April 2022

Go to www.sunflower.ksu.edu for more details on these programs.

Inside Your Newsletter...

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Tree Care and Pruning Workshop

Dr. Charles Barden Professor of Forestry and Research Center Director, K-State University is coming to the Sunflower Extension District!

Tuesday, May 3, 2022
5:30 PM (MDT)
Sherman County 4-H Building, Fairgrounds, Goodland, KS

Indoor workshop followed with hands on experience at a tree site.

Any residents in Cheyenne, Sherman or Wallace Counties may leave samples of trees in question at the local Extension Offices on Monday, May 2 or Tuesday May 3.

Sample needs to include-
Pictures of the tree and area where planted, branch sample, still alive to help ID it, and a sample with the symptoms. A note to describe the problem would be helpful also. These will be diagnosed and information returned.
Understanding the Chemical Reactions of Urea in the Soil

With the current high prices of commercial fertilizers, it is even more important to implement management practices that minimize nutrient loss and maximize crop uptake. Some common nitrogen (N) containing fertilizers used in Kansas are composed of urea. This article explains some of the science behind what happens to urea when it is applied to soil. The information is taken from a new KSRE publication, MF894 Management Practices Affecting Nitrogen Loss from Urea. The full article can be viewed at: https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF894.pdf.

Urea fertilizers range in composition from pure, dry, granular urea (46-0-0) to products that are mixtures of urea and other sources of N and/ or phosphate and potash. The most common mixture of urea with other N fertilizers is the liquid urea-ammonium nitrate solution (UAN), which is sold as a solution containing 28% N or 32% N. Approximately half of the N in UAN is urea.

While cost advantages favor increased use of urea, questions are often raised about its availability to crops compared to other N sources and its potential for loss when applied to the soil surface and not incorporated by tillage or irrigation. Chemical reactions of urea and ammoniacal N (ammonia and ammonium) in soil, and soil, climate, and management factors that affect the performance of urea need to be understood for proper use.

Reactions of Urea in Soil

Urea applied to the soil reacts with water and the soil enzyme urease and is rapidly converted to ammonium. This conversion, shown with the chemical reaction below, is called urea hydrolysis. In this reaction, hydrogen ions (H+) are consumed, causing the soil pH near the fertilizer to rise. If the pH rises above 7, a significant amount of gaseous ammonia can form in soil for a few days following urea application. When urea is surface-applied, the formation of ammonia at the soil surface from urea hydrolysis may allow some ammonia to be lost, and if urea is banded with the seed, some plant damage may occur because of ammonia toxicity. The severity of both processes depends largely on the concentration of ammonia formed in the soil.

The concentration of ammonia in the soil from urea hydrolysis depends on a number of factors. The most important are:

1) The rate of urea applied. Larger urea applications generally result in more hydrolysis and higher ammonia concentrations in soil. Band applications also concentrate the urea in smaller volumes of soil, which can result in more ammonia formation at the site of fertilizer placement; however, this does not mean that ammonia loss will be greater from surface-banded urea, since the hydrolysis rate may be reduced (see number 3).

2) The pH at the soil surface for the first three to five days following urea application. The higher the pH during this time, the more ammonia will be formed. Soils vary in their ability to resist the increase in pH due to the amount of hydrogen ions they contain. Soils with relatively large amounts of clay and organic matter, and low pH before urea is applied have relatively large amounts of hydrogen ions. Less ammonia will be formed on these soils. At the other extreme, soils that are sandy and low in organic matter, especially those with a high pH, allow more ammonia to be formed from urea hydrolysis.

3) The speed (rate) of urea hydrolysis in soils. Fast urea hydrolysis reduces the time available for urea and ammonium (and any gaseous ammonia) to diffuse deeper into the soil when surface-applied (or away from the seed in case of seed-placed urea). When the time for diffusion into the soil is reduced, the ammonium will be more concentrated at the surface, the pH will be higher, and more ammonia will form. The factors affecting the rate of hydrolysis that are most likely to change from field to field include the amount of urease enzyme in the soil, soil temperature, and soil moisture. Since band application reduces the contact between fertilizer and soil urease, this method slows the rate of urea hydrolysis.

