

David Hallauer

District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Soybean N Credit

A 60 bushel per acre soybean crop will remove just shy of 200 pounds of nitrogen per acre plus another 65 pounds in Stover. That's a lot of nitrogen the process of nitrogen fixation in a well-nodulated soybean plant takes care of for us. It also begs the question: how can we not have to apply N to the soybean crop and still receive an N credit for the subsequent corn crop?

As awesome as the nitrogen fixation process is, it's not entirely the reason we get a nitrogen credit for the next crop. The credit actually comes from the nitrogen component of soybean residue and roots. These plant components have a low carbon to nitrogen (C:N) ratio, meaning residues decompose readily and rapidly to become available for the next crop. The higher C:N ratio of corn residue means decomposition of those crops is slow and no 'credit' is given to the following crop.

Soil test labs will differ slightly in their calculation of an N credit. For more information on what to expect from a previous crop like soybeans (or alfalfa, etc...) in a rotation, request a copy of KSU's Soil Test Interpretations and Recommendations publication from any District Office or check it out online at <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf2586.pdf>.

Orchardgrass in Lawns

If it's a grass, but it's light green color and faster growing than the turfgrass around it, you may have orchardgrass. Its (unfortunately) a common problem in many cool season turf stands (tall fescue in particular...) and makes a vivid showing this time of year.

Where did it come from? In all likelihood, it was a part of what's known as 'other crop seed' on grass seed label. It's not considered a weed seed, per se, but it can be a problem.

The most challenging aspect of orchardgrass management is a lack of products for control, with no herbicides labeled to kill the it without also killing the turf. Products containing glyphosate are an option for spot spraying orchardgrass clumps (they don't spread as readily as some grasses will...), just keep the sprayed area small to avoid injury to desirable turf species. Reseeding will be difficult, so if you are only dealing with a few spots, consider cutting out a clump from elsewhere in the lawn and replacing the orchardgrass clump after it dies following a glyphosate application. If you have large numbers of orchardgrass plants, its likely more practical to kill the entire lawn and start over this fall.

To identify, visit: http://kswildflower.org/grass_details.php?grassID=15.

Ross Mosteller

District Extension Agent
Livestock & Natural Resources

Small Ruminant Basics

Having just returned from our Extension Agent Livestock Program Focus Team meeting in the Winfield/Arkansas City area, there are many news column topics rolling around in my head. The Creekstone beef processing facility, Southern Kansas Cotton Growers gin and the bonus small ruminant tours were all excellent, but it is the latter that I focus on today.

On every sheep/goat tour I've ever been on, one common theme prevails. That is that there is NOT a plethora of local resources, research, help and support in this livestock area - specific to Kansas. That said, there are some VERY good producers who have learned much through trial and error. Finding these folks and quizzing them is a great place to start. Here are some major themes to consider before starting with a small ruminant operation.

“Start small, get familiar with the animal/production system and be prepared to ask lots of questions!” Sheep and Goats are NOT just “little cows” and are not the same as each other. Generally speaking, they require more management. Not all goats and sheep are created equally comparing dairy to meat breeds and wool to hair breeds, etc.. but there are some generalities. Goats tend to be browsers, who prefer to eat brushy or woody plants. Sheep tend to prefer forbs (broad-leafed plants) but will browse and eat grass. While cattle tend to be mainly grass-eaters.

“Be watchful for some common health/disease issues and be prepared to not have as many vaccines and or labeled treatment options at your fingertips.” Internal Parasites (worms), Over-eating disease, CL (Caseous Lymphadenitis) and Chlamydia seem to be major obstacles for small ruminants and their managers. Waiting until you see a problem is often way to late, so these are issues to familiarize yourself with. Finding a veterinarian who is knowledgeable with small ruminants is critical for these and other animal health issues.

“Start with quality seedstock, from reputable breeders, to have the best chance of success.” The idea of buying a few bred nannies or ewes from a local livestock market, might seem like a good source (*and to be fair can be at times*) but if the animals are of unknown origin, health status and genetic history, you might be asking for trouble. Give yourself the best possible start, even if it means more start-up dollars and research on genetic sources.

