

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Late Season Weed Control Evaluations

Whether you're scouting this time of year in-field, the pickup, or will wait until the combine cab this fall, at least some evaluation of your weed control program is in order. When you think about the prolific nature of some of our pigweed species (they can produce 500,000 seeds per plant and remain viable in the soil for four to five years), it's easy to be reminded of the importance of a good weed control program.

A lot of factors affect our ability to control weeds. Sometimes we're fighting resistance and a lack of new chemistries to help us combat it. Even with a lack of chemistries, new tank mixes *are* available, and require evaluation, too. Add in adjuvants, and trying to figure out what works best with what product plus the variables Mother Nature throws at us, and it can make our best weed control efforts a greater challenge than they already are.

To help you sift through those variables with an eye towards 2024, the annual Meadowlark Extension District Demonstration Plot Tour will move (mostly) inside this year, with a focus on weed control. K-State Research & Extension Weed Management Specialist Dr. Sarah Lancaster will be our guest on *Wednesday, August 23rd* at the Colonial Acres Event Center in Oskaloosa (courtesy of Taylor Insurance Services) starting at 4:45 p.m. She'll cover a wide range of weed management topics including new products to consider as well as efficacy data on current chemistries. She'll also chat adjuvants, and alternative weed control options plus demonstrate differences in spray coverage via the use of a spray table. We'll go (just about) whatever weed control direction you want to go, with the hope of helping you make decisions to finish *this* year for a better weed control program *next* year.

Please RSVP for a sponsored meal at 6:00 p.m. courtesy of Tarwater Farm and Home and the Jefferson County Conservation District by calling the Meadowlark Extension District Oskaloosa Office at (785) 863-2212 or e-mailing dhallaue@ksu.edu by noon on Monday, August 21st. Check out a flyer in the events section online at <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/crops-soils/index.html>.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Grazing Conference Ruminations

Our friends in Nebraska offered another outstanding lineup of topics and presenters at the 23rd annual Nebraska Grazing Conference in Kearney. Driving across the corn/soybean monoculture desert of south central/south east Nebraska gives a person time to process presentations shared, ruminating on them if you will. Much like last year, my plan is to summarize some of the information learned, in an attempt to pass on what was shared. Today will be a quick overview of the full conference topics and discussion.

Tuesday's events began with a stress-free livestock handling field tour with Dr. Ruth Woiwode and Curt Pate. Curt was also the evening keynote speaker, focusing on stockmanship and working with the land and livestock. Gathering seventy plus bred replacement heifers into a new portable catch pen facility, with a line of cars/spectators behind, drone flying overhead and a new cow boss, with different herding techniques, proved to be a teachable moment!

However, Mr. Pate's patience, instruction and perseverance got the group gathered, moved and held (without gates closed I might add!) in front of a multitude of distractions. Main points were approaches to "pushing versus pulling" livestock, managing the "thinking versus reacting" sides of the cow brain and the pros/cons of working from horseback, ATV and on foot. If you've never listened to Curt Pate, his insight and perspective alone made the conference a success and his information is worth studying and consideration.

A producer panel of Leopold Conservation award winners from ranches across Nebraska, provided insight into operational success and challenges for the future. Key points noted were: Well-run ranches require intensive management and are typically covered with polywire, where grazing management is a priority. The greatest tool for success on operations has been water development/distribution, in conjunction with cross fencing. One key to profitability has been the removal of as much fossil fuel powered equipment as possible, between the forage and the cow's mouth. Cover crops and crop residues have been integral to year-round grazing, which leads to more operational profitability potential. Labor, operational transfer, loss of grassland acres to crops, trees, recreation and absentee ownership were noted as challenges for the future of working ranches.

The Emerging Issues in Grazing Lands Management session offered some really good rapid-fire topics from private and public entities alike. Everyone acknowledged challenges and opportunities that permeate the grass-based operations and the rural communities whose vitality often goes hand in hand with these operations. Federal and private resources are being directed to preservation of grasslands through Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Inflation Reduction Act and Great Plains Grassland Initiative projects, to name a few.

Precision Livestock Management was the focus of Wednesday's program. Precision grazing management tools ranging from 3D cameras to capture weight gain/loss on pasture, to satellite imagery programs monitoring forage - like Rangeland Analysis Platform, to virtual fencing options were discussed. All parts of our world are advancing in technology, why would we think livestock production would be any different? One key statement was "Early adopters often reap the benefits, but sometimes being the earliest adopter isn't necessarily beneficial to an operation." There are lots of emerging technologies on the horizon, keep yourself informed.

There you have it, a quick, somewhat editorialized summary of another Nebraska Grazing Conference. Next week I'd like to pick up discussion on some of the stockmanship principles shared and demonstrated.

