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District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils/Horticulture

### **Early Summer Sericea Control**

A lot of work has been done to fight the spread of sericea lespedeza since it became a Kansas noxious weed in 2000. Unfortunately, many of the plant's attributes have allowed it to survive many of our most well-intentioned control efforts.

It won't be long until the control window is wide open and another control opportunity will be at hand. With multiple control options (mowing, prescribed fire, grazing with different livestock species, etc...) available, an integrated control approach is often the best one, and often includes a herbicide component.

Early season (while sericea is in the vegetative stage) control often includes triclopyr only containing products (Remedy Ultra) or products containing triclopyr plus fluroxypyr (PastureGard HL...). Products containing picloram plus fluroxypyr (Surmount) is also an option. Spray volumes of 10-20 gallons/acre will provide the best results (aerial applications should be at a minimum spray volume of three gallons/acre). Repeat treatments will likely be necessary.

If sericea control is on your to-do list, start planning now. Great information can be found via your County Noxious Weed Department. There's also an entire page in the *2023 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide* dedicated to chemical control of sericea. Contact us for a copy or check it out online at: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/CHEMWEEEDGUIDE.pdf> .

### **Bagworms Already?**

We generally notice bagworms when they are three quarters to an inch long in late summer, but if they've given your evergreens fits in the past, scout now. Bagworms are much more easily controlled when very small (less than one quarter inch), and they'll likely be hatching and growing quickly to that point sooner than we're ready.

Feeding typically starts at the tops of trees and shrubs, meaning damage is likely already occurring up in the canopy by the time we see it at ground level. They don't all hatch at the same time and they can move from tree to tree via silken threads that allow them to 'balloon' from plant to plant. If left unchecked, they can cause a lot of damage in a little time, particularly to evergreens that won't produce another flush of growth after they are defoliated

If you're looking for insecticides, look first for a product labeled for bagworms and also with a label for the plant(s) to which you are applying. Some products (Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki and Spinosad) can work very well, but have to be used on small larvae. Numerous other products are available as well, and may have some efficacy on slightly larger larvae, but none will likely get larger larvae often well protected by their bag.

No matter what you use, good coverage is key. Products have to either contact the larvae or be ingested, so make sure application covers trees from top to bottom and interior to exterior. Reapplication may be necessary if the hatch occurs over a long period or residual activity of insecticide wanes.

For additional information, request a copy of our KSU bagworm publication or check it out online at: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3474.pdf> .

Ross Mosteller  
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

### **Beware of the Hazards of Plants to Livestock**

Traffic in the Extension office tends to pick up in spring and summer, with folks bringing in a plant for identification or problem diagnosis. Often, we are asked to identify plants that cause problems of toxicity to livestock, pets, and people. There are numerous plants that can cause a wide range of problems from minor discomfort to death. The Extension office has several good resources that deal with toxic plants. If concerns arise, please feel free to contact us for help. Animals that spend time in corrals, marginal areas like ditches/waterways or even pastures are potentially at risk of eating toxic forages. Summertime, with its high temperatures, varied rainfall, and agricultural chemical applications, can heighten the risks, as they all can change the toxicity levels of plants. Following is a short list of the more common midwestern plants that can be hazardous to livestock if consumed or touched.

Poison Hemlock comes to the top of the list as it is abundant, toxic to humans, birds, cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and other wildlife. Although livestock rarely eat hemlock because of its strong odor, they will eat it if no other forage is available or if it is in hay or silage. Salivation, abdominal pain, muscle tremors, and lack of coordination are the first signs. If enough is consumed symptoms become, respiratory paralysis, coma, and death. Poison hemlock can cause abnormal fetal development if eaten by pregnant cows at 40-70 days of gestation.

Another problem hemlock is Water Hemlock as it has a toxin concentrated in its tuberous roots. The roots of water hemlock are always highly poisonous, and livestock that consume the roots usually die. In the spring, the emerging plant is the most toxic. The mature plant, in late summer and the dry stems have minimal toxicity to cattle.

Pigweeds and Johnsongrass are notorious nitrate accumulators, typically found in cultivated and disrupted soils along roadsides and waste areas. Pigweeds and Johnsongrass are also frequently found in and around corrals and other animal enclosures. When high nitrate plants are consumed, the blood becomes a chocolate color because it can't move oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body and animals can abort, become non-ambulatory and possibly die.

Plants in the Bean family like Lupins, Loco and Yellow Sweetclover can cause issues. Lupins can kill sheep and may cause birth defects when consumed by pregnant cows. Lupin and Loco generally are more often found in the western great plains. Moldy sweetclover hay is the issue as coumarin is converted to dicoumarol during heating/spoilage and causes internal bleeding. Animals consuming the green plant will typically have no issues with sweetclover.

