

May 8, 2020

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

Never Did I Ever

Never did I ever think that 2020 would turn out to be such a nightmare. Never did I ever think we could shut down our nation. Never did I ever think our grocery shelves would be empty. Never did I ever think I would need to worry about my next roll of toilet paper (still have enough). Never did I ever want to get the call that hog producers are contemplating euthanizing the hogs that they have nowhere to go with them. Never did I ever think the evening news would discuss how many deaths we can trade for opening the economy. It is just overwhelming.

On top of all that, the Blue/Green Algae beast I have been battling (Before COVID) has reared its ugly head. There have been some cattle deaths this spring in Eastern Kansas. Already in March. This is not supposed to happen this soon. We usually consider this a hot/dry summer problem.

Harmful algae blooms can be hazardous to dogs that ingest or swim in infested waters. People as well can have skin reactions if they swim in a pond with Blue/green algae.

I have been working with KDHE, Kansas Biological Survey, KCARE, and others to work on some projects to work on Harmful Algae blooms in private ponds. One of the recommended treatments in barley straw.

They will be doing some projects with public water bodies in Shawnee county and around the state.

I am excited that we have found a source of barley straw and will have some on hand to do some trials with this summer.

So if you have any problematic algae blooms in your ponds, let me know, and we will run a trial to see if we can help control it.

Or if you have some barley planted, consider baling the straw for future use, let me know if you have some for sale.

Never did I ever think 2020 would be so problematic!

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Tree Monitoring

Trees are often taken for granted. Once we get them established, it is pretty easy to ‘walk away’ and forget them. 2020 might not be the year to do so.

2019 did a number on many of our tree species. Excess moisture resulted in foliar diseases like cedar apple rust and anthracnose. That same moisture likely caused root damage to some species as well, especially if trees were in standing water for an extended period. Insect pressure – like bagworms – resulted in defoliation and could result in additional problems as well. All of this means that close attention needs to be paid to our landscape and windbreak trees as they leaf out and start to grow this spring.

In some cases, we may see trees not leaf out at all, overcome by too much stress last year. Others may leaf out slower than expected. For some fruit trees, fruit production may be reduced. Still, other trees may seem to be just fine, only to begin to fail as we head into warmer weather with more variable moisture. In all cases, be sure to do a thorough evaluation to determine the severity of damage and the potential for recovery before removal. If removal is the only option, do so with extreme caution or consider hiring a professional.

It may not seem logical that a tree would die from just one year of damage. In most cases, it is not a single year that gets the trees but stresses over multiple years. Look back over the last five to seven years of the tree’s life. How many drought cycles did it experience? How many times was it diseased or defoliated from insect pressure? Was it ever in standing water for a period? Even short term stresses (like a month of hot/dry weather during July of 2019 in an otherwise wet summer) and multiple stresses begin to add up over time. Couple multiple stressors with years when the recovery time after drought going in to fall was not very long, or a late spring frost burned leaves back, and all of a sudden, it can be more than the tree can take.

If trees are lost, now is a great time to start thinking about replacements as well. Both the K-State Research & Extension Horticulture Department and Kansas Forest Service have great resources to assist as you select replacements. Drop a line if you are interested in them by e-mailing dhallaue@ksu.edu or calling any of our three District Offices.

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

Making a Casserole from What's on Hand

With so many of us staying home these days, cooking and eating home has been on the rise. If you have small amounts of leftovers and would like to mix them together into some type of casserole, try this recipe. Turn those leftovers into favorite family foods!

“Make-Your-Own” Casserole Makes six servings

General Directions:

Select food (s) from each category or use your own favorites. Combine in a 2- to 2 1/2-quart casserole dish that has been greased or coated in cooking spray. Cover and bake at 350°F or about 50 minutes to 1 hour or microwave using 50% power for about 15 to 30 minutes, rotating or stirring as necessary. Heat until steaming hot (165°F) throughout.

Starch—select one:

- *2 cups uncooked pasta (macaroni, penne, spiral, bow tie), Cooked
- *1 cup uncooked long-grain white or brown rice, cooked
- *4 cups uncooked noodles, cooked

Protein—select one:

- *2 cups cooked ground beef
- *2 cups cooked and diced chicken, turkey, ham, beef, or pork
- *2 cups chopped hard-cooked egg
- *2 (6 to 8-oz.) cans fish or seafood, flaked
- *2 cups cooked or canned, dry beans (kidney, etc.)

Vegetable—select one:

- *1 (10-oz.) pkg. thawed and drained frozen spinach, broccoli, green beans, green peas
- *1 (16-oz.) can green beans, peas, carrots, corn, drained
- *2 cups sliced fresh zucchini

Sauce---select one:

- *2 cups white sauce or one can sauce-type soup (mushroom, celery, cheese, tomato, etc.) mixed with milk to make 2 cups.
- *1 (16-oz.) can diced tomatoes with juice

Flavor—select one or more:

- *1/2 cup chopped celery, 1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/4 cup sliced black olives
- *1-2 teaspoons mixed dried leaf herbs (basil, thyme, marjoram, tarragon)
- *salt and pepper to taste

Toppings---select one or more:

If desired after heating, place on top:

- *2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- *1/4 cup shredded Swiss, Cheddar, or Monterey Jack cheese
- *1/4 cup buttered bread crumbs
- *1/4 to 1/2 cup canned fried onion rings

Return casserole with topping (s), uncovered, to the oven for about 10 minutes or microwave for about 2 minutes.

Source: Allice Henneman, MS, RD, Updated, and reviewed in 2020.

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

The Goodness of Whole Grains

The Mediterranean diet is packed with delicious, whole grains, which are essential for good health. They provide energy, help promote digestive health and reduce the risk of developing a number of diseases. Whole-grain foods are also more satisfying, they have great texture and taste, and provide a feeling of fullness.

Common whole grains include brown rice, oatmeal, popcorn, whole wheat, and wild rice. Expand your whole-grain choices with quinoa, whole-grain barley, whole-grain corn or cornmeal, whole rye, and others.

One easy way to add whole grain is to replace half the flour in a recipe with whole-wheat flour. Give white whole-wheat flour a try. White wheat is lighter in color and has a sweeter, milder, and somewhat nutty flavor while having the same nutritional benefits as traditional wheat flour. To make sure you are selecting a whole-grain product, check the ingredient list. The first item listed should be “whole,” followed by the grain. Enriched wheat flour is not whole grain.

Banana Oatmeal Pancakes

Makes two servings

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| 2 eggs, beaten | 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 2 bananas | 1/2 teaspoon olive oil |
| 1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats, uncooked | 1/2 cup fresh or frozen fruit (optional) |
| 1/2 teaspoon baking powder | 1. Wash hands with soap and water. |
| 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract | |

2. Prepare fruit. Gently rub whole bananas and other fresh fruit under cool running water. Peel bananas and mash them in a medium-sized bowl.

3. Combine eggs, rolled oats, baking powder, vanilla extract, and cinnamon with bananas. The batter should be cohesive and without lumps.

4. Heat oil in medium skillet on medium-low heat. Once the oil is heated, spoon 1/4-cup portions of batter onto skillet, cook until golden brown on both sides (about 4 minutes on each side).

5. Heat fruit in a small skillet until warm, stirring occasionally. Serve over pancakes. You may also serve pancakes with chopped nuts or peanut butter on top.

Nutrition Information per serving: 280 calories; 8 g fat (0 trans fat, 2 g saturated fat); 46 g carbohydrates; 10 g protein; 6 g fiber; 210 mg sodium; 0 g added sugars.