

River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

rivervalley.ksu.edu

August 2022
Volume 17 # 8

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REDUCING RANCH EXPENSES

K-State beef cattle experts share tips on how to maximize the bottom line in a time of rising costs

With inflation on the rise, many people are looking for creative ways to make the most of their financial resources. That is true for cattle ranchers as well according to Dustin Pendell, agricultural economist at Kansas State University. During a recent Cattle Chat podcast from K-State's beef cattle institute, Pendell along with nutritionist Phillip Lancaster, veterinarian, Bob Larson and veterinarian, Brad White discuss ways for producers to make the most of their dollars.

What are some of the things you think about when managing those rising input costs? This can be considered a broad question because there are a lot of different areas to consider. "One strategy to manage around price inputs is to participate in the futures and options markets," Pendell said, noting that these strategies offer investors the opportunity to make money or hedge on their investments. Other strategies could be labor cuts, increase revenue, incorporating rotational grazing, and minimizing feed wastes.

"Seventy percent of the variable costs on a cattle operation are related to feed expenses," Pendell said. He encourages ranchers to look at rotational grazing as a feed management option. Beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster explained that with rotational grazing cattle are moved from pasture to pasture frequently to allow the grass to recover and keep it from being over grazed. "A good grazing management technique is to adjust the rotation based on the forage response to the current growing conditions and grazing pressure," Lancaster said. Even if ranches have established good grazing management techniques to help extend cattle's time on pasture. It isn't going to do the rancher any good if the optimum stocking rate exceeds the pasture limits. "There is a connection between stocking rate and productivity per cow and per acre, and it is important to find what that optimum stocking rate number is," Lancaster said.

Along with intensive grazing, he encouraged producers to use their feed resources strategically. "Make sure you are only supplementing the cows that really need the extra nutrition and not the whole herd," Lancaster said. In order to do that, producers may need to group the cows into smaller numbers, which involves additional labor. Another aspect to look at is there a way to substitute or an alternative to the way I do things on the ranch. Looking on the cow-calf side, hay is going to be a big input cost no matter how we might look at it. Hay is going to cost more to make this year because of the rise in fuel cost. Efficiency is a key in our management practices this year to help with some of our costs. Identifying cows that aren't as efficient and getting rid of them can help reduce the amount of feed inputs that are needed.

There is more to reducing ranch expense than just changing feed management practices. If you know the price is going up and you have the cash available is there any way to pre-purchase your inputs with cash. Sometimes there is a possibility when a cash in hand a discount might be applied. When other expenses go up, producers may need to put more of their own "sweat equity" into the ranch to reduce the labor expense, according to veterinarian Bob Larson. "It is time to rethink how we use all our resources, including the labor expense.

Continued on Page 7

Central Kansas Warm Season Forage Field Day



Thursday, Aug. 18, 2022
Donuts at 8AM - Tours at 8:30AM

Saline Co. Conservation District Farm
3421 E. Water Well Rd., Salina, KS

From I-135: Take exit 88 and go 4 mi. east on Water Well Rd. Watch for event signage.

FREE TO ATTEND - - - - - NO RSVP NEEDED

Tour demonstration plots consisting of Hybrid Pearl Millet, Teff, Crabgrass, and Photoperiod Sensitive BMR Sorghum-Sudangrass.

Visit about *Sericea lespedeza* – identification, concerns and control.

See results of an Old World Bluestem trial using five different herbicide treatments.

Featured Presenters

- Mike Henry – Saline County Rancher & Plot Cooperator
- Trent Page – Sales Manager, Star Seed
- Jay Wisbey – Crop Production Agent, Central Kansas Extension District
- Cade Rensink – Director, Central Kansas Extension District



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Highly pathogenic avian influenza, or HPAI, is a rapidly spreading viral disease that can infect many types of birds. Avian influenza, often called avian flu or bird flu, but some strains are highly pathogenic, which means they are more deadly. Introduced by migrating wild birds, HPAI can spread through spring migration and affect all domestic poultry — small and backyard flocks as well as commercial industries.

Poultry with HPAI do not survive the illness. Vaccines for HPAI are not readily available.

