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MEDICARE HELP IS AVAILABLE.....

Marion County Dept on Aging (Gayla) and K-State Research and Extension (Renae) are collaborating to bring FREE and UNBIASED assistance for residents of the county. Both are certified Senior Health Insurance Counselors of Kansas (SHICK). Part D Medicare Open Enrollment is from Oct. 15-Dec. 7. November 2 at the Hillsboro Senior Center from 8-4:30 appointments will be taken by calling the senior center. Other days and times are available by appointment. Call the Dept on Aging at 382-3580 or our office for more information.
Managing Beef Cow Margins: Round bale pitfalls: Darrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University

Cow-calf production is best viewed as the business of producing and marketing grass. The most successful and profitable cow-calf operations are generally those that most efficiently use grazed forage. However, seasonally limited quantity and/or quality of grazed forage means that producers often need additional nutrition in the form of harvested forages or purchased supplemental feed. Most beef cow-calf operations rely on grass hay to help meet cow nutritional needs. A variety of grasses are harvested as hay to provide supplemental protein and energy for cattle. The quality of grass hay varies widely depending on the type of forage; the management/condition of the forage; baling conditions; and quality degradation during storage. For example, well-fertilized Brome grass, harvested early will have 10-12 percent crude protein and total digestible nutrients (TDN) over 55 percent. Crude protein in under-fertilized, mature Brome will drop below 7 percent with TDN less than 50 percent. Prairie hay typically has crude protein values between 6 and 8 percent and TDN of 50-52 percent. If harvested late and very mature these values may drop to 4 or 5 percent for crude protein with TDN below 50 percent. Whether purchased or produced, it is critical for producers to know the quality of hay. Round bales of unknown quality and bale weight, subject to significant storage and feeding losses is wasteful, expensive and make it very difficult to manage cow herd nutrition. Round bale technology is convenient and saves labor. Unfortunately the convenience of round bales has also frequently encouraged production of low quality hay and poor storage and feeding management. Often hay production is a residual to poor pasture management where mature, rank grass that was not grazed effectively is baled. The labor saving and convenience of round bales has, in many cases, fostered poor pasture management that results in increased hay needs and production of poor quality hay.

Perhaps round bales are too convenient. In day of old, producers feeding small square bales were typically more aware of the quality of the hay, how much they were feeding, how much was being wasted and, as a result, often did a better job of managing cow herd nutrition and feed cost. It takes some additional management to capture the advantages of round bales without wasting hay and incurring additional cost.

Hay production per beef cow has more than doubled in the past 40. It appears that now significantly more hay is wasted and that poor pasture management has increased the number of days that cows are fed hay. Round bales very probably have contributed to this trend.

Considerations for round bale use:

* Manage the quantity and quality of pastures to extend grazing and minimize hay needs.
  Consider stockpiling pasture for fall and winter grazing. Feeding hay costs 2.5 to 5 times as much as grazing. Every day that cows graze instead of receiving hay will save $0.50 to $1.50 per head in feed costs.

* Know the quantity and quality of purchased or produced hay. Buy tons of hay...not bales. Weigh it and test it.

* Know how hay cows are actually eating. Measure storage and feeding losses in order to know actual consumption and the true cost of hay.

*Calculate the cost of hay nutrients compared to other supplemental feed sources. Projected record grain crops means that energy and protein from other feed sources will likely be cheaper this winter. Supplements using grain and/or byproduct feeds may actually be less expensive than poor quality hay.
Overseeding a Lawn

Tall fescue lawns that have become thin over the summer can be thickened up by overseeding during September. Start by mowing the grass short (1 to 1.5 inches) and removing the clippings. This will make it easier to achieve good seed-soil contact and increase the amount of light that will reach the young seedlings.

Good seed-soil contact is vital if the overseeding is to be successful. Excess thatch can prevent seed from reaching the soil and germinating. Normally we want 1/4 inch of thatch or less when overseeding. If the thatch layer is 3/4 inch or more, it is usually easiest to use a sod cutter to remove it and start over with a new lawn. A power rake can be used to reduce a thatch layer that is less than 3/4 inch but more than a quarter inch.

Once thatch is under control, the soil should be prepared for the seed. This can be done in various ways. For small spots, a hand rake can be used to roughen up the soil before the seed is applied.

A verticut machine has solid vertical blades that can be set to cut furrows in the soil. It is best to go two different directions with the machine. A slit seeder is a verticut machine with a seed hopper added so the soil prep and seeding operation are combined. Another option is to use a core aerator. The core aerator will punch holes in the soil and deposit the soil cores on the surface of the ground. Each hole produces an excellent environment for seed germination and growth. Make three to four passes with the core aerator to ensure enough holes for the seed. Using a core aerator has the additional benefit of reducing the amount of watering needed to get the seed germinated and growing. Aeration also increases the water infiltration rate, decreases compaction, and increases the amount of oxygen in the soil.