“Quality fencing and facilities are a must.” Goats tend to be more problematic at respecting fences and staying in, but there are good examples of systems that work - all the way from mesh woven wire to simple electrified fences. Bored animals, often times without enough to eat, will lead to issues with not staying in. Couple curiosity and/or boredom with smaller heads, some with horns, and you end up with recipe for having animals getting caught, hanging themselves and higher death rates around fences and feeding equipment.

“Predators can be a major problem!” A common predator coming to mind would be coyotes, however, there are others ranging from farm dogs to eagles. Especially in range grazing settings, guardian animals and predator control are needed considerations. Just like the small ruminants themselves, not all guardian animals are not created equally, but most often you see dogs, donkeys and llamas utilized.

This is by no means a complete or comprehensive list of topics to consider, but are some recurring themes shared by many breeders in many places. Jumping into a new animal species venture requires much thought and planning. One good basic resource for the beginner is the Penn State publication [“So You Want to Raise Sheep or Goats?”](#) Your local Extension office should be a great resource for you as well.

Teresa Hatfield

District Extension Agent
Family and Community Wellness

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Many of us face challenges and situations that can be overwhelming and cause tough emotions and increased stress levels. In this month of Mental Health Awareness, it is essential to remember to take care of yourself. High levels of stress over time can cause us to have some severe health problems. Stress can weaken our immune system, put added strain on our hearts, increase weight gain, and put us at greater risk for depression, anxiety, and fatigue.

Understanding your signs of stress will help you recognize the early warning signs and take steps to reduce it before it gets out of control. Some of us respond to stress in physical ways, others in emotional or mental ways. Some physical signs of stress include upset stomach, headache, high blood pressure, or sore or tense muscles. Mental or emotional symptoms of stress include crying, sleeplessness, irritability, or lack of concentration. Once you have identified your signs of stress, you will want to understand the causes. For some causes of stress, you may be able to change, but for others causes, you can't do anything to change them. Understanding what you can and can't change will help you cope with stress.

It is essential to learn to cope with your stress in healthy ways. If your signs of stress are more physical, choose stress relievers that are more physical as well; for example, you might take a brisk walk, take deep breaths, or play with a pet. If your signs are more mental or emotional, do things like reading a book, praying or meditating, listening to music, or talking with a friend. Avoid drinking too much, misusing prescription or illegal drugs, smoking, or using other tobacco products. Make time for yourself by developing an action plan to care for yourself. Write down what you intend to do to take care of yourself each week, be specific. Make sure it is something that you want to do.

If you or someone shows signs of depression or is thinking about suicide, get help. The mental health stigma sometimes makes it harder for people to seek help. The National Suicide hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 800-273-8255. Support services are available free of charge. For those uncomfortable speaking on the phone, a text line is available at 741741, and an online chat at [imalive.org](https://www.imalive.org).

During times of stress, it is vital to connect with others. Be sure to watch out for your family and friends. If you feel like something is wrong, ask. Help them get the help they need. For more information and resources about mental health, contact the Meadowlark Extension District at 785-364-4125 or email thatfield@ksu.edu.

Cindy Williams

District Extension Agent
Family & Community Wellness

30 Years of Food Safety Changes

Thirty years ago, a foodborne illness outbreak of E. coli 0157:H7 contaminated ground beef, at Jack in the Box restaurants, changed the safety of food forever. Lives were lost, lives were changed, and the emphasis on handling food safety grew exponentially. Besides meat products, other foods have been linked to foodborne illness such as leafy greens, eggs, deli meats and raw flour.

Prevention is a key strategy to reduce food safety problems. More training and education is key to mitigating foodborne illness from occurring. From handling food safely at home, to food service workers, to food manufacturers, changes such as monitoring temperatures, better cleaning practices, how food is handled on the farm and more has changed the food industry. Every person has a role in keeping food safe.

As we move into late spring and summer months, keep food safety in mind for your outdoor events and gatherings. When packing for a picnic or cookout, always pack a food thermometer. These three temperatures are key to safely cooked meat and poultry.

- Steaks, roasts, chops and fish-----145°F
- Ground meat such as beef, pork, lamb and egg dishes-----160°F
- All poultry (turkey, chicken and duck—whole, pieces and ground)-----165°F