Signs of Avian Influenza

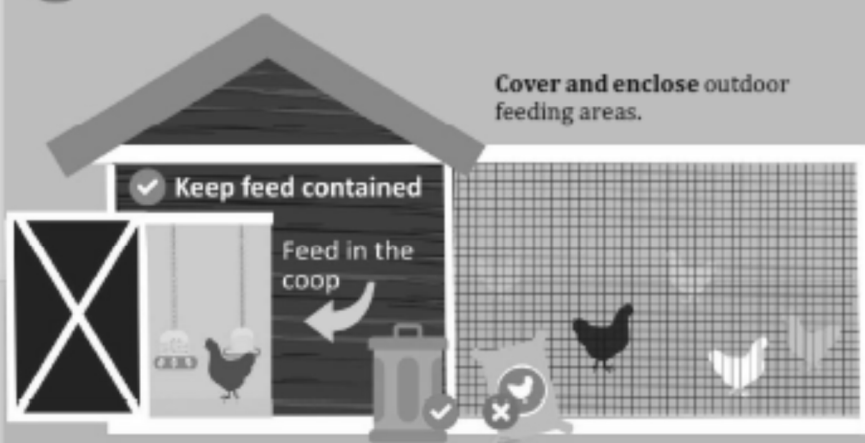
- Coughing and sneezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Extreme depression
- Lack of energy
- Decrease in feed or water intake
- Swelling or purple discoloration of head, eyelids, comb, wattle and legs
- Decrease in egg production
- Sudden unexplained death

Biosecurity is your best option to prevent HPAI from entering your small or backyard poultry flock.

Here is what you can do:

Protect Your Small Flock from Avian Influenza

- 1** Avoid attracting wild birds and waterfowl to your home or farm. Songbirds, sparrows, starlings, etc. are low risk.



- Clean up feed spills.
- Reduce puddles and standing water.
- Avoid visiting ponds and streams, especially with pets.
- Do not move birds from farm to farm.
- Isolate new birds.

- 2** Limit or halt travel with your birds to sales, shows and swaps.

Ensure you have clean hands, clothes, and footwear before handling your birds if you attend events. **Do not** allow others to handle your birds.



- 3** Limit your birds' visitors.

If someone must visit your birds: discuss where they have been. Have them wash their hands and wear clean clothes and footwear.



If your birds are sick or dying, call your extension office, veterinarian or the state veterinarian. For the extension livestock agent call Kaitlyn Hildebrand at 785-243-8185 or for a state veterinarian call the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health at 785-564-6601

A WORD ON THE ACIDITY OF TOMATOES

The following came from one of K-State's "Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe" publications. "Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe" is a collaborative effort between K-State and Karen Blakeslee, K-State's Food Preservation Specialist. These "Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe" publications can be picked up from your local extension office. Additionally, there is a wealth of information about current, safe home food preservation methods on the "Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe" webpage. I highly encourage anyone interested in home food preservation to check out the webpage: rrc.k-state.edu/preservation

Understand that, like anything else, best practices CHANGE as we learn more, so even experienced canners will benefit from staying up-to-date.

Select only disease-free, preferably vine-ripened, firm tomatoes for canning. Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes can also be canned.

Although tomatoes are usually considered to be acidic, some have pH values slightly above 4.6, which makes them a low-acid food. As such, tomato products must be acidified to a pH of 4.6 or below with **bottled** lemon juice, vinegar, or citric acid.

Properly acidified tomatoes can be safely processed in a boiling-water canner **or** pressure canner. **Both methods require acidification.** There are no recommendations for processing tomatoes without acidification.

Acidification Options for Tomatoes (choose one)			
	BOTTLED LEMON JUICE	CITRIC ACID	VINEGAR (5%)
Pints	1 tablespoon	¼ teaspoon	2 tablespoons
Quarts	2 tablespoons	½ teaspoon	4 tablespoons

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. When pressure canning tomatoes, does bottled lemon juice need to be added?

Yes, when either water bath canning or pressure canning, **bottled** lemon juice, citric acid, or vinegar must be added. See acidification instructions in the table above. For home canning bottled lemon juice has a consistent acid content, **fresh does not.**

2. My tomatoes froze on the vines, are they safe to use?

Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. The acid level has changed in the tomato and should not be used for canning. They can be frozen or eaten as fresh.

3. Can yellow "acid free" tomatoes be used in canning?

Yes. They have the same acid content as red tomatoes, but taste less acidic. They should be used as if they were red tomatoes.