Of the three methods, I prefer the slit seeder for obtaining good seed-soil contact. However, if watering is difficult, core aeration may be a better option. Regardless of method used, fertilize should be applied at the rate suggested by a soil test, or a starter fertilizer should be used at the rate suggested on the bag. (Ward Upham)

Power Raking or Core-Aeration

September is the optimum time to power rake or core-aerate tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass lawns. These grasses should be coming out of their summer doldrums and beginning to grow more vigorously. This is a good time to consider what we are trying to accomplish with these practices.

Power raking is primarily a thatch control operation. It can be excessively damaging to the turf if not done carefully. For lawns with one-half inch of thatch or less, I don’t recommend power raking but rather core aeration. For those who are unsure what thatch is, it is a springy layer of light-brown organic matter that resembles peat moss and is located above the soil but below the grass foliage. Power raking pulls up an incredible amount of material that then must be dealt with by composting or discarding.

Core-aeration is a much better practice for most lawns. By removing cores of soil, core-aeration relieves compaction, hastens thatch decomposition, and improves water, nutrient, and oxygen movement into the soil profile. This operation should be performed when the soil is just moist enough so that it crumbles easily when worked between the fingers. Enough passes should be made so that the holes are spaced about 2 to 3 inches apart. Ideally, the holes should penetrate 2.5 to 3 inches deep. The cores can be left on the lawn to decompose naturally (a process that usually takes two or three weeks, depending on soil type), or they can be broken up with a power rake set just low enough to nick the cores, and then dragged with a section of chain-link fence or a steel doormat. The intermingling of soil and thatch is beneficial to the lawn.

(Ward Upham)
Take the Challenge: Prepare Kansas 2016—Food Safety

Ice storms, tornadoes, and flooding – Kansas has them all and more. Do you really know how long food will stay safe in the refrigerator if your power is out? Or what foods and supplies you should have on hand in case of emergencies?

Starting Sept. 1, Prepare Kansas 2016 will provide tips on keeping food safe in emergency situations. This year’s program will be conducted through the K-State Research and Extension (see link below) Facebook page. No registration is required, so Kansans and anyone interested in planning ahead for emergencies can follow on Facebook at any time during September, pick up handy information and interact with K-State extension specialists and agents.

More information on Prepare Kansas will be available in September at https://www.facebook.com/KStateRE. You can also follow along on the blog at http://blogs.k-state.edu/preparekansas/.

If computers are not your thing, but you still would like the information, call the office and we will send you the information.

Prepare Kansas is launched as part of National Preparedness Month, designated as the month of September. Consider updating your home inventory and your emergency kit. Check smoke detectors soon and review your insurance policies.

Fruit leather is essentially a homemade fruit roll. Try this pumpkin leather recipe for a treat that includes the amount of sugar you choose.

- 2 cups of fresh pumpkin, cooked and pureed
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon powdered cloves

Place the pumpkin in a bowl. Add the honey, cinnamon, nutmeg and powdered cloves, and blend all of the ingredients together. Spread the mixture evenly—about 1/8-inch thick—on a tray lined with plastic wrap or a nonstick drying sheet that fits on a dehydrator tray. Dry at 140 degrees F. If you’re drying the leather in a dehydrator, it will take six to eight hours; if you’re using an oven, it’ll take up to 18 hours.

The leather will dry from the outside in. It’s ready to peel from the sheet when you touch the center and it’s not shiny or tacky. Peel the leather from the tray while it’s still warm and flexible, and make roll-ups the size you want to serve. Wrap in plastic wrap once they have cooled.

Fruit leather can be stored up to one month at room temperature, or up to one year in the freezer.

For more info reference North Dakota State University at https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/making-fruit-leathers
10 Commandments of Clutter Control

1. Stop procrastinating...stop putting off until tomorrow what you can do today, especially when you know you will probably not do it tomorrow.

2. Quit making excuses...you are only fooling yourself. The clutter is not going away.

3. Use it or lose it...if an item is not useful or doesn’t enhance your life in some way, move it out.

4. Learn to let go. As our lives change, needs change. Clutter which takes up valuable space and gives nothing in return should be tossed or given away.

5. Be a giver. Give things away if they are not being used.

6. Set limits on the amount of space you are willing to allocate to clutter. Just because one space fills up doesn’t mean that you should find or buy (rent storage unit, etc.) more space. It means that it’s time to declutter and reclaim the space you have.

