

Pack your picnics with care

As many as 76 million Americans suffer from food borne illness annually, and that figure may be underreported. People may attribute an upset stomach to the quantity of food consumed rather than the quality.

People can die from food-borne illness. Careful attention should be paid to keeping food safe, especially during summer picnics and potlucks. Potentially dangerous bacteria are all around, but they need not become uninvited guests. Here are some tips to keep foodstuffs at holiday picnics and potlucks safe:

Wash hands before and after handling raw or cooked foods, as well as before and after eating. Soap and water are preferred. Use hand sanitizers or disposable towelettes if water is not available. Failure to wash hands is the No. 1 food safety mistake.

Invest in more than one ice chest or cooler. Use one for meats, one for salads, and one for beverages, which typically is opened more frequently. The environment in a cooler can change each time it is opened.

Protect coolers and food from direct sunlight, which can cause food quality to diminish rapidly. In warm weather, 90 degrees and above, food left out for more than an hour should be discarded.

Keep hot foods hot (above 140 degrees) and cold foods cold (40



Home Time

By Tranda Watts
Multi-county Extension Agent

degrees or lower).

Avoid cross-contamination. Keep raw foods separate from cooked foods.

Prepare foods such as salads or vegetable and fruit trays at home; wrap separately, and chill well before placing them in coolers.

Prepare hard-cooked eggs in advance, up to a week ahead, when refrigerated in their shell. Deviled eggs should be prepared the same day they will be served. Cover and chill well before serving.

Clean the grill before using with a wire brush or, in a pinch, wadded up aluminum foil. Place away from the house or garage, and use pre-treated briquettes or charcoal lighter fluid — not gasoline — to start the coals. Keep an eye on the grill, and watch children and pets.

Keep raw meats, poultry and utensils used to prepare them separate from other picnic or potluck foods. Partly cooking meats or poultry before the picnic is not recom-

mended, as it can create an environment in which bacteria can grow.

Discard marinades used with raw meats and poultry.

Use a meat thermometer to tell if meat or poultry is cooked. That means 160 degrees for hamburgers, 170 degrees for chicken, and steaming hot for hot dogs.

Plan to pick up deli or prepared foods such as fried chicken just before serving.

Wash watermelons and cantaloupe before slicing to remove bacteria that may have been in or near the ground on which the melon was grown.

Tranda Watts is Kansas State University extension specialist in food, nutrition, health and safety for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. Call her at 785-443-3663 or e-mail twatts@oznet.ksu.edu.

For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.

Rainfall was great for corn crop

A couple of weeks of substantial rain for the area sure can change people's perspective.

Many summer crops, especially corn, were about ready to start running out of water, but thanks to the rain that will not happen.

The rain came at just the right time for corn, as it will start elongating very quickly over the next few weeks. However, the additional moisture will not be enough to make a crop. Subsequent rains will be needed in late July to early August.

The rain will also do a lot of good for pastures that were showing significant stress. However, stocking rates should not be increased. Instead, this rain will allow pastures to start the slow process of recovery.

For the wheat, the rain did not bring all good news. Moisture in the wheat head has caused a good portion of the wheat to start sprouting, depending on the location. This appears to be one last nail in the coffin for an already poor wheat crop. First there was the drought, hot early-season temperatures, a late freeze, some hail, some wind, and now, sprouting. Wheat is extremely durable, but there were a lot of factors for this crop to overcome.

Something else the rain has brought on is diseases and deficiency symptoms. Diseases typically flourish when it's wet. Producers need to make sure their crops are not showing signs of foliar diseases, such as gray leaf spot, on corn or oth-



Extension Lines

By Brian Olson
Extension Agronomist

ers. Depending upon the severity and the disease, a fungicide may be needed.

Deficiency symptoms such as those shown with a lack of phosphorus are accentuated when conditions are wet. Plants deficient in phosphorus will have purple leaf tips.

Another deficiency symptom not related to the moisture that has been showing up with frequency in grain sorghum is iron. Leaves having low iron content will have green veins, and be yellow between the veins. Over time, these plants will likely grow out of these symptoms, but

will be stunted. All in all, I would say the mood of farmers has dramatically changed, with much more optimism being exhibited about the possibility of producing a summer crop. Hopefully, Mother Nature keeps blessing us with the rain so we will be harvesting this fall.

Brian Olson is Kansas State University extension agronomist for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. E-mail bolsoln@oznet.ksu.edu if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop.

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JULY

Decatur County Community Calendar

Call 785-475-3441

(Call Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce to have your organization's meeting updated and listed in next month's calendar.)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 Hansen Mueller				1	2	3 1/2 Price Day Bargain Box Plus.
4 Porkburgers in the park 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. FIREWORKS at the fairgrounds at dusk. Fun and games in the park and swimming pool. Attend the Church of Your Choice	5 Norcatur Rebekahs Lions Club, Medical Arts bldg.	6 Dr. Doolittle, Dec. Co. Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon ; Weight Watchers, 6-7 p.m.	7 Dr. Eskildsen, Dr. Curry, Urology, Dec. Co. Hospital; Thallium Testing; Oberlin Business Alliance, LandMark Inn, Noon ; Blood Pressure Clinic, Golden Age, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; AA, ambulance Barn, 8 p.m. ; Jyacees, Red Crown, 8:30 p.m.	8 Chamber Board Noon Hirsch & Pratt	9 Oberlin Royal Neighbors Golden Age 4 p.m.	
11 Attend the Church of Your Choice Antique Engine Club Potluck, Sappa Manor, 6:30 p.m.	12 Oberlin School Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.	13 Dr. Doolittle, Dr. McGowan, Cardiology; Dec. Co. Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon ; Weight Watchers, 6-7 p.m.	14 Dr. Eskildsen, Vacation; Thallium Testing ; Legion Auxiliary meeting, 7:30 p.m.; Norcatur Royal Neighbors ; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.	15 CVB, LandMark Inn, Noon	16	17
18 Attend the Church of Your Choice	19 Dr. McDonald, Cataracts, Dec. Co. Hospital; Norcatur Rebekahs Hospital Board Meeting, 7 p.m. ; Lions Club, Medical Arts bldg.	20 Dr. Doolittle Dec. Co. Hospital Rotary, Gateway, Noon Weight Watchers, 6-7 p.m.	21 Dr. Eskildsen, Vacation Thallium Testing, Decatur Co. Hospital Jaycees, Red Crown, 8:30 p.m. AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.	22 Community Garage Sale maps available at Chamber office after 3 p.m. American Legion Meeting	23 Community Garage Sale maps available at Chamber office 9 a.m.-5 p.m. ; Chamber-sponsored Community Garage Sales starting in PM; Bargain Box Plus 1/2 price day.	24 Community Garage Sales Maps at Chamber office from 8-10 a.m. Activities in Centennial Park
25 Attend the Church of Your Choice	26 Dr. Doolittle, Dec. Co. Hospital Rotary, Gateway Noon Weight Watchers 6-7 p.m.	27 Dr. Doolittle, Dec. Co. Hospital Rotary, Gateway Noon Weight Watchers 6-7 p.m.	28 Dr. Eskildsen, Dec. County Hospital; Thallium Testing, Decatur Co. Hospital; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.	29 The Oberlin Herald NOW IN OUR 125th YEAR OF SERVICE	30 Coffee Hour, Ward Drug.	31 Hospital Benefit Golf Tournament Bargain Box Plus \$3 Bag Day

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