4. Can I can my own salsa recipe?

Salsas are usually mixtures of acid **and low-acid** ingredients; they are an example of an acidified food. Salsas are safe for boiling-water canning **only if** the final pH is less than 4.6. Therefore, the specific recipe, and sometimes preparation method, must be scientifically validated (proven safe through scientific tests/studies). We only recommend recipes and procedures we know to be safe, and encourage consumers to use tested, science-based home-canning recipes from reliable sources (like the National Center for Home Food Preservation website) or some equipment or home preserving ingredient manufacturers.

5. Why does tomato juice separate after canning?

This is an enzymatic change that occurs when cutting tomatoes. To reduce separation, heat tomatoes quickly to a simmering temperature.

6. Can salsa be processed in a pressure canner?

Currently, there are no instructions to process salsa in a pressure canner. Use a water bath canner or steam canner (AND A TESTED RECIPE).

7. Can salsa be canned in quart jars?

No. Currently, there are no processing instructions to can salsa in jars larger than pints.

8. Can any variety of peppers be used in a salsa recipe?

Yes. Any variety of pepper can be used because of similar acid content. Do not, however, change the amount of peppers called for in the recipe. Any changes will alter the acidity of the recipe and make it unsafe.

Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Extension Agent at 785-243-8185 or kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

DINING WITH DIABETES TO BE HELD IN CONCORDIA IN SEPTEMBER

Nutrition and physical activity are keys to managing your type 2 diabetes, but where do you start? The Dining with Diabetes program can help!

The program includes:

- planning meals and snacks with delicious and healthy recipes
- cooking demonstrations and food sampling
- motivation and support — connect with others who are living with diabetes
- ideas for being more active
- an understanding of how diabetes affects your overall health

Dining with Diabetes consists of four sessions and a follow-up. Adults with type 2 diabetes and their family members, caregivers, and support persons are invited to participate. Individualized meal plans or guidance will not be provided.

The program costs \$25

There will be a Dining with Diabetes program this September on Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in Concordia at the Cloud County Resource Center, located at 107 W 7th St. Dates will be September 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd. The fifth follow-up session will be scheduled at a later date.

For questions, or to register, contact Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent at 785-243-8185 or kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

MEDICARE PART D PLANS 2023

It may be August, but that means Medicare Part D Open Enrollment is right around the corner. Though information about specific 2023 Medicare Part D Plans will not be available until October. Near the end of September or first part of October, Medicare Beneficiaries with a Part D Plan will receive information from their company informing them of any changes for 2023. The Open Enrollment Period for Part D Plans will be October 15th -December 7th.

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) Counselors are available in your area to help in shopping and enrolling in 2023 Part D Plans. Appointments will be available at our office locations in the River Valley Extension District. Be on the lookout in the September River Valley Extension District Newsletter for more information on appointment times. Some location's appointment times fill up fast, so make sure to call after September 5, 2022 to schedule your appointment. If you are new to Medicare or have any Medicare questions please contact Jordan Schuette, in the Washington County Office, by phone at 785- 325-2121.

UNDERSTANDING HOSPICE AND ADVANCED DIRECTIVES

If you have questions about advance directives or what hospice care provides? Plan to attend the upcoming program, Understanding Hospice and Advanced Directives on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at 2:00 pm at the Belleville Public Library (1327 19th Street, Belleville, KS 66935). Presented by Meadowlark Hospice Director, Amy Burr. Sponsored by K-State Research and Extension-River Valley District and Meadowlark Hospice.

Hospice care is more than caring for a patient in their last moments of life. It focuses on improving the quality of life for persons and their families faced with a life-limiting illness. The primary goals of hospice care are to provide comfort, relieve physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering, and promote the dignity of terminally ill persons. Hospice can help ease the burden on families in those final days, but when initiated early enough hospice can also help the patient and family prepare for the road ahead. Hospice is about living and making moments last when faced with a terminal illness.

Discover answers to your questions at this presentation about hospice care ranging from how it works, how it's paid for, and how you get started. It will provide an understanding of how hospice can ease the burden when a patient is faced with the decision of how to spend their last moments.

The presentation will also discuss advanced directives and the importance of having this critical conversation with your loved ones. Tools will be provided to help navigate those conversations.

Advanced directives can help ease the burden your loved ones face when they have to make decisions for you. They will be confident they are following your wishes and not left trying to determine what your wishes are.

This program will be held in person at the Belleville Public Library in Belleville, Kansas. Please RSVP to the River Valley Extension District Washington County Office by calling 785-325-2121. For more information, contact Jordan Schuette at jschuette@ksu.edu or call her at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121.

