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Livestock and Natural Resources

### **Cell Phones; weaning**

Cell phones, what were we thinking? I've never been too fond of talking on the phone, anyway. Sometimes it's nice to go outside and get away from the phone, so WHY take one with you? A recent experience with the birth of our new grandson and MAJOR phone malfunction almost led to hysteria, I'm wishing I could get rid of the thing altogether.

They can be useful to find out when the spouse will be home, but when they don't answer it's quite frustrating. I will have to admit the younger generation is addicted to them. Taking away the cell phone is now worse punishment than taking away their keys!

Bawling calves. Heard any lately? There's been considerable research on the best method to wean calves. Complete removal, fence line weaning and more. Whatever method you choose, it should best suit your needs and minimize weight loss, sickness and stress.

Weaning calves is mostly about common sense. Provide palatable grass hay, start them off slowly on grain, if you want them to gain. Provide salt and mineral and keep a watchful eye, for sickness. Pre-weaning vaccinations are preferred. If not done then, vaccinate the day of weaning. Your vet can help you with your health program, but usually they are given Blackleg, IBR, BVD and RSV. The vet might suggest worming, lice and grub control.

Don't mix cattle from different sources, if you can help it. Weaning is a big stress on calves. Too bad they don't have cell phones to call their mommas.

David G. Hallauer  
District Extension Agent  
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### ***Compaction: An Issue at Harvest...and Beyond***

With any luck, the content of this column won't have any application to this fall harvest season. Maybe we'll get a break from fall moisture predicted to provide us with ample opportunity for wet soils and the compaction issues that come with them. If we don't...

The issues soil compaction causes are numerous. Root systems don't penetrate as deeply as they should. Nutrient deficiencies as a result of reduced uptake show up. The result: reduced crop yields or at the very least growth and development issue during the growing season.

Sometimes, we don't see the issues as vividly. Infiltration rates decline. Surface runoff increases. With increased surface runoff, we not only reduce water in the soil profile, but increase sediment and the subsequent nutrient losses as well.

Bills don't get paid without the crop being harvested, however, and that means that harvest often *does* result in compaction issues. There's no way around it when a full 1050-bushel grain cart weighs 17.6 tons per axle and a 12 row combine with full hopper exceeds 20 tons per axle. You can't avoid it completely, but it can be managed to a degree. How?

Check soil moisture. Push a ribbon of soil between thumb and index finger. If it breaks over within a couple of inches, compaction potential is low. Harvest first on low potential soils.

If compaction potential is high, consider dedicated traffic lanes. Seventy to 80 percent of total soil compaction occurs during the first wheel pass, with subsequent passes much lower. In addition to dedicated traffic passes from field to truck, consider avoiding on the go unloading. It's only one pass, but it can be an important one to help reduce future issues.

Reduce axle loads by reducing combine/cart loads. When this doesn't work (it's easier in soybeans), plan loaded combine/cart passes so that they occur close to the unloading point.

Harvest around really wet areas. Not only does this reduce compaction, but can help you avoid issues with stuck equipment that go beyond the cost of damaged machinery and time.

Try to avoid post-harvest tillage. Many compaction issues are a result of weak soil structure from tillage. Tillage to 'correct' compaction should be done when soil moisture (at the depth of tillage) is drier than field capacity – or *other* compaction issues can result.

Wet harvest compaction issues are a fact of life. Management considerations now, however, can help you get a head start on the work required to remediate them in the future.

### ***Sunsald on Thin-Barked Trees***

One of the common issues associated with young smooth barked trees (honeylocust, fruit trees, oaks, maples...) is sunsald and bark cracks. They are issues that can negatively affect these species at a time when they need to be growing quickly.

Typically occurring on the south/southwest side of a tree, they are the result of warm/sunny winter days where bark on the sunny side of the tree gets 20 to 40 degrees warmer than that on the shaded side. A loss of cold hardiness occurs that makes cells active, but also susceptible to freeze damage from dropping nighttime temperatures. Bark damage results. It may not be deadly, but often requires some TLC for adequate recovery.

Preventative measures are the best bet for susceptible species. Apply a light-colored tree wrap from the ground to the start of the first branches in October/November. Just remember to remove it the following March or it can cause other issues for the tree in the spring.

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

### **Washing Poultry Not Worth the Risk**

The practice of washing or rinsing raw poultry can actually put you and others at a higher risk of foodborne illness. Quite simply, there's no need to do this.

Participants in an observational study were observed in handling and preparation to see how bacteria moves from raw foods to other foods or surfaces. They were divided into a control group and a treatment group. Food safety messages were sent via email prior to observation sessions to learn how to effective those messages were in preparing chicken.

Some reasons consumers feel rinsing raw poultry is necessary is to remove blood/slime, because a family member said to do so, or it washes off the germs or bacteria. Most do this under the faucet with water running without any other container. Because of this, water splashes onto other items or food causing cross contamination. Then, many improperly washed their hands by not using water or soap, or did not rub their hands with soap at least 20 seconds. They also were ineffective at cleaning and sanitizing equipment and countertops.

Bottom line. There is no need to wash poultry or meat prior to cooking. Cooking to safe temperatures is the best and safest defense against foodborne illness. All poultry should reach 165 degrees F; ground meat should reach 160 degrees F; and roasts, steak and chops should reach 145 degrees F.

### **Preserving Venison Safely**

Fall hunting season is quickly approaching! Venison offers variety and an unusual flavor to the fall and winter table. When handled properly it can make an excellent meat. It can be refrigerated or frozen as meat cuts or sausage. It can also be preserved by canning, curing, or drying.

The following resources can help you get your supplies ready and help you decide which method is best for your family.

\*Dry Meat Safely at Home [www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubsMF3173.pdf](http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubsMF3173.pdf)  
(<http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3173.pdf>)

\*Resources for Home Preserving Venison <http://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/venison.html>  
(<http://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/venison.html>)

\*How-to Videos for Canning Meat—Pressure Canning (For canning, all types of meat must be pressure canned.)

[www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/videos.html](http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/videos.html) (<http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/videos.html>)

Any questions concerning preserving meats, please contact your local Meadowlark Extension District Offices, which are located in Seneca, Holton and Oskaloosa. I can be reached at 785-863-2212.

If you are interested in food preservation of all kinds of food, I would strongly suggest that you sign-up for our free bi-monthly newsletters, entitled Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe. The information included in this newsletter is different than the information shared in my news column. To sign up, visit [www.meadowlark.k-state.edu](http://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu) and look for the newsletter sign up icon. This newsletter can be sent electronically or by mail.

We have other newsletter in addition to the one mentioned above. Those include: Districtwide general newsletter, Crop Connections, Money Matters and Extension Response. For more information, contact your local Meadowlark Extension District Offices at Holton-(364-4125); Oskaloosa-(863-2212); or Seneca (336-2184). All offices have 785 area code. Your contact information will not be shared with other groups or organizations.

September 27, 2019

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

No article this week