Weather Conditions at and Shortly after Application

Two weather-related factors, temperature and moisture, greatly affect urea hydrolysis rates and ammonia loss from surface-applied urea fertilizers. If a choice is possible, apply urea fertilizers when temperatures are cool. Wheat and cool-season grasses can be fertilized in late winter to good advantage, rather than late spring when temperatures begin to rise. Even though losses are usually not large with later application, the early application is preferred. Although application under cool or cold conditions is preferred, there is potential for loss of fertilizer in storm runoff should an unusual winter rainstorm or quick snowmelt occur when soils are frozen. Poor fertilizer performance has been observed in a few instances when these somewhat rare weather events occurred. It is best to avoid application of fertilizer to frozen soils, if there is a high probability of rapid warming conditions with rainstorms and runoff. If the surface soil is partially thawed at fertilizer application time or if it thaws soon after application, the fertilizer will dissolve and diffuse into the soil within a day or two. If storms and runoff then follow, losses will be small.

Application is also better under dry surface soil conditions than under wet conditions to avoid ammonia loss. Usually, the surface of a well-drained soil dries quickly in Kansas weather. Soils with high water tables, however, may stay moist near the surface for longer periods of time. Lower parts of a field that stay wet for long periods of time may also experience some problems with ammonia loss, whereas well-drained areas of a field may not. Somewhat higher rates of application on these wetter areas could increase production by offsetting some N loss.
Breeding Success Through Cow Management

As discussed in last month’s newsletter article, it is important to test bulls for fertility prior to every breeding season. However, bulls are half the equation and the females being bred need to be set up for success as well. While bull fertility is dependent on several factors, a cow’s ability to conceive becomes way more complicated. Females not only have to battle any inherent issues with their fertility, post partum periods, dystocias, and nutrition can all negatively impact the ability for a female to rebreed. In short, a successful breeding season starts far before calving even starts. Proper nutrition and management decisions year round will set the cowherd up for success.

Dystocia

Dystocia or difficulty while calving can cause damage to the reproductive tract and stress that may delay a female from coming into heat again. Research shows that every hour that a female is in stage 2 of labor (from the appearance of the membranes to delivery of the calf), her resuming estrous is delayed by four days (Anderson, 2017). Conception rates increased by 16% when females experiencing difficulty were assisted in the first 90 minutes compared to those that were not assisted (Anderson, 2017). To optimize re-breeding success, assist early when appropriate and make selection decisions to avoid dystocias.

Post-partum period

The post-partum interval (PPI) is the amount of time that passes between calving and rebreeding. After calving, a cow needs time for her reproductive tract to repair and to resume cycling. The length of the anestrus period where she is not cycling significantly impacts the chance of her becoming pregnant. Dependent on many factors, this period of non-cycling can last 17 days to 150 days (Anderson, 2017). Considering an ideal body condition score (BCS), mature cows generally experience 45 - 90 days of anestrus, while first calf heifers experience 75 –120. Considering a 285 day gestation, a female would need to conceive within 80 days of her calving date to theoretically calve at the same time or earlier the next calving season. This stresses the importance of defined breeding seasons at it becomes difficult for a late calving female to calve earlier in the subsequent years.

Body Condition Score

Assessing body condition of cows is a management practice that should be done year round. Body condition scoring (BCS) is the assignment of a score based on an estimation of body fat. In beef cattle the scores range from 1 to 9, in which a score of 1 is extremely emaciated and a score of 9 represents an extremely obese animal. A change in one score is usually represented by a 75 pound change in body weight (Anderson, 2017). Ideally, cows should calve at a BCS of 5 or greater. This helps ensure that they can maintain their own condition as much as possible as they take on lactation. Emphasizing this increase in requirements, protein and energy needs increase by 25 to 30% in most beef cows after calving (Anderson, 2017). Research has suggested that as pre-calving BCS decreases, the calving interval increases. For example, on average a cow in BCS 3 at calving would not calve again until approximately 400 days later, while a cow at a BCS 6 would calve approximately 360 days later (Anderson, 2017). Evaluating the BCS of cows in the herd is important year round, however it is most important prior to calving and subsequently before breeding season. Therefore, if cows are thin at calving, their energy intake should increase to salvage reproductive performance as much as possible.

Vaccinations

There are several diseases that are known for causing significant reproductive losses in the form of infertility, abortions, birth defects, and weak calves. Some of the diseases that can cause losses include leptosporosis, bovine viral diarrhea, trichomoniasis, and vibriosis. According to the NAHMS survey, in 2017 only 46% of cows were vaccinated for leptospirosis, 24.8% for vibriosis, 4.6% for trichomoniasis, and 57.4% of cattle were vaccinated for bovine viral diarrhea. Unvaccinated cows could be experiencing reproductive losses that are being attributed to other factors. Producers should work with their veterinarian to develop a herd health plan that includes vaccination against these reproductive diseases to minimize losses.

