

## **D's Notes 10/19/21**

### **2021 Fall Ranch Management Seminar Series**

The 2021 Fall Ranch Management Seminar Series is being hosted in Larned, on Wednesday, Nov. 10 with a meal starting at 5:30 pm at the J.A. Haas Building, 403 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street.

This seminar include a series of presentations focused on enhancing profit in beef production and a 'Town Hall' question-and-answer session where producers can ask questions to local/district and state extension specialists.

Producers are encouraged to bring their questions on cow-calf animal health, nutrition, genetics, reproduction and management to the session. Please RSVP by Thursday, November 4 by calling the Pawnee Co. Extension Office at 620-285-6901.

Online updates about the series can be found at *KSUBeef.org*.

### **Off-Road Safety Week October 16-24 - Be Responsible Riding and Driving**

Cooler autumn months are a big draw for enthusiasts, hunters, campers, and other adventurers to enjoy their ATVs, dirt bikes, and side-by-sides. And for the first time, the ASI, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association are partnering to promote off-road safety during a special week.

October 9, trained Extension agents, led 15 area youth and adults in a set of safety trainings.

### **Reminder**

Harvest tomatoes and peppers when frost threatens

### **Control Broadleaf Weeds in Lawns in Late October - Early November**

Late October to early November is the most effective time to control broadleaf weeds in lawns. Dandelions usually produce a flush of new plants in late September, and the winter annual weeds henbit and chickweed should have germinated in October. These young plants are small and easily controlled with herbicides such as 2,4-D or combination products (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out) that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba. Even established dandelions are more easily controlled now than in the spring because they are actively moving materials from the top portion of the plant to the roots in the fall. Herbicides will translocate to the roots as well and will kill the plant from the roots up. Choose a day that is 50 degrees or higher. The better the weed is growing, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots. Cold temperatures will slow this process but these products will still work at lower temperatures. Weed Free Zone (also sold under the name of Speed Zone) contains the three active ingredients mentioned above, plus carfentrazone. It will give a quicker response than the other products mentioned especially as temperatures move below 50 degrees. (Ward Upham)

### **Why Late Lawn Seedings Often Fail**

We normally recommend that Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue be seeded in September but no later than October 15. Though plantings later than October 15 can be successful, the odds of success diminish as time passes.

The problem with late plantings is not that the seed will not come up or that young grass plants are sensitive to cold. Most often, the problem is with rooting. Unless the young grass plants have a fairly extensive root system, the freezing and thawing that takes place during winter heaves plants out of the ground, and they dry out and die. Regardless of when planted, be sure the new lawn is kept watered through the fall. More mature lawns will need less frequent watering but all should go into the winter with moist soil. (Ward Upham)

### **Tucking Your Lawnmower in for the Winter**

If you are done mowing for the year, be sure to service your mower before putting it away. Make sure you drain the gas tank of gasoline-powered engines or use a gasoline stabilizer. Untreated gasoline can become thick and gummy. A few drops of oil squirted inside the spark plug hole (after you remove the spark plug) will help lubricate the cylinder. While you have the spark plug removed, replace it with a new one. If your equipment has a battery, clean the battery terminals, which usually corrode during the season. A wire-bristle brush is a good tool for doing this. The battery can then be removed or connected to a battery maintainer that will keep it charged over winter. If you remove the battery, be sure to store it in a protected location for the winter (a cool basement works best). Now is also an excellent time to sharpen mower blades so they'll be ready next spring.

Sharpening rotary mower blades is fairly straightforward. The following steps will guide you through this process:

- \* Check the blade for major damage. If you can't fix it, it will need to be replaced.
- \* Remove grass and debris from the blade with a moist cloth. Dry before beginning to sharpen the cutting edge.
- \* Remove nicks from the cutting edge, using a grinding wheel or hand-file.
- \* If using a grinding wheel, match the existing edge angle to the wheel. If hand-filing, file at the same angle as the existing edge.
- \* Grind or file until the edge is 1/32 inch, about the size of a period. Sharpening to a razor edge may result in the edge folding over during use resulting in a poor cut.
- \* Particularly with a grinding wheel, avoid overheating the blade as this may warp it.
- \* Clean the blade with solvent or oil, much like if you were cleaning a gun, for optimum winter storage. Avoid using water because it will promote rust.

Following these tips can help you better prepare your mower for winter storage and also save you some steps this coming spring. (Ward Upham)

### **Hardiness of Cool-Season Vegetables**

Cool-season vegetables vary in cold tolerance, with some able to take colder temperatures than others. Semi-hardy crops can take a light frost but are damaged by

temperatures in the mid- to upper-20s. Examples include beets, Chinese cabbage, collards, Irish potatoes, Bibb lettuce, mustard, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, and leaf lettuce. Covering these plants when cold weather threatens can help extend the harvest season.

Plants termed "hardy" can take lower temperatures but are damaged when the temperature drops to the low 20s. These include cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, turnips, and kale.

Certain root crops can essentially be stored outside even after the leaves have been damaged or killed by frost. Beets, carrots, potatoes and turnips can be mulched and harvested as needed until the soil starts to freeze in late November to December.

Growing vegetables in Kansas can be a challenge, but we have an extremely long gardening season. We can harvest from early April (asparagus) to early December. Winter is a good time to plan and prepare for next year's crops. (Ward Upham)

### **Keeping Your Pumpkin Longer**

If you buy your pumpkins early, there are some tricks to make them last. Make sure the pumpkin wasn't harvested too early; before the rind developed a hard, waxy layer to keep it from drying out and shriveling. Test the pumpkin with your thumbnail. If it penetrates the fruit easily, it was harvested too early. Pumpkins also keep better in cooler weather. Even mature pumpkins may benefit from a light application of a spray wax such as that used for cars.

If you carve your pumpkins consider that the seeds can be saved and roasted. Scoop out the seeds, rinse them well to remove any strands of tissue that have remained and spread them out so they can dry. Once dry, they can be roasted on a cookie sheet for 10 to 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Roast larger seeds for the longer amount of time.

If you prefer salted seeds, soak the seeds in a brine. Make the brine by combining 2 tablespoons of salt for every 2 cups of water. Add the seeds to the brine and bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain, toss with a tablespoon of olive oil and spread on a cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Check the seeds during the last 5 minutes and remove when done.

Note that carving reduces the longevity of pumpkins with carved pumpkins doing well to last a week. (Ward Upham)

### **Winter Storage of Summer Bulbs**

As winter approaches, we need to start thinking about storage of the bulbs that will not survive Kansas winters. The bulbs of gladiolus, caladium, dahlia, tuberous begonia, calla lily, and canna lily need to be dug and stored so they can be planted next year. Actually, the storage organ of the above plants is not a true bulb. Canna and calla lilies are rhizomes, caladium, and tuberous begonias are tubers, gladiolus is a corm, and dahlia is a tuberous rooted plant.

All of these plants should be dug after frost has browned the foliage. Then, allow them to dry for about a week in a shady, well-ventilated site such as a garage or tool shed. Freezing temperatures should be avoided. Remove any excess soil and pack them

in peat moss, vermiculite, or perlite. Make sure the bulbs don't touch so that if one decays, the rot doesn't spread. Dusting them with fungicide before storage will help prevent them from rotting.

Caladium should be stored between 50 and 60 degrees F. The other bulbs mentioned should be stored as near 40 degrees F as possible. Finding a good spot to store the bulbs may be difficult. Some people place them against a basement wall farthest from the furnace and insulate them so the wall keeps them cool. (Ward Upham)