

September 17 2021

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No news today

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Forage Stand Recovery

Larval feeding in forage stands from fall armyworm has been rampant as this growing season heads towards the finish. Perennial forage crops like brome and alfalfa tend to respond fairly well to feeding in most cases, but scouting is still strongly recommended.

From a feeding standpoint, we don't always know with certainty what the culprit might be. Fall armyworms don't typically overwinter in Kansas, so the hope is they will wrap up feeding after this generation and try to find more suitable feeding location. True armyworms can overwinter in Kansas, so will likely continue to cycle through another generation or two, requiring a hard frost or freeze to end their feeding year.

From a damage recovery standpoint, there are lots of variables that come in to play. Late harvested stands seemed to be the most attractive to initial feeding damage and as they regrow may still be quite attractive to moths looking to lay eggs for the next generation of feeding. Stands that are under drought stress, are nutrient deficient, or have been declining over time may recover even more slowly than stands in better growing conditions. Since root growth tends to stop for at least a couple of weeks after complete defoliation, stands take time to recover – some more than others. Continue scouting to see first if the stand is going to recover and second to make sure another infestation doesn't remove new growth before it has a chance to.

If there were an 'easy' answer as to what to do now and what to expect going forward – believe me, I'd share it here. Unfortunately, there are a lot of variables at play and stands are going to respond differently based on level of infestation and previous management. Continue monitoring this fall to make sure feeding pressure doesn't cause additional damage.

Planting Trees in the Fall

If you've been looking at your landscape all summer wishing you had more shade, or added color, or just another landscape feature in the way of a tree – consider planting now. Warm soil conditions in the fall are generally encouraging for rapid root growth. If we can get some good moisture (or provide it ourselves...), fall can be a great time to get a tree established so it's better established prior to harsher conditions next growing season.

The best time to plant *most* trees in the fall is early September to late October. This should provide ample time for roots to become established before ground freezes. Avoid planting beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows, and dogwood, in the fall since they don't put out a lot of fall root growth. Wait on them until spring.

Fall trees are not 'easy care'. The top might be dormant, but roots are still actively growing. Make sure soils stay moist but not soggy via watering through the fall and in to the winter if we have warm spells reducing soil moisture levels. Mulch can be helpful because it minimizes moisture loss and slows soil cooling so root growth continues as long as possible.

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

What to Look for In Healthy Recipes

It has been well documented during the COVID-19 pandemic that Americans spent more time eating, working and cooking at home. And, for many, that included many more visits to the family's favorite recipe book.

Recipes are fun, but "they are also a science." Said K-State Research and Extension northeast area family and consumer specialist Sharolyn Jackson. "You can make some modifications and tweak recipes in some cases, but in a lot of baked goods, for example, those measurements are based on scientific proportions. So, being accurate and following the recipe is really important."

Jackson, though, knows that science is ever-changing.

"I'm reminded of a favorite quote: 'Science is not the truth; science is finding the truth. And when science changes its opinion, it didn't lie to you. It learned more.'

"I think about that because good nutrition is a very new science in comparison to many other sciences." Jackson pointed to the fact that nutritionists once advised people to choose a low-fat or nonfat diet. "That science has changed because not it's not just that you look at low-fat or nonfat foods, but it's the type of fat in that food." She said. "We always knew there were different types of fat, but years ago we thought they were processed the same in the body, and now we know they are not. "We recommend now that people use unsaturated fats, rather than saturated fats. Things that we told people years ago to avoid, we now say to eat these because they're good for you, even though they have fat in them."

Those types of changes have helped form guidance for how to adapt time-tested recipes, some of which may have been passed down through generations of families. Jackson offered the following thoughts on choosing healthy recipes, or adapting existing recipes to make them healthier:

*Look for veggies: "We know that fruits and vegetables are important in the diet, and the recommendations for how much to include have actually gone up over the years," she said. Jackson said one idea is to look for recipes in which vegetables can serve as a main dish, "and then if you want meat with the meal, add a side dish of fish, grilled chicken or the occasional red meat." "Instead of making the meat the main dish, make the vegetables the main dish."

*Use whole grains: If a recipe calls for white rice, consider substituting brown rice or another grain. "You can experiment a bit even with some of the ancient grains," Jackson said. "And, think about mixing grains; go half and half with pasta and rice, or half white/half whole grain pasta or rice."

*Use whole wheat flour instead of white flour. This is an easy substitute for any recipe that is not leavened by yeast, including cookies and quick breads. If your family is not keen on traditional whole wheat flour, use white whole wheat flour.

*Bake it to make it. If a recipe calls for frying a food, bake it instead, and avoid breading, which adds fat and calories.

*Cut the sugar. Use one-third to one-half less sugar in recipes for such goodies as cookies, muffins and quick breads. "If there's a recipe that you use often, such as a family recipe, start by reducing maybe one-fourth of that sugar," Jackson said. "Then each time you make the recipe, but out a little more and not how much you used each time."

*"When you get to the point where that recipe is not working anymore, or your family may not like it, then you know that's how much you can cut out. Alter the recipe from there on." Use that same strategy in cutting back on salt.

*Substitute herbs and spices for salt. Herbs and spices can be more pleasing in many foods. Jackson said many people's taste buds are trained for salt, but with small changes, they can be re-trained to enjoy certain herbs and spices in foods.

*Choose dark greens. Iceberg lettuce is the most popular type of lettuce, but it's mostly water. "If you're going to use Iceberg lettuce for a salad, load it up with a lot of other vegetables—tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and more," said Jackson, who suggests such leafy greens such as spinach, mixed greens, arugula and kale.

*Eat Mediterranean Style. This is a diet choice that incorporates fruit, vegetables, nut seeds, fish and leaner meats and lots of vegetables.

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Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark District
Family Life

No News this week