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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Soybean Insects & Defoliation

Over the past month or better, various soybean insects have moved through soybean fields with some just passing through and others likely causing defoliation. Others, still, may even start feeding on pods as pod set hits high gear.

One of the great things about soybeans is their ability to compensate for leaf area lost from insect feeding. In fact, when holes are chewed in the upper canopy, light penetrates deeper into that canopy and inner leaves can increase photosynthetic rate, helping compensate for lost leaf material. Many factors affect that compensatory ability - thin canopies can't tolerate as much as denser ones; defoliation during reproduction is less tolerated than during vegetative growth; and good growing conditions allow for greater compensation levels than when plants are under stress - but the plant's ability for recovery is still great. In fact, research out of Nebraska would suggest defoliation losses can reach almost 20 percent before enough is lost to warrant treatment.

While 20 percent doesn't seem like much, defoliation levels are almost always over estimated. Damage doesn't occur evenly through the canopy, so defoliation observations should be made throughout the canopy to get a good idea as to how the *entire* plant is affected. Want to know what 20 percent even looks like? Check out the 2022 KSU Soybean Insect Management Guide online at: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF743.pdf> (and available upon request from District Offices. Want to scout? The University of Nebraska has some excellent scouting tips available at: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2016/decision-making-soybean-defoliating-insects> .

It can take pretty high numbers of foliage feeders to reach the 20 percent leaf loss level where treatment might be needed, but pod feeding insects are a completely different story. Bean leaf beetles and stink bugs are already present in some fields. The damage they can do, in addition to that from soybean podworm (corn earworm), can add up quickly. Be vigilant about scouting for them now as well.

Iris Division Time

You likely won't notice, but after several years, centers of your iris clumps tend to lose vigor, with flowering only occurring on the outside. As one of our most popular early season flowers, we want *lots* of healthy blooms, and that means dividing plants every three to five years to 'rejuvenate' them. The time to do so is now through August (early August is ideal).

Start by digging up the entire clump – roots, rhizomes, and all. Cut rhizomes apart with a sharp knife so each division consists of a fan of leaves plus a section of rhizome (the best ones will have a *double* fan of two small rhizomes attached to a larger one forming a Y – they tend to produce more flowers in the first year after planting.). Discard rhizomes showing damage or remove borers and treat for soft rot if doing so is going to eliminate too many flowers

Cut leaves back by two-thirds, making cuts at an angle to allow water to shed. Remove weeds from the planting area and fertilize via soil test or by applying a balanced fertilizer at the rate of 1 pound of actual nutrient per 100 square feet. Mix six inches deep then plant. Smaller rhizomes may take longer to bloom while larger ones may well bloom next spring.

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness

Choosing the Right Canning Jars

A variety of jar sizes are available to use in canning. Reliable recipes sources will indicate what size of jars are to be used for that recipe. But can you use a jar not listed for that recipe? Yes and no.

Standard jar sizes include half pint (8-oz.), pint (16-oz.), and quart (32-oz.). There are also in between sizes such as 4-oz., 12-oz., 24-oz., and 28-oz.

When a recipe lists half pint only, you cannot use a larger jar. This is because the larger jar may require a longer processing time which must be tested and verified to ensure safety. Guessing, by the home food preserver, can lead to spoiled food. If a recipe indicates half-pint AND pint, you can use a 12-oz. jar, but you cannot use any jar larger than a pint. For jam and jellies, 4-oz. jars are a good option. Use 4 oz. jars like half-pints; 12-oz. jars like pints; and 24-oz. and 28-oz. jars like quarts.

Just because your family uses a certain food in larger quantities, does not mean you can preserve in larger jars. For instance, you will not find a USDA tested recipe for salsa to be canned in a quart jar, because there has not been any testing on this food product in this larger quantity. Doubling the processing time will not guarantee that the center of the salsa jar will reach the needed temperature in order to kill the bacteria that maybe present. Therefore, it is only recommended to safely can salsa in pint jars ONLY. Be smart, be safe!

Any questions about preserving food safely, contact your local extension agent or give me a call at 785-863-2212. I can also be reached at csw@ksu.edu

Ross Mosteller
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Livestock & Natural Resources

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Serotype 2

Rabbits may not be on the list of high-valued, livestock industries in the state of Kansas, but for many people (*my oldest daughter included*) rabbits are an important part of life; for reasons ranging from loveable pets to an efficient protein food source. Whatever the reason might be for keeping rabbits, it is important to note that a serious disease virus has recently been detected in Kansas and poses a significant threat to rabbit health.

