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District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

No news from Jody today.

David G. Hallauer
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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Harvest Safety

Harvest time. That time of the year when we get to see the fruits of our labor in the form of a harvested crop. It gets a romanticized depiction in paintings and photographs and even videos. It looks like it's a lot of fun – and it is. It's also high stress and dangerous.

The 2019 harvest season will likely be characterized to some degree as a waiting game. Crops are maturing behind schedule, potentially causing a greater overlap in corn and soybean harvest windows. Weather has been anything but predictable this year, and will likely be a factor at some point during harvest season as well. What can we do to be as safe as possible?

Start by checking equipment. A Nebraska Extension Educator that has served for over 35 years as a firefighter and EMT shared last fall about his department's discussions this time of year as fire calls increase due predominantly to combine fires. Residue buildup around engine and exhaust systems and concealed drive belts and pulleys are huge. Taking a little extra time to make sure harvest residue is cleaned off and out of machines is a huge first step towards avoiding fires. Take a peek at electrical systems. Problem areas can spark, igniting grain dust, crop residue, or fuel vapors. If you haven't initiated preventative maintenance yet – do so now.

There are also some relatively simple steps you can take to help in case preventative maintenance doesn't do the trick. Start harvest operations on the downwind side of the field. If a fire occurs, the flames will be pushed towards the harvested portion of the field, reducing potential damage. Carry a cell phone – and know what level of service you may have as well as how to compensate for service issues in case of an emergency. Knowing field location is extremely important, not only for you, but for the entirety of the harvest crew. Field locations should be able to be relayed to emergency personnel using local road numbers and letters.

Have three fire extinguishers ready: one in the combine cab, one accessible from the ground, and one in a piece of equipment or service truck nearby. If you do get a field or equipment fire, don't hesitate to use it, but call 911 first.

Road safety is important as well. Think about the number of times you pull that combine out of a field and move it to another. How many vehicles do you encounter? Do you have working flashers, lights, and adequate slow moving vehicle signs? It may seem logical for those of us in an agriculture community to slow down when we see a semi with flashers on following a slower moving combine. That slow moving vehicle may only be another obstacle to pass on highway for someone who doesn't understand.

Having a plan cannot be stressed enough. Lots of moving parts make up a harvest operation. Combine. Tractor and grain cart. Semi. Auger. Grain Bin or Elevator. All have their own moving parts and hazards. Have a plan to make sure that all are operated safely and that plans are in place should an accident occur. We don't like to think about it, but we need to.

Take care of yourself. Sleep should not be replaced with one more energy drink. Meals shouldn't be reduced to a simple candy bar or skipped altogether. Take time on a regular basis to stop, stretch, and move around. Taking good care of yourself physically will also help you stay more alert and can help prevent you from making unsafe or time wasting mistakes.

Harvest *should* be an enjoyable time of the year. It's great to have it romanticized in magazines for the world to see. It can be both of those, so long as it's done safely.

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

Breakfast---Most Important Meal of the Day

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” We’ve heard it hundreds of times, yet for many individuals, including children, they would rather sleep a few more minutes than sit down to breakfast, or even grab something as they run out the door.

Both researchers and teachers will tell you that children who eat something for breakfast are better learners. Children who have eaten breakfast are more likely to have better concentration, have more problem-solving skills, and better hand-eye coordination.

Smart choices for breakfast include whole grains, fruit and low-fat dairy products. The whole grains and fruit contain high amounts of fiber, which tend to fill you up faster and will delay symptoms of hunger for hours.

If all your child wants for breakfast is cold cereal, make a choice that will help them make it through until lunch. Look for whole grains with 3 to 5 grams of fiber and make sure sugar doesn’t appear as one of the first three ingredients on the nutrition facts label. Sugar may be disguised as a word that ends in “ose.” “Ose” words mean that some form of sugar is in the product. Some of the sugar-coated or frosted cereals may have as much as 2 to 3 teaspoons of sugar for a 1-ounce serving.

If your children want leftover pizza for breakfast, let them have it! A traditional breakfast isn’t necessary as long as it is nutritious and well balanced. The combinations are limited only by your creativity and imagination. Think out of the box for breakfast ideas including ways you can save time in the morning. Try some of these ideas:

- *Mash a banana into peanut butter and spread over whole wheat.
- *Keep muffins in the freezer and warm them up in the microwave.
- *A breakfast casserole takes a little time to prepare but it can be done the evening before then refrigerated. Pop it in the oven in the morning for 45 minutes while everyone is getting ready and you have a quick and nutritious breakfast!
- *Set the breakfast table the night before even if it’s only for juice and cereal. You’ll be surprised at how much time it will save you.
- *Most kids love French toast plus it is quick and easy. Add a little cinnamon to the egg batter for variety.
- *Use last night’s left over chicken and make quesadillas or breakfast burritos in a matter of minutes. Wrap in a paper towel and they can be eaten on the bus or in the car on the way to school.
- *Create your own specialty breakfast biscuit. Between the biscuit, place a cooked egg, a sausage patty, a small chicken patty, or a slice of ham with cheese melted on top. This is super quick when you use your leftover biscuits from the weekend.
- *Greek yogurt is always a fast choice. With the amount of protein in it, it will help tide you over until lunch. Pair it with a carbohydrate such as fresh fruit and you have a Portable breakfast.
- *Let’s not forget fruit. Most of it can be just washed and eaten. No prep required, and it will add vitamins that your brain needs.

Breakfast doesn’t have to be time consuming or a hassle. Just as you plan what school supplies and clothes to purchase, keep in mind what healthy breakfast foods you will have on hand, as well.

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

How to Stay Clean During a Natural Disaster

While we can't control when natural disasters will affect us, we can take charge of how prepared we are to handle them.

The American Cleaning Association shares that one website that offers great advice for creating plans for everything from evacuations and staying in touch with loved ones to safeguarding documents and pets is <https://www.ready.gov/september>.

National Preparedness Month, is recognized each September to promote family and community disaster and emergency planning now and throughout the year. The 2019 theme is "**Prepared, Not Scared.**"

Cleaning supplies are important to have on hand during natural disasters – whether you are staying at home or heading for higher ground. Depending on the emergency, water may be unclean or scarce, germs or bacteria may be rampant, or you may simply need a way to keep clean on the go.

Here's a list of supplies that you should keep handy in a small to-go kit or supplies stash: hand sanitizer and a bar or dispenser of soap, disinfectant wipes, small bottle of dish soap with bottled water, small bottle of laundry detergent, and facial/body wipes.

Of course, we hope you will never have a need for this stash, but safe is always better than sorry.