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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

2023 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide

Over time, the options for integrated weed management have changed – but the goal has not. Whether we’re talking agronomic crops or range and pasture management, we’re still trying to effectively manage weed populations.

Herbicides are typically one of the first options we consider for weed management and one of the reasons the annual KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide is so popular. Now available online (<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/SRP1176.pdf>), this publication provides information on most currently available active ingredients for our major field crops as well as hay fields and pastures. It even includes sections specific to the various noxious weeds in Kansas. Herbicide efficacy scores are provided as are short summaries of product labels and recommendations. The guide also provides estimated costs, premix lists, and product safety information. It’s a great one stop shop if you are looking to dig a little deeper in to product options and evaluations.

Hard copies will be available at winter Extension meetings and local Extension Offices in mid-late January. Contact a District Office to request a copy or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu.

Old Garden Seed

A new year means out with the old and in with the new, right? In the case of garden seed, ‘old’ can be difficult to define.

Three years is a good rule of thumb when it comes to how long garden seed might remain viable, assuming, that is, storage in cool, dark, dry, conditions. Some crops are less. Carrot family crops are likely only good for one or two years. Colorado State University has a great publication showing the potential storage life of different garden seeds. Request a copy from any of our offices or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu. You can also find it online at: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/storing-vegetable-and-flower-seeds-7-221/>.

Interested in trying your own seed viability test? It’s not difficult if you follow this step by step process from KSU Horticulture Specialist Ward Upham:

Put 10 seeds on a paper towel moistened with warm water. Cover with a second moistened towel.

Roll up the towels and place inside a plastic bag with enough holes for air exchange but not so many that the towels dry quickly.

Place the bag in a warm place such as the top of a refrigerator.

Remoisten towels with warm water as needed.

After the first week, check for germination.

Remove sprouted seed and check again after another week.

Add these numbers together to determine the percent germination.

It’s going to take a little time, but if you really want to know whether you should try to stretch that seed for one more year, it’s a great option. Otherwise, check out some of the new varieties available in the many seed catalogs that are likely available now.

Ross Mosteller

District Extension Agent
Livestock & Natural Resources

Some Last-Trimester Cow Management Tips

The recent drop in temperatures and an official date on the calendar for the start of winter, makes it seem like my most dreaded season has arrived. Some enjoy and marvel at the frosty beauty of freshly fallen snow in winter landscapes. As for myself (*and I'd suspect other livestock folks*) it means need for increased feeding/care, frozen waterers/body parts, wearing bulky clothing, slow starting equipment, moving snow before you can do any of it and fewer daylight hours to do it all in. Many producers say they have “spring” calving cow herds, but let’s be real folks, January, February and most of March is WINTER. The vast majority of our “spring” calving cow herds are in, or will soon be, entering a critical time - the third trimester.

A cow's last trimester of pregnancy is a very serious management time. The way she's fed and managed during this time directly affects her physical condition, rebreeding schedule and her calf's health. Following are some research-based management tips for the cow/calf producer to consider in this final trimester of gestation:

- The nutritional needs of cows increase rapidly during the last 3 months of pregnancy. Keep this in mind when feeding the cow herd and plan to feed more!
- If a cow is to calve every 365 days, she must be bred within 83 days after calving.
- From calving until the uterus is in condition for pregnancy is about 40 days. This leaves only two heat periods for her to rebreed.
- The level of energy fed pre-calving will affect a cow's reproductive performance. Under-fed cows are slow to return to normal heat cycles and have lower conception rates.
- A lack of feed intake (energy/protein) is probably the greatest cause of poor reproductive performance in beef cattle.
- Low-quality winter feeds and poor management practices may allow serious nutritional disturbances to develop.
- Cows will benefit from being divided at this time and fed according to the condition and age of the cow.
- Thin cows should be fed to try to gain weight during the winter. Also, older and weak cows and first-calf heifers need extra feed. This may mean separate facilities.
- In late pregnancy, the cows feed requirements increase because the fetus makes 70% of its growth in the last 3 months.
- The unborn calf is largely protein, so the need for protein, increases as calving time nears.
- Extra nutrients are required 90 days pre-calving to assure proper fetal growth, a healthy calf at birth and a cow that can milk.
- Pre-calving nutrition of the mother cow has many important implications in the resistance of the calf to stress and disease.
- A dry, pregnant beef cow weighing 1,300 lbs. will require about 26 lbs./feed/day and about 1.5 lbs. of crude protein. Increase feed by 1% for each degree below 32 degrees F.
- A mature beef cattle with a wet hide will have a maintenance energy increase of 1.9% for every one-degree F below 59 degrees F. The only thing worse than cold is wet AND cold.
- Do forget some of the basics beyond that of energy and protein requirements. This can include, but is not limited to: consistent access to fresh water, free access to good trace mineral and vitamin supply, providing bedding and wind protection and checking the herd for lice and treating when necessary.