In July 2022, the National Veterinary Service Laboratories confirmed detection of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease virus Type 2 (RHDV2) in a domestic rabbit from Leavenworth County. RHDV2 is a highly contagious and fatal disease that only affects rabbits; it does NOT impact human health. This is the first case of RHDV2 in Kansas, although many states to the west of Kansas, most notably Colorado, have reported cases of RHDV2 in domestic rabbits, wild cottontails and jackrabbits in recent years. RHDV2 is a highly contagious and fatal disease of rabbits. This disease is considered a foreign animal disease (FAD) and is of high concern at the state and federal levels.

Since RHDV2 is highly contagious and affects both domestic and wild rabbits. Many times, the only signs of the disease are sudden death and blood-stained noses caused by internal bleeding. Infected rabbits may also develop a fever, go off of feed, or show respiratory or nervous signs. With the primary detection symptom being sudden death, prevention of the spread of this disease is extremely problematic.

The RHDV2 virus is very resistant to extreme temperatures. It can be spread through direct contact or exposure to an infected rabbit's excretions or blood. The virus can also survive and spread from carcasses, food, water, and any contaminated materials. People can spread the virus indirectly by carrying it on their clothing and shoes.

An emergency use vaccine for RHDV2 has recently become available in the U.S., but is not yet widely utilized. The best steps for an owner to protect your rabbits is to practice good biosecurity. These actions will significantly reduce the chance of RHDV2 or other contagious diseases affecting your rabbits. It is best to follow these recommended biosecurity practices:

- Do not allow pet or wild rabbits to have contact with your rabbits or gain entry to the facility.
- Do not allow visitors in rabbitries or let them handle pet rabbits without protective clothing (including coveralls, shoe covers, hair covering, and gloves).
- Always wash hands with warm soapy water before entering your rabbit area, after removing protective clothing and before leaving the rabbit area.
- Do not introduce new rabbits from unknown or untrusted sources. Do not add rabbits to your rabbitry from animal shelters or other types of rescue operations.
- If you bring outside rabbits into your facility or home, keep them separated from your existing rabbits for at least 30 days. Use separate equipment for newly acquired or sick rabbits to avoid spreading disease.
- Sanitize all equipment and cages moved on or off premises before they are returned to the rabbitry, disinfecting with 10% bleach or 10% sodium hydroxide mixed with water.
- Establish a working relationship with a veterinarian to review biosecurity practices for identification and closure of possible gaps.

Rabbit breeders and owners need to be on heightened alert to be vigilant in addressing prevention of the spread of this disease. Everyone should remain observant for hemorrhagic, wild rabbits as well. Information for this article came from the Kansas Department of Agriculture and can be found at: [https://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/division-of-animal-health/animal-diseases/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-serotype-2-\(rhdv2\)](https://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/division-of-animal-health/animal-diseases/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-serotype-2-(rhdv2))

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness

How Does Medicare cover the Shingles Shot?

Often, I hear about someone confused about how to pay for the shingles vaccination with Medicare. People tell me their friend's shingles shot costs very little or nothing, but they were charged hundreds of dollars. It is difficult to understand why vaccinations have such a wide range of out-of-pocket costs. When it comes to vaccination coverage under Medicare, it can get a little complicated.

Shingles is a painful rash that usually develops on one side of your body. It may cause blisters that will scab over. People also can experience fever, chills, headache, and upset stomach. Chickenpox is the virus responsible for shingles. Anyone who has had chickenpox can get shingles. If you have had the chickenpox, the virus is still hiding in your body. For this reason, if you are over age 50, it is recommended you get the shingles vaccination to help prevent the disease from reemerging.

Most vaccinations your doctor recommends will probably be covered under your Part D prescription drug coverage of Medicare. There are some exceptions. Your annual flu, pneumonia, COVID-19, and hepatitis B vaccinations are covered under Medicare Part B. All other vaccinations will be covered under Medicare Part D.

The current vaccination for shingles is the Shingrix vaccination. If your doctor recommends that you have the Shingrix shot, you will need to use your Part D prescription drug plan to cover it. If your plan has a deductible, you will have to pay the deductible before you will enter your initial coverage level and get a cost reduction. If your plan has no annual deductible, you should see the reduction without paying the full cost. Use your Part D plans preferred pharmacy to receive your vaccination if you can to help reduce your cost. If you are considering using your physician to administer your vaccination, ensure that they are in your plan's network. If they are out of network, you may have to pay the full cost of the vaccination.

The federal government requires private health insurance companies to cover mostly all recommended vaccinations at no cost. This is not the case with Medicare. If you are going on to Medicare soon, consider getting up to date on all your vaccinations before you go onto Medicare.

If you have a question about Medicare vaccinations or other questions about Medicare, call 785-364-4125 and ask to speak to Teresa.