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Fall SCN Testing

Soybean harvest will soon be upon us and hours in the combine staring at a yield monitor can provide us a good opportunity to plan fall Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) monitoring efforts. In-cab field observations combined with yield monitor data can help us design that plan.

Sampling for SCN can occur about any time during the year. Fall is a great time, allowing time for potential management changes in advance of the next soybean crop. Drought conditions favor SCN reproduction, making this fall a prime time to monitor SCN levels.

One of the challenges of SCN is its uneven distribution. Nematodes only travel short distances, so testing protocols are fairly intense and designed with the intent of getting a good idea of numbers. Most protocols suggest 10-20-acre sampling blocks or sampling according to field management zones or in areas where you've noted production issues in the past. Focus on fields known to have SCN populations or those planted to soybeans with greater frequency, or with a history of soybean Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS). Walk in a Z pattern and collect 10-20 cores (six to eight inches deep) per sampling zone. Mix well in a bucket and collect one pint of soil in a plastic bag. Seal the bag, and ship overnight (Refrigerate samples if shipping cannot occur immediately. Do not allow samples to remain in the mail over a weekend.).

To aid Kansas producers in monitoring for SCN, the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab is offering *limited* free SCN testing through a grant from the SCN Coalition. To learn more, contact me via any District Office or email dhallaue@ksu.edu or check out a KSU Agronomy eUpdate article at https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article_new/free-soybean-cyst-testing-from-the-k-state-plant-disease-diagnostic-lab-497 .

Adding Organic Materials to the Garden

Tired of looking at a garden that hasn't gotten it done this summer? Maybe the only advantage to a hot, dry end to the growing season is we can start adding organic matter to the garden sooner than later. In fact, you might consider adding organic materials directly to the soil, and bypass the compost process altogether.

The materials you can add are (almost) endless. Old mulch or rotted silage? Add it and till it in. When leaves start to fall, you can do the same.

One material many homeowners want to use is collected grass clippings. Most of the time, that will be fine, so long as you avoid any clippings previously sprayed with a crabgrass killer. Spring applied crabgrass *preventers* should be okay, but crabgrass *killers* are not. They can carry over and harm growing plants the following spring.

Spread materials to a depth of three inches and incorporate Shred coarse materials (tree leaves, etc...) so they will break down better. When incorporating, make sure soil is not too wet.

You can repeat this process about every two weeks so long as weather remains warm. As it cools down, the addition interval will need to be lengthened, but you can likely repeat the process until early December.

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Body Condition Score

As I've entered my mid-forties, there are signs of my changing body condition (fatter, less hair, etc...) but that's not where this article is going. Those who attended the Tailgate Talk last week got to hear me ramble on about cow body condition scoring assessment and the opportunities to add body condition in fall. Since that's fresh on my mind, let's dive in a bit to BCS.

The Body Condition Score (BCS) system used for beef cows range from 1 to 9, with a score of 1 reflecting an emaciated cow and a score of 9 an obese cow. The BCS system allows producers to visually assess their cow herd using numbers to objectively describes the amount of condition or fat reserve of an animal. Cow body condition score is closely related to reproductive efficiency and is a more reliable indicator of nutritional status of a cow than is body weight. Concepts are similar in other species; with dairy cattle, goats, sheep and swine using five-point scales.

Body condition is important because there is a close relationship between BCS at calving and the first 90 days after calving to reproductive success. In addition, cow body condition influences the calf's ability to develop a strong immune system. Don't forget the bulls! BCS can affect fertility in the male side of the equation too. BCS is a snapshot of cowherd management, similar to a financial balance sheet, and should be assessed at specific production points throughout the year.

You can evaluate body condition anytime you are around cattle, but it is recommended 60 to 90 days before calving, at calving, and weaning. This can simply be done with a tally of the number of cows that fall into each BCS category while riding, walking, or driving through the cattle or chute side as processing. You can record this on about anything, but the [K-State Body Condition Record Book \(MF3277\)](#) is a great tool for recording scores.

Knowing BCS is one thing, but how and when is it beneficial to work to change scores? Obese cows can be an issue, but generally this discussion centers on getting flesh on thin or borderline cows (BCS 3 or 4) by moving them to more optimal scores of 5 or 6. One body condition score is roughly seventy-five pounds, so adding that much condition doesn't happen overnight. The more time you have, less energy demands the animal has, the fewer scores you have to jump and the higher quality of feed available; all have direct impact on changing body condition score.

Fall is an excellent time to add condition in spring calving herds. Cows are second trimester gestation, have weaned a calf and are going through the period of lowest maintenance energy requirement. This is also 90-120 days away from common calving windows, which gives the additional time factor. Moderate quality feedstuffs can be used to add condition, with cool season grasses having their secondary production window (if it rains!) and crop residues are available, some with high nutritional value cover crops as we discussed last week at tailgate talk. This can be accomplished on low quality forages with protein supplementation as well.