Take steps now to prevent problems down the road. The old saying, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” rings especially true in a cow's final trimester of gestation.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent
Family and Community Wellness

Medicare Advantage Plan Open Enrollment Period

Medicare offers several enrollment periods to allow beneficiaries to select their coverage. The Medicare Open Enrollment Period is over for the 2023 calendar year. However, beneficiaries in a Medicare Advantage Plan have another opportunity to change their coverage in the new year. This enrollment period begins January 1 and continues through March 31, 2023.

The first enrollment period that most beneficiaries see is the Initial Enrollment period surrounding their month of eligibility. This enrollment period covers three before the month of eligibility, the month of eligibility, and three months after the month of eligibility. During this time, beneficiaries can sign up for Medicare and join a Prescription Drug or Medicare Advantage plan.

The Open Enrollment period happens every year from October 15- December 7. During this time, beneficiaries can change their Prescription Drug coverage or their Medicare Advantage Plans. There is no guarantee to change or join a Medigap plan. Medigap plans have a guaranteed issue period of six months after the beneficiary signs up for Medicare Part B. After this period; you can change your plan only if you go through the underwriting process.

Special Enrollment periods allow beneficiaries to sign up for Medicare and change plans if they experience particular circumstances. They may have changed addresses, lost or changed employer coverage, or have Medicaid or Extra Help through Social Security. The length of special enrollment periods varies based on the reasons for the Special Enrollment Period. Check with a SHICK counselor for more information.

The Medicare Advantage Plan Open Enrollment Period (January 1-March 31) allows people currently on a Medicare Advantage Plan to change to a different Medicare Advantage plan or go back to traditional Medicare. This is not the time for new enrollments into a Medicare Advantage plan. Make careful consideration and use caution before deciding to change. If you are considering switching to a different Medicare Advantage Plan, check to see if your current providers are in the plan's network. If they are not, you may end up paying for the entire cost or a higher amount than if you used an in-network provider. Remember that your healthcare providers include skilled nursing, physical therapy, and all other healthcare providers. If unsure, call your providers directly and ask if they are "in the network" for the plan you are considering.

If you need help understanding the details of a Medicare Advantage plan, contact a Senior Health Insurance Counselor (SHICK) for help. Trained SHICK counselors provide unbiased information on Medicare and the other insurance that works with Medicare. They do not sell insurance but only provide information to allow you to make the best decision for you. In Jackson, Jefferson, and Nemaha counties, contact Teresa Hatfield with the Meadowlark Extension District at 785-364-4125.

Cindy Williams

District Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness

Inspire January Joy!

January is a fresh start with a new calendar year! How can you shift your focus to find happiness in your day? How can you inspire joy in those around you this month? What little things can help bring cheer and delight to you, your children and family? Take moments of time to share joy with your family.

*Even though it might be cold, think of how fun a sledding party would be.

*See who can create the best snow fort.

*Work in teams to create a snow sculpture (whale, snowman, pet)

*When January weather keeps your family inside, take the opportunity to teach some basic cooking or food preparation skills. Here is an easy way to teach your child the skill of setting the table.

* “Fork” has four letters and so does the word “left.” Because they both have four letters, you can remember to place the fork on the left side of the plate. The napkin can be placed by the fork.

*Knife and spoon both have five letters, as does the word right. Therefore, the knife and spoon go to the right side of the plate. Your glass will go above the knife and spoon on the right side.

*While you are enjoying your meal, discuss joyful things that have happened to your family.

What are things your family enjoys doing together (family game night, roller skating, helping a neighbor by scooping snow)? Think of words that start with “J” that bring your family joy.

January is egg month. An egg-straordinary way to create a fun meal is to make Cookie Cutter Toad-In-The-Hold from the American Egg Board: <https://www.incredibleegg.org/cookie-cutter-toad-in-the-hole>. Encourage the entire family to take part in making this. The children can select the cookie cutters, and cut the shapes out of the bread. While the adult is cooking, the children can set the table. Serve with orange sections, banana slices and milk.