Every breeding season takes year round planning in terms of management, timing, and precautions. To set up cows for reproductive success, producers should focus on optimizing body condition scores, implementing a herd health program, providing early calving assistance when appropriate, making selection decisions to avoid dystocias, and creating a plan to resume estrous in after calving.

For more information on preparing for breeding season, please visit or call the Cheyenne County Extension Office at (785)332-3171.

For more resources and event announcements, please follow us on Facebook at K-State Research and Extension Sunflower District.
Physical Wellness Checklist

Positive physical health habits can help decrease your stress, lower your risk of disease, and increase your energy. Here are tips for improving your physical health:

GET ACTIVE
How well your body functions affects your ability to accomplish your daily activities. Sedentary behavior—which usually means sitting or lying down while awake—has been linked to a shorter lifespan and a wide range of medical problems. Any time you get up and move, you’re improving your chances for good health.

MAINTAN YOUR BODY
Your bones, muscles, and joints all work together to make your body an amazingly movable machine. Like any machine, your body can suffer some wear and tear. It needs regular care and maintenance to keep moving with ease.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET
We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart choices. A healthy eating plan not only limits unhealthy foods, but also includes a variety of healthy foods. Find out which foods to add to your diet and which to avoid.

MIND YOUR METABOLISM
Your metabolism changes as you get older. You burn fewer calories and break down foods differently. You also lose lean muscle. Unless you exercise more and adjust your diet, the pounds can add up. Middle-age spread can quickly become middle-age sprawl. Carrying those extra pounds may be harming your health.

BUILD HEALTH HABITS
We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you’ve already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It’s not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

We are all aging, but whether we do so gracefully is up to you!

Join K-State Research and Extension, Sunflower District to learn 12 keys that can help you grow old successfully and with increased longevity. No matter your age, you can take steps now to age well into the future.

Starting on Thursday, April 7th at 3:00 p.m. (M.T.) 1 hour zoom sessions, will end on June 23. No cost!!

All are welcome!

There are 12 keys (lessons) in the program. You will need to sign up for the program by calling the Sunflower Extension District in your own county or you can call my office at 785-852-4285 or email: mdaily@ksu.edu.

We will do one lesson per week for 12 weeks. I know that seems like a long time, but it will be worth your time. There will be a handout every week on our web-site at: www.sunflower.k-state.edu/fcs. Once you have signed up I will be able to email you the handouts as well.

We will have sessions every week on Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. (M.T.) via zoom meetings. These sessions will be recorded for those that are not able to attend at that time. At the end of every lesson there will be an evaluation that I would appreciate you filling out and returning it to me. I will be posting on Facebook reminders for the program.

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
You CAN Incorporate STEM in your 4-H Project!

America needs people with expertise in technology, engineering and math!

Science happens all around us ... Find ways to incorporate STEM and inquiry-based learning with 4-H members. (Hint—refrain from giving them the answers and work with them to find the answers.)

Think of science as discovery:
Scientists ask questions, predict, compare data, test ideas, and communicate findings. Suggest problems for members to solve and resist feeling like you have to give them an answer. Encourage them to discover answers themselves.

Think of engineering as imaginative design:
Engineers think creatively and create designs that are useful. Challenge members to engineer something that improves a tool they use in their project.

Question every day occurrences:
- How is STEM related to what they are learning? Ask members to talk about how things work.
- Members are inquisitive and like puzzles.
  - What is in the food you feed your animals and why is it in the feed? What do the eggs do in a recipe?
- What is sandpaper made of and why does it work? Where does electricity or water come from?
- Find experiments related to each project area.
  - What is in a seed and how does it grow? Why are eggs an egg shape? How is ice cream made? How do robots work? How do things fly? How is science involved in riding a bike? What do animals need to stay healthy?
  - What kind of bait do fish like best and why?

Samples of ways to incorporate science content into a 4-H project.

**Chemical engineering.**
Youth involved in cooking groups can explore food by designing a new snack product. They can even use technology and design a commercial to market their new creation.

**Physics.**
Youth involved in a shooting sports group can experiment with distance and trajectories in arrow flight and report on the results.

**Entomologist.**
Youth involved in garden clubs can research the use of beneficial pests in gardens and on farms, and learn about entomology or the study of insects.

**Veterinary science.**
Youth enrolled in a horse and pony project may enjoy learning about various horse feeds and compare the differences in ingredients and how they affect the equine digestive system.