The Nightshade family is another group of plants that livestock producers need to be on the look out for. Jimsonweed, Black nightshade and Horsenettle contain poisonous alkaloids in all parts of the plant, but berries/seeds tend to be most problematic. Nightshades have evidence of poisoning all classes of livestock, birds and children.

Hairy vetch can be a beneficial legume that establishes along roadsides, waste areas and in croplands. Hairy vetch poisoning in cattle and horses is a hypersensitivity reaction that activates the animal's immune system response. Hairy vetch poisoning is debated and variable, but when it occurs it is most often when the plant is near maturity and constitutes a major part of the diet of cattle and horses.

This isn't an exhaustive list of problematic plants, but highlights some of the more common issues. K-State's publication MF3244 Grazing Management: Toxic Plants gives additional information about a wide range of problem plants.

Teresa Hatfield  
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

### **Safe Summer Driving for Seniors**

Memorial Day marked the unofficial start of summer. As the weather gets warmer, people travel more; we must be cautious on the road. It is time to brush up on our driving skills. Older adults as well need to assess their driving proficiency. Many older drivers have years of experience behind the wheel and are safe drivers. As we age, studies indicate we can experience sensory loss; this includes vision, hearing, reflexes, and in some older adults, cognitive decline. The Kansas Highway Patrol states that older drivers have as many accidents as younger, less experienced drivers. However, injury to older adults can be more severe than to younger drivers and sometimes deadly. People need to be aware of the sensory changes as we age and realize they may need to adjust their driving activities or consider other modes of transportation. What are some things to consider, and what can you do?

#### **VISION**

As we get older, our vision begins to decline. If you have difficulties reading highway signs or seeing lane markers, curbs, people, or other vehicles, your vision might be an issue. Is driving at night or in the rain more difficult? Follow these suggestions to help improve your vision.

- Make sure to keep up with your annual vision exam. An eye exam is essential for driving safety and your eye health. Your doctor will also screen for eye diseases that could affect your vision. You may need a new prescription to help you see better.
- Make sure your windows are not tinted or darkened.
- Avoid driving at dawn, dusk, or at night.
- Keep your windshield and mirrors clean.

#### **REACTION TIME**

Driving a vehicle requires you to divide your attention on multiple things that are going on around you. As we age, our reaction time begins to slow. You may have a reduced reaction time if you feel overwhelmed driving; you may find it harder to judge distances between other traffic. The medication you take could also cause you to have reduced reaction time. You may believe that cars just come out of nowhere.

- Plan your trip and stick to familiar roads.
- Drive during the day and stay out of rush hour traffic.
- Keep a safe following distance to allow you more time to react.
- Don't be distracted by conversations, radio, or cell phones.

Your physical limitations may impact your driving ability. Consider other people's concerns about your driving abilities, especially if they are those you trust. If you are concerned about driving, talk with your doctor to discuss if your medications that may be causing side effects that may impair your driving. Review driving basics and consider taking a driving course for older adults. You also may get a discount on your auto insurance for completing the course. Lastly, be prepared to find alternative ways to meet your transportation needs before a crisis occurs.

Cindy Williams  
District Extension Agent, Family & Community Wellness

### **Making Fruit Leather**

It's summer and school are out! One summer activity that my family enjoyed was making fruit leather. Making homemade fruit leather is a great way to use up extra fruit and have a healthful snack. But fresh fruit can harbor bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. It is best to heat the fruit for safety and better color retention.

North Dakota State University Extension recommends heating fresh fruit in a double boiler to steam heat the fruit. It takes about 15-20 minutes and the temperature should reach 160°F with a food thermometer. An alternative is to use canned fruit that is pureed, applesauce or strained baby food fruit.

Fruits choices for fruit leather include apples, apricots, berries, cherries, nectarines, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums and strawberries.

### **Salmonella in Raw Flour**

Another recall has been issued linked to raw flour that has been found in 11 states, caused 12 illnesses and three hospitalizations. It is another reminder that any flour is a raw product and can cause foodborne illness. This outbreak results from people eating raw dough or batter. Currently, no specific brands of flour have been identified as the source of this recall.

Some reminders when handling raw flour include:

\*Do not eat any raw dough or batter in any amount. Always bake or cook foods made with any type of raw flour before consumption.

\*Wash your hands, equipment and surfaces that have touched raw flour.

\*Keep raw flour, dough, and batter away from ready-to-eat foods.