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The 2010 Census Coming Soon

By Ed Browning

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau attempts to count every resident living in the United States. This includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens and non-citizens.

It's not only interesting to see the changes in our country's population, but it's also important to learn how many more of us there are and what trends have shifted. For example, in 2000 our population was 291,421,906. In June 2006 it was estimated that we had just surpassed 300 million. However, there's no way of knowing what the actual number is without taking a census. Below are some things you should know.

- The census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- Your participation in the census is required by law.
- Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census.
- Census data are used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year.

Missouri could lose a seat in Congress to some other state unless it is determined by the census that our population is great enough to need our current nine Congressional districts. Additionally, funding for grants, contracts and other programs are many times dependent on population numbers. Further reductions in financial support from the federal government might cause additional funding issues for University of Missouri Extension.

Historical census information has been important to me personally in a quest to learn more about my family. Fill out the census report if for no other reason than to make it easier for your descendents to learn more about you. They'll have to wait 72 years to see it because it is protected by law.

Fun is Harvesting from the Garden

By John Hobbs

If you planted a garden this past spring, you have and should be seeing some of the fruits - or in this case, vegetables - of your labor. Maybe you're a regular green thumb and know exactly when to pull all of your fruits and vegetables. However, if you're a novice in the gardening game maybe you're not too sure when the proper time to harvest is. Here are some suggestions.

- **When should you pick blackberries?**

The exact time to harvest blackberries varies by cultivar, with thorny blackberries normally ripening earlier than thornless types. But there are some general guidelines to keep in mind when harvesting blackberries. Do not pick blackberries too early or berry size and flavor will be sacrificed. Two major characteristics determining maturity for harvest are fruit color and ease of separation. Blackberries usually develop a dull, black color with plump, juicy fruitlets as they ripen. The berries soften and produce the characteristic flavor. Full color often develops before the berries separate easily. Pick the berries by gently lifting the berry with the thumb and fingers. The receptacle, or center part of the fruit, remains in the fruit when blackberries are harvested, unlike raspberries, which leave the receptacle on the bush. Take care not to crush the berries or expose them to the hot sun. When possible, avoid picking berries when they are wet. They'll probably need picking every second or third day. Cool the berries immediately after harvest to extend shelf life. Keep them refrigerated under high relative humidity and use within three to five days.

- **Is there a clue when to pull onions?**

Onions are ready to harvest when about half the plants have tops that have fallen over. This is a sign that the onions are mature and need to be pulled out of the ground as bulbs may sunburn without foliage to protect them. The secret to onions keeping well is to allow the tops to dry completely before storage. Move onions to a shaded, well-ventilated area after harvest. After tops are completely dry, store in a cool, dry location. Large-necked onions take more time to dry than small-necked onions such as Bermuda types. Avoid storage in plastic bags because the lack of air circulation will shorten storage life. Use an open, mesh bag instead.

- **When is sweet corn ready to pick? Observe the raccoons.**

It seems the official sweet corn inspector should be the raccoon as they seem to harvest the sweet corn the day before you plan to pick it. Instead of discussing picking corn, I would like discuss an alternative to keep the raccoons out. The control measure you can have success with is the electric fence. Here are some suggestions on how to set up an electric fence to keep raccoons out of your corn.



- Two or more wires must be used. Place the first about 5 inches above the ground and the second 4 inches above the first or 9 inches above ground. Raccoons must not be able to crawl under, go between or go over the wires without being shocked.
- Fence posts used for electric fences work well for this application as do the insulators used to support the electric wire.
- It is much easier to use the woven(poly) electric wire with strands of wire embedded than to use a solid metal wire. The woven wire is easier to bend around corners and to roll up when done for the year.
- Though both the plug-in and battery operated fences work, the battery operated types allow more versatility in where corn is grown. One set of batteries is usually sufficient for the season.
- Start the charger before the corn is close to being ripe. Once raccoons get a taste of the corn, they are more difficult to discourage.
- Control weeds near the wire. Weeds can intercept the voltage if they touch a wire and allow raccoons entry beyond the weed.
- Check the wire occasionally to make sure you have current. This can be done easily by using tools available for sale that will measure the voltage. They are worth the money.