**Materials engineering.**
Youth involved in clothing and textiles can conducting an experiment that tests how different fabrics absorb dye.

**Environmental engineering.**
Youth interested in environmental projects can set up a water quality monitoring program for a local stream.

Sources:  https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/stem_programming_for_4_h_club_or_the_home_part_2
4-H’ers statewide may choose to utilize the online record option with ZBooks. This online record keeping software is identical to the new Project Report Form pdfs- meaning 4-H’ers and families now have the option to choose which format they feel more comfortable using. They can continue to fill out the form fillable pdf version of Project Report Forms or they may opt to keep their records online with ZBooks. ZBooks is user friendly and a great way to keep project records.

This amazing opportunity offers over 20 topics to choose from. Have you received your registration/information forms? If not, contact the Extension Office to receive one.

You won’t want to miss this!

April 2022:
24: Market Beef DNA Envelope order due
27: Small Livestock Weigh-In 6-7:00 pm

May 2022:
1: Project Deadline – Final Add/Drop for Projects
1: CN Breeding Heifer & Horse ID’s Due
1: KSF/KJLS Market Beef Nomination Due
15: CN Market Livestock ID’s Due

Three in person options available
Sherman County April 19 5-6 pm mt
Wallace County April 20 6:30-7:30 pm mt
Cheyenne County April 21 5:30-6:30 pm ct
**Cheyenne County**

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- **17th**: Happy Easter
- **20th**: YQCA Trainings
- **24th**: Deadline to order Mkt. Beef DNA Envelopes
- **26th**: Small Animal Weigh In 6-7:00 pm
Important Dates

- April 1: JR Leader Scholarships Due
- April 4: Promotion Committee Meeting
- April 4: 4-H Council
- April 6: Foods
- April 10: Ruleton Eager Beavers
- April 10: Prairie Dale
- April 15: Good Friday
- April 16: Cloverbud
- April 17: Easter
- April 18: Country Clovers
- April 18: Small Animal Weigh-In
- April 19: YQCA
- April 24: Sunflower 4-H

Rock Springs 4-H County Camp 2022 is much different this year!

Why the changes?
For more information, visit
https://www.kansas4-h.org/4-h-programs/camp/docs/Direct%20Mailing%20to%204H%20Families.pdf

For session pricing and to register, visit
https://www.rockspringsranch4hcamp.org/.

Session Dates:

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<td>Session 10</td>
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4-H Family Camp Dates:

- Session 1: June 3-5
- Session 2: August 5-7

Rock Springs County Camp will be making arrangements for a pickup spot in Colby, KS.

Call your local Extension Office for more information.

Small Animal Weigh - In
Monday, April 18, 2022,
from 4:00 - 6:00 PM at the
4-H Livestock Barn.
You must enroll in your Livestock Project before the weigh-in or you will show in open class.

All Other Projects
Add or Drop are due on
May 1, 2022, or you will show in open class.

Save the Date!
Discovery Days
June 1 - 3, 2022

What is Discovery Days?
For more information, visit:
https://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/conferences-events/discovery-days/index.html

Like us on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/sunflowerextensiondistrictshermancounty4h/
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Note: The events listed are tentative and subject to change. Always check the official 4-H calendar for the most up-to-date information.
When: April 20, 2022
Where: Wallace County Extension Office
Who: Any youth 8 years of age and older who will be exhibiting a market or breeding animal in the KS State Fair Grand Drive or KJLS is required to obtain certification.
Fair Board has said this year that all members in Wallace County weren’t required to do this, only members that will be going on in a livestock project. So this year if you take it you will be in charge of paying yourself. New members are encouraged to take it as well.

Visit www.yqca.org

Discovery Days 2022
When: June 1-3rd, 2022.
Who: 4-H members ages 13 to 18 years of age are eligible to participate.
What: Help youth learn new ideas, techniques, and skills they can use personally and in their 4-H clubs or groups and communities. Give youth in-depth training through hands-on educational sessions from content and youth development experts. Enhance personal growth by giving opportunities to develop responsibility, confidence, independence, accountability, problem-solving, decision-making, and time management skills.
For more information on how to get in on this opportunity, visit the website at www.ksre.ksu.edu.

Small animal weigh in will be held April 24 from 2-4 pm
**Notice time change**

2022 Wallace Co Fair Dates are July 25-30th
Please let the office know of any ideas you may have for a fair theme.
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- **April Fool's**: Date marked with a festive image indicating a prank day.
- **Small Animal Weigh-In 2-4**: Indicates an event on the 24th.
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