[K-State's Guide to Body Condition Scoring Beef Cows and Bulls \(MF3274\)](#) highlights work from Spitzer et al on first calf heifer rebreeding rates, looking at BCS. The study shows that heifers going into breeding who were at score 4, had a 43% pregnancy rate at Day 40 of the breeding season. Comparatively, heifers at score 6 showed a 90% pregnancy rate, a substantial difference. This guide gives good additional information on Beef Body Condition Scoring. Hopefully Body Condition Scoring is, or will be, a part of your herd management plan.

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September 18-24 is Falls Prevention Week

This week is falls prevention week. One out of four older adults will be affected by a fall next year. As we approach the season of Fall on the calendar, it is a good time to consider how we can reduce falls in ourselves and others.

Falls tend to happen quickly. Many times, they occur from something in our environment. Last winter, I slipped and fell a small piece of black ice in a parking lot; before I knew it, I was on the ground. I quickly recovered my dignity and got by with just a scraped knee. Falls can be very detrimental to our health; they are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries in older people. The good news is that there are things we can do to prevent falls. Common factors that lead to falls:

Balance and gait: as we age, we lose some coordination, flexibility, and balance through inactivity.

Vision: Distinguishing between contrasting objects becomes more difficult.

Medications: Some medicines we take can cause dizziness and dehydration, which are factors that contribute to falling.

Environment: What modifications can you make to prevent a fall?

Chronic conditions: Diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease can increase the risk of falling. What can you do then to prevent a fall? One thing you can do is exercise. Strength training programs will help increase your muscle mass and improve balance. K-State Research and Extension Programs like Stay Strong Stay Healthy are great ways to start. Walking, swimming, bicycling, yoga, and Tai Chi can help. Always consult your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program.

Check your home for fall hazards. Do you have throw rugs? Consider removing them or properly securing them to the floor. Clean up the clutter. Check for cords, pet toys, or other items on the floor that you could trip over. If you have stairs, are they in good condition? Is your handrail secure? Consider marking your steps with contrasting tape. Make sure you have adequate lighting in your home. Use night lights to light the way to the bathroom. Keep a flashlight by your bed. In your bathroom, is the shower or tub floor slippery? Put self-stick strips on the floor or the tub or shower. Consider installing grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet. Arrange your furniture so that you do not have to walk around it. Replace furniture if it is difficult for you to get into and out of it. Remove wheels from chairs. These tips can help make your home safer. Talk with your healthcare provider about your fall concerns. Consult with them about healthcare about any medications you are taking. Make sure to get your vision checked regularly. If you fall, check your doctor afterward, even if you think you are not injured.

Make plans to reduce your fall risk now, before it occurs.

Resources: National Council on Aging

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Making the Most of The Last of the Garden Produce

It's that time of year in Kansas when gardens are beginning to overflow with fruits and vegetables. Seasoned gardeners with large gardens are usually prepared to preserve their tasty summer produce through canning. However, freezing produce and meal planning can also ensure food does not go to waste, especially for those gardeners who lack proper canning equipment, time and storage space.

With around 40 percent of the United States food supply being wasted, which is equivalent to about 1,500 wasted calories per person per day, it is important to help reduce food waste as food producers and consumers.

There is that saying, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade, or in this case, when life gives you tomatoes, make salsa. Whether it's excess tomatoes, cucumbers, or peppers, you should be mindful of the foods you have in your garden and incorporate them into your meals and snacks.

The first step of meal planning is taking an inventory. Start by writing down a list of meals that include the produce from your garden and foods that you already have in your refrigerator and pantry that your family enjoys.

Next find a calendar that has plenty of space and pick a day to start with that is not very busy. Write in meals from your list on your calendar filling up 1-2 weeks, and decide what foods you would like to add to complete the meals. Keep the five food groups in mind (grains, protein, fruits, vegetables and dairy) and try to include three different food groups for breakfast and all five food groups for lunch and dinner.

Snacks can also be important, especially for children. Plan fun, healthy snacks using your garden produce.

Tomatoes can be quickly frozen without blanching them first. You may freeze tomatoes whole, sliced, chopped, or pureed (with or without their skins). Choose firm, ripe tomatoes and rinse and dry them before freezing. Frozen tomatoes can easily be incorporated into cooked dishes such as soup, sauces and stews.

Sweet, bell, and hot peppers can be frozen after washing. Wash sweet and bell peppers and cut off stems, remove seeds, and slice. "Tray freezing", or freezing in a single layer on a cookie sheet for at least an hour or until frozen, can be done before transferring peppers into a freezer, zip-top bag to prevent peppers from sticking together. Hot peppers can be frozen whole after they are washed, dried and destemmed.

Zucchini can be frozen for soups, casseroles, pastas dishes, and even baked goods. Blanch cut zucchini in boiling water for 3 minutes then drain, cool promptly, seal and freeze. Freeze zucchini for baking by washing, grating, and steam blanching for 1-2 minutes using a pot with a basket and tight-fitting lid.

You can also freeze peas, corn, onions, berries, peaches and more! Keep your freezer at zero degrees or below to maintain the quality of frozen foods. Frozen fruits and vegetables should be eaten within 8 months for best quality.