Livestock and the World Wide Web

By Dona Funk

The internet can be very useful but very scary. Many people are using it to get their ideas out there to millions of people and sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between opinions and facts. Animal agriculture is one that has been impacted by the internet greatly. Producers can find information about raising livestock, market reports, weather forecasts and much more. However, some of what is out there really shouldn't be. Here are a few things that I just randomly put in a search engine and what I found.

- Cows have rights - 1,280,000 results came up. On the top of the page is an advertisement for an organization that is trying hard to make sure cows have the same rights as humans. However, part way down the list is an article from 1998 that talks about that same organizations attempt to free 71,000 cows from their human captors in Wisconsin. Within several hours 43 cows had been hit by cars, 11 had fallen off bridges and drowned, and three had been electrocuted from chewing on power lines.
- Feeding meat goats - this search turned out better. There were 596,000 websites listed and the first ones were research based information. When I changed what I was searching for to meat goat feeds, the number of results increased to over 18 million and most were trying to sell feed for meat goats. This example shows that what you type in the search engine really determines what you get.
- Vaccinating a cow - 959,000 results came up. The first one is from *eHow* which is a site that tells people how to do everything from baking bread to vaccinating a cow. It is a very short article, doesn't tell where to put the vaccination or what to use but says that it is moderately easy to do. It does tell you to consult a veterinarian but forgets to even tell you to restrain the animal before giving the vaccination. Luckily, further down the list of results are several good publications from better qualified sources.

So what is the best way to get the information you are looking for? You can always contact your local University of Missouri Extension office for help. If you would rather search the internet, try to remember a few things. Search for exactly what you are looking for. In the meat goat example I used, I was not looking to buy feed for goats, I wanted to know how to feed them. There was a difference in the results that I got. The other thing to remember is to look at the source of the information. Most research based, unbiased information will come from an educational institution. The addresses for these websites usually end in .edu. Another hint is to compare the results that you get. If one site tells you one thing and another tells you something completely different, keep looking to see which one is correct.

In the News

By Ed Browning

Three recent articles illustrate the need to be involved in issues that may affect you. This isn't intended to be politicizing, but if you're a livestock producer, your livelihood could possibly be in jeopardy.

One is in Missouri Farm Bureau's July/August "Show Me" magazine. It's entitled "Understanding the animal activist....Wolves in sheep's clothing". Another article in this publication is entitled 'Court's pesticide ruling not good sign for farmers'.

The other 'The Carbon Footprint of Animal Agriculture', is about a webcast that will be offered in July. It is referred to in a monthly newsletter published by the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center.

Something to Think About

By Eldon Cole

You're all aware of animal activists who "infiltrate" farms, packing plants, and livestock markets and take pictures both still and video, that are leaked to the media. They usually show a rather disturbing side of agriculture that does not endear this important industry to many who are not closely related to it.

What would such an infiltrator find if they arrived at your farm and spent several weeks taking undercover pictures of your day-to-day activities? I hope it doesn't happen in this area, but it seems no one is immune anymore to such an invasion. Agriculture, from big operations to the smallest farm needs to keep it's guard up and ask yourself frequently, what might a hidden camera reveal?

Water Quality

By Eldon Cole

I frequently see articles about the need for high quality water for livestock. I totally agree, we should attempt to provide the best quality water within reason, but don't be panicked into thinking your water's bad unless you really have some unbiased source of information proving it.

Many of you recall a water study that was conducted at the University of Missouri Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 that looked at the water quality issue. The first two years stocker steers were the test animals while spring-calving cows and their calves made up the trial the last two years.

Each year one-half of the animals were provided crystal clear, well-water from the deep well near the pastures. The "dirty" water was hauled daily from ponds that had cattle traffic in them. We'd have liked to actually had a small pond in each of the 8 replicated pastures, but since they were only 2.5 acres in size that wasn't practical. The following table sums up our findings.