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

USGS Wants Your Dead Butterflies

While the dead butterfly on your patio might normally prompt you to reach for a broom, the U.S. Geological Survey is asking that you reach for an envelope instead. The agency is calling on Kansas residents to mail in dead butterflies, moths, or skippers to help them find out why our insect populations are declining.

When you step outside on a hot afternoon, you might not think we are running low on bugs. The research, however, shows a different story. Loss of habitat, invasive plant species, and changing weather patterns are putting valuable insect species at risk. We have already lost nearly 10% of our insect species, and new research suggests that an additional 40% of insect species could be extinct within the next couple of decades.

These numbers are not just bad news for the bugs. We often hear about insects as pests that decimate crops or spread disease. Yet insects play key roles in our food system and ecosystems. Insects are responsible for pollinating over a third of our food and in the U.S. alone their service is worth around \$20 billion a year. Other insects keep our food chain stable, serving as prey for many other creatures. Many beetles make themselves useful by breaking down manure and waste, which keeps our soil fertile and healthy.

To make matters worse, the decline is not affecting all species equally. While beneficial insects are taking a hit, many nuisance species are thriving. The pine beetle and the emerald ash borer are expanding their range, and crop pests are seeing increases in their populations. Without beneficial insects that can pollinate or prey on pests, our crops and gardens everywhere will struggle to produce.

All is not lost, and acting now can help us find solutions that will protect our gardens, trees, and fields in the future. In addition to sending in insects to the USGS, you can create gardens that attract pollinators, plant native species, and limit your water usage.

Those who have dead butterflies, moths, or skippers should place all specimens in a resealable plastic bag, and mail them USGS LRC, 1217 Biltmore Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049. You do not need to put your return address or any other personal information. All specimens should be dead when collected, and not killed, but they can be partially intact or damaged. If you are not able to mail the insect within three days of finding it, place it in the freezer until you get the chance to mail it. The initial deadline is November 1st, but based on the current response, the agency may extend their collection efforts into 2024.

If you are interested in learning more about the USGS's work, threats to our insect populations, or how you can help the insect world, reach out to the Meadowlark Extension District for more information.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

How to File a Medicare Appeal

Medicare can be quite complex. It can be alarming if you have ever opened your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) and noticed that Medicare denied an expensive service or procedure. As a Medicare beneficiary, you can appeal your denied claim. Before you rush to appeal your claim, ensure that your provider billed Medicare correctly for the item in question.

You will first want to review your MSN or Medicare Summary Notice. Your MSN is the notice you get after the provider files a claim to Medicare. It explains what the provider billed for, the Medicare-approved amount, what they paid, and the amount you may be responsible for. One possibility for the denied claim is that your provider made an error in billing. So, you might want to start by contacting your provider to ensure they billed Medicare correctly. If so, the provider can resubmit the claim to Medicare. If the provider believes they correctly billed Medicare, you may need to appeal your claim.

You have 120 days after receiving your MSN to file a first-level appeal with Medicare. The last page of your MSN will contain the information you need to file the appeal. You will need to file your appeal in writing. Using your MSN, circle the items that you disagree with. Explain in writing why you believe the item or services denied should be covered; you may use additional pages if needed. You may also include supporting information from your healthcare provider, ambulance company, or home healthcare provider. Ensure all pages include your name, Medicare number, and phone number. Make copies of all the pages you submit for appeal, and mail them to the address listed on your MSN.

If Medicare denies your appeal, you still have options; there are four additional levels of appeal. Level two appeals require a qualified independent contractor to review the appeal. This is a contractor who didn't participate in the original appeal. Levels three through five require the claim to be more than a specific dollar amount to proceed to the next level.

There are a couple of other things you need to keep in mind. Sometimes your healthcare provider might ask you to sign an Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN). An ABN is a notice that a doctor, supplier, or other provider gives a Medicare beneficiary before furnishing an item or service if the provider believes Medicare may deny. If you sign the ABN and Medicare denies payment, you will probably be responsible for paying for the item of service. If the provider fails to give you an ABN before you get the item or service, and Medicare denies payment, you may not have to pay for it. The second thing to remember is that if Medicare denies your claim and you have a Medigap insurance policy, Medigap will not pay on the denied claim. Medigap policies generally only pay for Medicare-approved items or services.

The steps outlined above are for original Medicare only. People with Medicare Advantage plans have a separate appeals process.

If you need help with a Medicare appeal and have a question about Medicare, contact Teresa Hatfield at K-State Research and Extension-Meadowlark District at 316-364-4125 or tihatfield@ksu.edu. Medicare counseling services are available in Jackson, Jefferson, and Nemaha counties. If you seek help outside these counties, contact the statewide call center at 1-800-860-5260.

August 11, 2023

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent, Family & Community Wellness

No news articles this week.