of them don't work. Talk with a dermatologist or your regular doctor if you have concerns.

Age spots are flat, brown spots often caused by years in the sun. They are bigger than freckles and commonly show up on areas like the face, hands, arms, back and feet. Using a broad-spectrum sunscreen that helps protect against two types of the sun's rays may prevent more age spots.

Skin cancer is a very common type of cancer in the United States. The main cause of skin cancer is the sun. Sunlamps and tanning booths can also cause skin cancer.

There are three types of skin cancers. Two types, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, grow slowly and rarely spread to other parts of the body. These types of cancer are found mostly on parts of the skin exposed to the sun, like the head, face, neck, hands, and arms. But they can happen anywhere on your body. The third and most dangerous type of skin cancer is melanoma. It is rarer than the other types, but it can spread to other organs and be deadly. Check your skin for things that may be cancer. Look for changes such as a new growth or a sore that doesn't heal.

Some sun can be good for you, but to keep your skin healthy, be careful. Limit time in the sun, use sunscreen, wear protective clothing and avoid tanning.

Your skin may change with age but remember, there are things you can do to help. Check your skin often. If you find any changes that worry you, see your doctor.

Visit www.nia.nih.gov, a website from the National Institute on Aging, for more health and wellness information for older adults.