Beef Steers (2 year average for 64 steers in 16 pastures)		
	Pond Water	Well Water
Water Intake (gallon/head/day)	9.0	8.8
Free-Choice Water Intake	5.2	5.0
ADG (lb/day)	1.02	1.02

Cow/Calf Pairs (2 year average for 32 pairs in 16 pastures)		
	Pond Water	Well Water
Water Intake (gallon/head/day)	21.8	20.0
Free-Choice Water Intake	11.4	9.3
Cow weight change (lb.)	-44.3	-60.1
Calf ADG (lb./day)	1.82	1.82

The bottom line, we could not see any difference in animal performance any year for either class of cattle. We saw no significant visual differences. The water was analyzed periodically with iron being the only mineral that consistently was slightly above the acceptable level for human consumption in the pond water. Bacterial counts were elevated in the pond water, sometimes several thousand units above the safe limit for humans.

The final three years of the project we set up, side-by-side in a pasture, two water tanks one contained clear, cool well water and the other was dirty pond water that was hauled

in daily. Intake was measured in those tanks throughout the duration of the trial. Once again, virtually no difference in water intake was noted between the two sources. During the length of the trial, there were weeks when differences in their choice of water was striking, but no definite reasons could be identified. The one year a significant intake difference was noted, the cattle actually consumed 3 more gallons of pond water per day than the well water.

Most of the articles touting the need for and performance response from "quality" water refer to trials northwest of Missouri. Much comes from Canada and Montana. One of their major finding was elevated sulfate levels in the pond or dugout supplies. Our 4 years of water analyses did not reveal any sulfate levels that would be a concern. The greatest sulfate level found was 15 milligrams per liter.

Ponds, if properly managed, can be a source of cooling for cattle on hot fescue pastures. Sure, it's not good to have a mud hole pond that could limit water intake and increase the threat of hoof problems and perhaps other disease risks. Just because your cattle drink from a pond doesn't mean you're compromising performance.

The next time you read a water quality article, consider where it came from and how the trial was conducted.

Japanese Beetle

By Ed Browning

The Japanese Beetle isn't new to southwest Missouri, but there seems to be more reports this year. This is one insect for which all of us should be watching. It is one of the most devastating pests in the landscape. The JB chews leaf tissue between the veins of the leaf, hence the skeletonized leaves you may find. They'll start at the top of a plant and work their way down.

There are control measures available to the homeowner and gardener, but once they infest an area it's probably going to be a never ending battle. In the adult stage, they can be attacked with insecticides, organic or alternative types of control products, but there is only about a two week period to achieve this. The same types of controls are available in the larval stage, but timeliness is critical. Control measures in this stage need to be conducted while the grubs are in the upper soil region.

Home Food Preservation Classes to be Offered

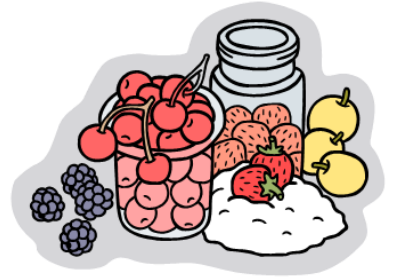
University of Missouri Extension in cooperation with the Neosho Farmers Market will be offering two hands-on “Home Canning the Safe Way” classes.

- **Wednesday, August 5.** The basics of home food preservation will be covered. Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and participate in the process of pressure canning green beans or another garden vegetable from fresh-picked to sealed in the jars. Learn the difference between boiling water canning and pressure canning and which foods are appropriate for each. Freezing foods will also be discussed. Cost is \$10 per person. Class is 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, August 5.** Come learn the art of jelly and pickle making. We will go to the kitchen and make a batch of both. Learn how to process in a boiling water canner. We will also discuss drying of foods. Cost is \$10 per person. Class is at 6:00 –8:30 p.m.

Classes will be held at the First Lutheran Church, 431 Cemetery Rd., Neosho. (Corner of Cemetery Rd. and Hwy 60)

These classes will be taught by Tammy Roberts, a nutrition and health education specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

Participants will receive MU Extension guide sheets that include basic information for canning or the making of jams, jellies and pickles.



Class registration – Please return with check

Name: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone _____

Circle session attending

August 5—2:00 p.m.

August 5—6:00 p.m.

Cost is \$10 per person:

**Make check payable and mail to: Newton County University Extension, 1900 S. Hwy 71, Neosho, MO 64850
For more information, call 417-455-9500**



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Newton County
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Home Food Preservation Classes

scheduled for

Wednesday, August 5th.

See page 5 for information.