FALL FLING

Fellowship and fun will be a large part of the upcoming Fall Fling, Monday, October 10th in the Clay Center 4-H Conference Center at the Clay County Fairgrounds. All interested men and women in the area are encouraged to attend. Please bring a salad to share with others. Beverages and table service will be provided. Refrigeration is available for salads.

The following programs are scheduled for the day.

The morning program will start at 10:30 a.m. and feature Lou Ann Schneider, a Federal Veterinarian. Her program will be on Wild Horse Gatherings.

The afternoon program will start around 1 p.m. and feature author Lindsay Metcalf. She is the author of non-fiction children's books. There will be books available at this program.

This is a free program and Clay County Homemaker Extension invites everyone to attend.

BLOSSOM END ROT ON TOMATOES

Do you have tomatoes with a sunken, brown leathery patch on the bottom of the fruit? If so, then you probably have blossom end rot. Blossom end rot is not a disease; it is a condition that is caused by a lack of calcium in the soil. In Kansas this is not necessarily the case, because Kansas soils are derived from limestone, which is partially made up of calcium. So, what causes blossom end rot in Kansas? Actually, there are a number of possible causes, especially on tomatoes. Let's look at some of the other possible causes of blossom end rot.

The first possible cause could be that the tomato tops have outgrown the root system. During cooler spring weather the root system can keep up, but when it turns hot and dry, the plant tries to keep itself alive by sending water; with the calcium it carries to the leaves, and the fruit is bypassed. The plant responds to the heat and lack of calcium with new root growth which should allow the condition to correct itself after a couple of weeks.

The second possible cause could be heavy fertilization, especially with ammonium forms of nitrogen, which can encourage this condition. Heavy fertilization encourages more top foliage growth than root growth causing the ammonium form of nitrogen to compete with calcium for uptake through the roots to the fruit.

The third possible cause could be anything that disturbs the plant roots such as hoeing too deep. Mulching your plants will help because it keeps the soil surface cooler and reduces weed growth and promotes a better environment for root growth.

The fourth possible cause could be inconsistent watering. Keep soil moist but not waterlogged. Mulching can help by keeping the soil moisture level consistent over time. Even so, there are some years you do everything right and the condition shows up due to the weather. In such cases, remember that blossom-end rot is a temporary condition, and plants should come out of it in a couple of weeks. You want to pick off affected fruit to encourage new fruit formation. Even though blossom end rot is most common on tomatoes, it can also

affect squash, peppers, and watermelons. If you are noticing that you have a lot of blossom end rot occurring, go through the possible causes and see if you can find what might be causing the problem. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at khatesohl@ksu.edu.

DIVIDING DAYLILIES

Daylilies are like Iris they need to be divided every three to five years to maintain good flower production. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them at this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make the plants easier to handle.

Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place. Dividing in place is practical if it hasn't been long since the last division happened. In most cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug.

Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you'll save more roots by using spading forks back-to-back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each back to its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year after division but will return to normal until the plants need to be divided again. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at khatesohl@ksu.edu.

TOMATO CRACKING

Tomatoes often have problems with cracking caused by pressure inside the fruit that is more than the skin can handle. Cracks are usually on the upper part of the fruit and can be concentric (in concentric circles around the stem) or radial (radiating from the stem).

Tomatoes have a root system that is very dense and fibrous and is quite efficient in picking up water. Unfortunately, the root system can become unbalanced with the top of the plant

Early in the season, it may be small in relation to the top growth resulting in blossom-end rot during hot, dry weather. Later it may be so efficient that it provides too much water when we get rain or irrigate heavily after a dry spell. This quick influx of water can cause the tomato fruit to crack.

Therefore, even consistent watering can help with cracking. Mulching will also help because it moderates moisture levels in the soil. However, you can do everything right and still have problems with cracking in some years. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or at khatesohl@ksu.edu.

PLANNING YOUR WHEAT FERTILITY PROGRAM: START NOW BY SOIL TESTING

Wheat planting is not far away for Kansas, so now is the time to get your soil sampling done to have good information on which to base your fertilizer inputs. This is particularly important with the higher fertilizer prices.

The most important tests and nutrients to focus on depends on location, the choices you make when applying N, and tillage system. The nutrients for which wheat is most likely to show responses statewide are nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P). Wheat is the most P-responsive crop in Kansas, and while P removal with wheat may be less than with corn or soybeans, the relative yield response is often the highest. In addition, low soil pH is becoming a problem, especially fields with a history of high rates of N application and relatively low cation exchange capacity.

