

# *Extension Connection*

**AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER**

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## **Cover Crop Field Day set for May 13 at K-State HB Ranch near Hays**



HAYS, Kan. –

Growing cover crops to enhance soil quality and nutrient cycling and suppress weeds and pests in wheat production systems is increasingly being

considered by producers, but the water requirements pose a concern for growers in western Kansas. Kansas State University researchers have been evaluating cover crop management options in water-limited environments and will discuss their findings at a Cover Crop Field Day on Friday, May 13, at the K-State HB Ranch near Hays. The day includes presentations by K-State faculty, growers and a government official.

K-State cover crop research – John Holman, K-State agronomist

Cover crop plot tour – Augustine Obour, K-State agronomist

Growers' perspective – Brice Custer and Larry Manhart, cover crop growers

Cover crops and soil health – Candy Thomas, U.S.

Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

Grazing cover crops – Sandy Johnson, K-State animal scientist

The field day and tour starts at 10 a.m. at K-State's HB Ranch. A complimentary lunch is included. The ranch is four miles south of the Cedar Bluff Dam on Kansas Highway 147. Attendees are asked to RSVP by May 6 to Milissa Alexander at 785-625-3425 or [milissa@ksu.edu](mailto:milissa@ksu.edu).

## **Beef Improvement Federation Convention to be held in Manhattan, KS, June 14-17, 2016**

The 2016 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Annual Meeting and Research Symposium will be June 14-17 at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Manhattan, Kansas. The theme for this year's program is "Progress on the Prairie." Hosted by Kansas State University, the event will start at noon on Tuesday, June 14 with registration and at 1p.m. a Young Producers Symposium. A welcome reception begins at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will allow the research community and industry to meet and discuss issues surrounding the genetic improvement of beef cattle and for attendees to learn about technologies and management practices that can aid in the profitability of their operations.

On Wednesday, June 15, the meeting will start at 8 a.m. with a welcome and general session. Presentations and technical breakout sessions will follow through June 16. Attendees are invited to participate in producer tours on Friday, June 17. Sessions to be covered include a variety of presentations on: "Opportunities for the Beef Value Chain: Can we become more coordinated and more profitable," and "Protecting producer profit for the future." For a complete schedule, visit

<http://beefimprovement.org/convention/general-information>.

A link to online registration for the conference is coming soon. Early registration is offered at a discounted rate and ends May 1. Day-only, student and spouse discount rates will also be available. A room block is available at the conference hotel; go online to <http://beefimprovement.org/convention/general-information> for room block instructions.

The Beef Improvement Federation was formed more than 45 years ago to standardize beef cattle performance programs and evaluation methodology and to create greater awareness, acceptance and usage of these concepts for the genetic improvement of beef cattle. It represents more than 40 state and national beef cattle associations. For more information about this year's event, contact Bob Weaber, Associate Professor/Extension Beef Specialist with Kansas State University at 785-532-1460 or [bweaber@k-state.edu](mailto:bweaber@k-state.edu).

### **Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns**



The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have

henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. Keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating these plants as they are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F so the young

plants are actively growing and will take up the chemical.

Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring (March) to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth. (Ward Upham, KSRE Rapid Response Specialist)

### **Grow Your Own Food in a Community Garden**

For a small fee, you can rent a plot of land to grow food at a community garden! The Finney County Extension Master Gardeners Community



Garden will be available for a third year, to anyone interested in having a garden plot. Plots sizes are 10' x 10' and cost is \$20 per plot. At the end of the garden season, \$10 will be refunded when the plot(s) plant compost is cleaned. The primary focus of the Community Garden is to increase and expand access to healthy, fresh foods.

This Community Garden has some unique features to help people desiring a place to garden. Master Gardeners and the Finney County Extension Office will be glad to provide assistance in answering questions about gardening. A limited number of tools, hoses and watering equipment are available for gardeners to use in their plots. The Community Garden is located next to the Finney County Extension office, 501 S 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Garden City.

If you are interested in a plot, Registration Forms and Rules and Regulations are available at the Finney County office. Register NOW and reserve a garden plot or two. Gardening season is here, so don't delay and sign up for a plot before they are all gone.

If you have any questions about the Master Gardeners Community Garden, contact the Finney County Office by phone 620-272-3670 or email [fi@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:fi@listserv.ksu.edu).

### **Help for New Vegetable Gardeners**

Kansans that are new to vegetable gardening often don't know how much of each crop to plant. K-State Research and Extension has a publication that can help. The "Vegetable Garden Planning Guide" gives information on the size of planting needed per person and the average

crop expected per 100 feet. Also included is a garden calendar highlighting suggested planting dates and expected harvest dates. Crop specific information is detailed including days to germinate, plants or seeds needed per 100 feet of row, depth of planting, spacing within the row and spacing between rows. You can find the publication at your local county extension office or online at:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf315.pdf>

Another, more in-depth publication titled the “Kansas Garden Guide” is also available. This 77-page booklet has sections on planning a garden, composting, improving soil, seeding and planting, garden care, watering, planting gardens for fall production, insect and disease control, container gardening, season extension and harvesting and storing. This is followed by an extensive section on how to grow specific vegetables and herbs. You may order the print publication at

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/Item.aspx?catId=534&pubId=8219>

This web page also provides a link to a free PDF copy of the same publication. If you don't know the location of your county extension office, see <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Map.aspx> (Ward Upham, KSRE Rapid Response Specialist)

## Mole Control



Though moles spend most of their time underground, the damage they cause above ground is all too visible. Meandering paths of upheaved soil are evidence of the small

mammals foraging for food. Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after being built while others are travel lanes and used for a longer period of time. Even though moles do not feed on plant matter, they can still cause damage by disturbing roots and uprooting small plants.

Numerous home remedies have been concocted to control moles including chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleaches, windmills, and human hair. None have been found to provide consistent and reliable control. Poison baits also fail to work because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not vegetable matter. Even grub control products are ineffective as they do not control earthworms, and earthworms are the primary food source for moles.

The best control method is the use of traps. There are three types of traps (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each can be effective but may take some time to master. Try the following suggestions.

Moles use some tunnels more than others. Use a broomstick or something similar to poke holes in a number of runs. Check a day later to see which runs have been “repaired.” These are the active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place a trap in an active run by excavating soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finally, push down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. Moles should be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. Move traps if no moles are caught within three days.

For more information as well as “How-to” videos, see <http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html> (Ward Upham, KSRE Rapid Response Specialist)

## Upcoming Events

### **May:**

- 2 & 3<sup>rd</sup>: PQA & LQA Certification training
- 6<sup>th</sup>: Finney County Spring Livestock Show  
Pre-registration deadline
- 9 & 10<sup>th</sup>: 4-H Livestock Tag-in (5p.m.-7p.m.)
- 20 & 21<sup>st</sup>: Finney County Spring Livestock Show
- 24<sup>th</sup>: Cattle Feeders College
- 25<sup>th</sup>: Tractor Safety Training
- 30<sup>th</sup>: Office Closed for Memorial Day