

Cutting It Close

Fall is a wonderful time of year. Most of the harvest is in, crops are done, and the hard part is over. Now we just have to worry about turning the animals out to pasture and worry about battening down the hatches for the winter, right. Well, I would advise you not to neglect the poor pasture that you have put the animals on. It's trying to put away it's own reserves and if a horse comes crashing through and eating everything it has saved up you may significantly reduce that pasture's ability to feed your animals next year.

Between mid-September and the end of October is the most critical time for pasture grass to accumulate sugars into the crown of the plant. Grass needs this sugar to survive the cold winter and still have energy to emerge next spring. Unlike alfalfa, grass can't store it's energy down in it's root system, and must store it in the tissue above ground, close to the crown. Every grass species is different, but some grass plants can store it as high as 4-6 inches in the stems. If you graze your pasture lower than 4 inches in the fall, you are significantly diminishing the yields in your pasture next year.

On the flip side, if you allow your pasture to stay tall your grass will thank you by yielding more next spring. Many small acreage owners say to me "I can't afford to not have the horses out to pasture. Have you seen the price of hay?" Why yes, I have, which is why I am advising you to give it a rest, literally. Pastures that have a rest period before they are grazed or mowed yield more tons to the acre, and usually producers can support more animals on the same acreage or support the same number of animals on half the acreage and hay the other half. Increasing your carrying capacity on the land you already own is like buying another pasture, and it is the cheapest pasture you will ever buy.

So how does one go about resting a pasture? Well, you must insure that after a plant has been grazed that it isn't grazed again until it has at least doubled in yield. Grass grows quite a bit in the fall months because we have moderate day temperatures and cool nights. These conditions make it perfect for making lots of feed, but making feed is the grass's second priority. Its first priority is making sure it has the sugars it needs. Let the grass take care of itself before it takes care of your animals and you will have a better pasture. The best way to do this is rotational grazing. Section off your pasture in small portions where they can have more access to water, and then move them into new feed and off of the old areas they have already fed on. Never graze lower than 4 inches, and once they have fed on that area don't give them access to the area again until it has properly regrown. Yes, you may need to do this even through the winter, but with practice you will see increased yields and healthier pastures.

Overgrazing can also increase weed pressure in a pasture. Sometimes all a weed needs is a spot of bare soil and a little sunshine. There are very few weeds that can outcompete a properly maintained pasture, simply because it can't find the bare soil and the canopy is always shading it anyway. If you do have a weed problem with perennial or biennial weeds such as thistle, plantain, or dandelion, the fall is one of the best times to apply herbicide. Annuals should be taken care of in the spring.

In short, don't overgraze, especially during the fall months. Resting your pasture leads to better pastures and more feed. Overgrazing reduces feed and increases weeds, which ends up costing you more. Don't cut it close. Let it rest and sleep well this winter.



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Lunch from 1:00-2:00



ROOTS & RESULTS

With school starting and gardens winding down, it feels like a natural time for rest and reflection of the season. I've also been reviewing FCS programming and wanted to share our successes!

MASTER FOOD SAFETY ADVISOR PROGRAM

From January–March, we hosted the Eastern District *Master Food Safety Volunteer Advisor Program* with five participants completing the course. Registration is now open for the 2026 session. Graduating volunteers help with food safety/preservation education in a variety of ways. We are aiming to have booths at several farmers markets next summer!

“PRESERVE FOR FUN” SERIES

Over the past seven months, we've had a blast hosting hands-on canning classes—from jams and pickles to soups and meats. As the season wraps up, our final class of the year is already filling up fast!

FREEZER MEAL BOOTCAMPS 1 & 2

The response to nutritious and food safety education to our Freezer Meal Bootcamp series has been awesome! These have been fun with even large groups, and everyone goes home happy and excited to have that ‘chore’ out of the way.

NUTRITION MADE SIMPLE

We've partnered up with the *Fit & Fall Proof* program at the Senior Center to provide tip sheets and recipes for the aging population, making great friends in the process.

FITNESS MADE SIMPLE

Every Thursday, this energizing exercise class is offered over zoom. It's perfect for anyone over 60, and easy to join with a like-minded group to exercise in the comfort of your own home, and the expertise of rotating instructors. It's free to join!

DEMENTIA FRIENDS

Join us for a *Dementia Friends* workshop to learn simple, practical ways to better understand, support, and connect with your loved one. Whether you're a caregiver, friend, or neighbor, this session offers helpful insights for anyone wanting to make a difference. *Tuesday, November 18th, Rigby Senior Center, 3pm*

RECOMMENDED CANNING RESOURCES

National Center for Home Food Preservation: nchfp.uga.edu

Ball Blue Book: www.ballmasonjars.com

Master Food Safety Advisor Program

Registration Now Open!!

**Classes will be held every
Wednesday in February & March,
from 9-3pm**



To register, call our office
at (208) 745-6685,
scan the QR code,
or click the link here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/>

Canning Series

Last canning class of the year!

October 17th, 6-9 pm, \$15

Canning Low-Acid: Meat Products
Hands-On Chicken or Beef



To register, call our office
at (208) 745-6685,
scan the QR code,
or click the link here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/>

Fitness Made Simple

Join us on Zoom, for free!!

Every Thursday, 10-11am



Zoom Meeting ID:
851 4309 8244
Password: 693155

Jefferson County Survey

Contribute to our programming direction!



scan the QR code,
or click the link here to
participate

<https://forms.office.com/r/Q6HFWvAg6Z>

Pressure Canner Dial Gauge Testing

No appointment required, no charge.

Visit us during regular office hours:

M-F 9am-5pm (closed for lunch 1-2pm)

Deanna Poulsen
Jefferson County
FCS Extension Educator

Nationals Bound and National Winner

National Archery Winner: CJ Day! Team members include CJ Day, Chris Fong, Garrett Lintner, and Pearson Orme. As a team they place 1st in FITA, 5th in both Field and 3D and were awarded 3rd Place National Team. CJ was 2nd High individual for FITA. Congrats to her!

Nationals Bound: Kalli Smith, Keylee Harris, Amaiya Rice, and Halle Nicholes

This team of girls won the State Dairy competition, which qualified them for the National Contest in Wisconsin in September. They also won the State Horse judging contest that qualifies them for Quarter Horse Congress in Ohio in October. Finally they also get the opportunity to compete in Louisville, Kentucky at the National 4H Livestock Judging contest in November. Good luck to these ladies!



National Archery Contest: Garrett Lintner, Chris Fong, CJ Day, Pearson Orme



Nationals Bound Team: Kalli Smith, Keylee Harris, Amaiya Rice, Halle Nicholes



Rigby 4H Awards Night

Sept 22, 2025

6:00 at the Jefferson County Fair Grounds

Mud Lake 4H Awards Night

October 6, 2025

6:00 at the Mud Lake Fair Grounds

All 4H Projects and Premiums are ready to be picked up!

If you had a project at the county fair or state fair, you have premiums and projects in the office ready to be picked up. These projects will be taken to both awards nights. Any unclaimed projects, portfolios, premiums, etc. by November 1st, will be donated.

2026 New Year Start up

Can you believe that our 2025 4H year is coming to a close?! The new 4H year starts October 1. If you want to avoid registration deadlines in the spring start working on your 2026 registration. *(tip: wait until about October 15 to do your zsuite registration, so your registration doesn't get swept up in the 2025 clean up)*