7. Use the in/out inventory rule. If something new comes in, something old goes out. Apply this rule to everything—from clothes and toys to books, magazines and other clutter.

8. Less is more. Less clutter means more time, money and energy for yourself.

9. Keep everything in its place. Find a place for everything and keep it there!

10. Compromise. Compromise when managing clutter. Don’t let perfectionism keep you from organizing, or keeping someone from helping. Functioning effectively is more important that functioning perfectly.

Written By Jana McKinney, Mc Pherson County FCS Agent

Using the K-State Fact Sheet “Cut the Clutter and Get Organized”, by FCS Agent Denise Dias, asking yourself some questions may help you to realize you may have a clutter problem.

-Do you say “this house is a mess” more than three times per week?

-Have piles of papers, etc. around the house

- spend lots of time looking for things

- have closets/drawers/cabinet filled beyond capacity

If so, you may want to think about using Jana’s 10 Commandments or taking a look at Denise’s full fact sheet at http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2879.pdf

Two additional ideas known to work if you are having a hard time getting rid of it, excluding sentimental value, is to pack it into a “maybe I will get rid of it” box and see if you miss using it.

Hang your hangers backwards. If you haven’t used it or worn it in one year, it is time to let it go to either a new home or a new purpose. Repurposing any item is often a win-win so think about that as another option.

“A cluttered home is a cluttered mind”...words to keep in mind.

Don’t forget about digital clutter too!
Shooting Sports

On August 20, 2016, the archery division of the Marion County Shooting Sports club hosted a state qualifying event for 4-H’ers in the Archery program. The match was hosted in the ball park at Lehigh, KS. There was a total of eleven 4Her’s shooting at our first annual event. Kansas counties represented were Marion, Sedgwick and Kingman. Seven were 13 and under and the remaining were 14 to 18 years of age. Compound Bow Hunter and Compound Open were the two classes represented at the event. Eight 4-Her’s scored high enough in their age group and discipline to qualify for state competition. The Kansas State 4H Archery competition takes place on September 17th, just south of Topeka, KS at The Archery Range.

Marion County now has 4 youth qualified for the State Archery Match: Charlie Peters, Jack Parks, Hayleigh Mendoza, and Tanner Parks.

We also have 5 youth that have qualified for the state Shotgun Shoot Sept 24th and 25th.
Senior division- Greg Oborny trap and skeet
Logan Oborny trap and skeet
Junior division- Jessica Saunders trap and skeet
Rope Uhl trap and skeet
Jack Parks trap

Congratulations and Good Luck to all of these youth in their respective disciplines. Also, a big Shout-Out to our Archery leaders, Jamie Peters, and Shane Duerksen and Shotgun Leaders, JC and Susan Saunders for their hard work and commitment to our Shooting Sports Program.
4-H Officer Training and Council Meeting
Monday, September 26
Officer’s Training — 6:30 p.m.
4-H Council — 7:30 p.m.
Hillsboro United Methodist Church

Marion County Fair
Another one is in the books. For the Extension Office this will be one to remember for sure. To say the least there were a few minor changes!!! Some of those changes were good and well, some still need some tweaking... It takes everyone to pull off an event as large as a fair, and we are blessed with some of the best 4-Hers, leaders, and parents that make our fair what it is, so give yourself a pat on the back.

By the numbers: this year we had over 1200 items/exhibits pre-entered, and over 800 exhibits at the fair! Both of these are outstanding numbers.

We have been discussing an evaluation tool for you to complete. I know.... it should be done by now, but I promise this will be available soon. Then when we get some responses, you’ll hear about some opportunities to discuss and work on those events that need “tweaking”.

A “BIG” Thank You goes out to Marion County Farm Bureau Association for sponsoring t-shirts for our Marion County 4-Hers this year.

Livestock Judging
A big congratulations to Emily and Madeline Meier and Devon and Morgan Gaines for representing Marion County in the State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest. The team finished 15 out of 77 teams. Individually Emily was 30th out of 188 individuals and both she and Devon finished in the Gold Medal Division.

Record Books
That time of year again!!!! Books and Pin Apps will be due in the Extension Office by October 3 at 5 p.m. Remember to check with your local community leader to find out your club deadline as your club leader will need to look at your KAP’s as well as your pin applications before submitting them.

Remember the Pin Applications as well as the KAP forms can be found our web page at the following address http://www.marion.ks-state.edu/4-h/forms/index.html

SAVE THE DATES!!!!!!
48 HOURS OF 4-H/NEW 4-H YEAR KICK OFF— OCTOBER 9
MARION COUNTY 4-H ACHIEVEMENT NIGHT— NOVEMBER 6
We know there are some very skilled individuals in the county. Please consider sharing your talents in your communities.