The 0-6 inch soil sample - A standard 0-6 inch surface sample is normally used to test for pH and the non-mobile nutrients such as P and K. Phosphorus and K are buffered processes in our Kansas soils. This simply means that the soil contains significant quantities of these nutrients, and the soil tests we commonly use provide an index value of the amounts available to the plant, not a true quantitative measure of the amounts present. In the case of P, most Kansas soils require about 18 pounds of P₂O₅ to increase 1 ppm in soil test P; for K is around 8 pounds K₂O to increase 1 ppm K soil test.

The buffering value for both P and K varies based on soil cation exchange capacity (CEC) and the soil test levels. On high CEC soils, especially those soils with high clay content, the buffering capacity goes up, so the soil test levels will change more slowly. However, on low CEC soils, the buffering capacity can be much lower, and soil test levels can change rapidly. The same situation occurs with soil test levels. On soils with low soil test P or K levels, it will require more P or K to raise the soil test than at high soil test levels.

In addition to requesting the standard soil tests of pH, P, and K from the 0-6 inch surface sample, producers might also want to monitor soil organic matter levels and micronutrients such as zinc (Zn).

Soil organic matter (SOM) is an important source of nutrients such as N and sulfur (S). When calculating the fertilizer needs both these nutrients, SOM is taken into consideration. For

wheat production, 10 pounds of available N and 2.5 pounds of S is credited for every 1% SOM in the soil.

The 0-24 inch soil sample - In addition to pH, SOM, P, K, and Zn -- all of which are non-mobile in soils and accumulate in the surface -- the mobile nutrients N, S, and chloride can provide significant yield responses when deficient in soils. Since all three of these nutrients are mobile in soils and tend to accumulate in the subsoil, we strongly recommend the use of a 24-inch profile soil sample prior to growing wheat, corn, or grain sorghum.

Nitrogen is a nutrient likely to provide yield response statewide. One common misconception is that the accumulation of N in the soil profile only occurs in the drier, western half of the state. However, with our dry winters, N can accumulate in the soil statewide.

In many years, especially following dry summers, significant amounts of N can be present in soils at wheat planting. On the other hand, after good yields, the residual N levels may be lower than the commonly used "default" value, and N fertilizer rates would need to be adjusted accordingly.

Sulfur deficiency is increasing across the state in wheat production also. There are two primary causes: the reduction in sulfur deposition from the atmosphere seen over the past 2-3 decades, and the reduction in S content in many P fertilizers. While not as soluble as nitrate, S is also a relatively mobile nutrient which accumulates in the subsoil.

Chloride (Cl) is the third essential mobile element to be considered for wheat production. Chloride deficiency is normally found in the eastern half of the state on soils that do not have a history of potash (KCl) application. In general, this includes many areas in eastern Kansas, north of the Kansas River, and the central corridor of wheat production. Chloride deficiency is associated with grass crops, wheat, corn, and grain sorghum, and is correlated with the plants ability to resist plant disease.

Dorivar Ruiz Diaz-KSU Nutrient Management Specialist

REDUCING RANCH EXPENSES (FROM COVER)

The investment in labor might be less than what I've got in fuel, for example," Larson said. The experts agree that reducing expenses is one way to manage in a time of increasing inputs. Veterinarian Brad White said producers might also look for ways to increase revenue. "This might be a good time to look at alternative marketing strategies," White said. "Get out your spreadsheet and see if hitting a different marketing window will be cost efficient." For region-specific tips, Lancaster recommended reaching out to a local county extension agent or an area veterinarian.

Kaitlyn Hildebrand, RVD Livestock Agent, 785-243-8185

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RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT

“2022 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”

DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
Aug. 2-6		North Central Kansas Free Fair	Belleville-Republic County Fairgrounds
Aug. 9	6pm	Medicare Basics Program	Washington-FNB, 101 C Street
Aug. 18	8am	Central Kansas Warm Season Forage Field Day	Salina- 3421 E. Water Well Road
Aug.18	2pm	Understanding Hospice and Advanced Directives	Belleville-Public Library-1327 19th Street
September 1, 8, 15, 22	6-8pm	Dining With Diabetes	Concordia- 107 W 7th Street, Cloud Co. Resource Center
October 10	10:30am	Fall Fling	Clay Center- 4-H Conference Center, Fairgrounds