



June 2024

Family Consumer Sciences

What Chemicals are in My Food?

By: **Bonnie Brewer – FCS Extension Agent**

All food, like most everything else in the world, is made of chemicals. Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said what matters is how much a person eats or drinks.

“Bottom line, it’s the amount that counts,” Blakeslee said. “Foods contain nutrients, which are chemicals and are important for a healthy, balanced diet.”

Reading or hearing about chemicals in food, when combined with words like ‘toxic,’ ‘extremely dangerous’ and ‘cancer-causing’ may be scary, especially if you aren’t getting all the facts.

Here are a few points to help navigate information about chemicals in food:

- Complete information from a credible medical or scientific source would likely explain how much of the chemical is in the food, how much of a food someone actually eats or drinks and whether the chemical is present at a level that is harmful to people.
- Chemical names may sound complicated, but that does not mean they are unsafe; some ingredients may be familiar. For example, tocopherols are vitamin E; sodium chloride is salt; and dihydrogen monoxide is water.
- Some chemicals safely used in food may have other non-food uses. For example, vinegar is used as a household cleaner, but also is used in small amounts in food. If used in food, a chemical must meet the FDA’s safety standard.

You have choices to make. Eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods to have a well-balanced diet.

Agriculture

Field Brush

Charlene Miller – Agriculture Agent/Extension Director

Do you have buckbrush, roughleaf dogwood, and smooth sumac giving you problems? Control options are available! Control options can be found at: https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article/control-options-for-buckbrush-roughleaf-dogwood-and-smooth-sumac-591-3?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR2OiWV-Ex8NKaqpajaTV-k_fNxM18v6C-bLFXxac-0qigTGte-34qbotiw_aem_ARWOMB6brLV2At60SNd3g5nomhnUp3tupMJoicrIXO-D_v8UEZts0tsGNLW9Nln3tdgUaAF_Y2wY4kOn5rQ7n8fJ or by

referencing the 2024 Chemical Weed Control Guidebook. We have free copies of the guidebook available in our office.

4-H & Youth Development

Summer Full of Service!

Madeline Wallace – 4-H & Youth Development Agent

Summer is a great time to get outside, go on vacation, and prepare for the fall! Summer is also a great time to get out in your community to help neighbors in need. According to University of Nevada, Reno Extension, the benefits of volunteering to youth include: “Learning to respect others; learning to be helpful and kind; learning to understand people who are different; developing leadership skills, becoming more patient, and better understanding of citizenship.”

Here is a list of places to consider serving this summer:

- Meals on Wheels
- Senior centers
- Local hospitals
- Concession stands at local events
- Red Cross
- Local museums
- And so many more!

Horticulture

Colorado Potato Beetle

Calla Edwards – Horticulture Agent

The Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) is a major potato pest throughout North America. It can also feed on eggplant, tomatillo, and related crops. The adults become active in the spring at about the same time potatoes emerge from the ground. If you have had these pests in the past you know that the larvae and adults feed on the leaves and can completely defoliate the plants. Unfortunately, many pesticides are ineffective on this insect as they have developed resistance to the chemicals.

The first step is always correctly identifying the insect. The adults are approximately 3/8" long, oval, have a yellow-orange prothorax (area behind the head) and yellowish-white wing clusters with 10 narrow black stripes. Adults will overwinter 5-10 inches underground in field margins, windbreaks, and gardens. The larvae go through a couple of different colors before becoming adults. When they first hatch they are brick red with black heads and slowly transition to a pink or salmon color with black heads. All larvae have two rows of dark spots on each side of their bodies.

Controlling potato beetles requires a combination of methods. Always monitor your plants to catch the issue early. Cultural controls include removing nightshades and ground cherry plants near your garden, mulching between beds, and planting an early-maturing potato variety. If you have major issues stop planting potatoes for a couple of years as potato beetles aren’t very mobile. I also recommend using a row cover to prevent feeding and picking off any adults you find, putting them in a bucket of water, and crushing any eggs you see. I also try to encourage populations of lady beetles and stink bugs in your garden as they feed on the potato beetle.

Contact us:

Phone: (316) 321-9660

Web: Butler.K-State.Edu

Address: 206 N Griffith St, Ste. El Dorado, KS 67042

Facebook: @ksrebutlerco

Twitter: @ButlerExtension

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Join Us For Our 2024 Quarterly Extension Connection

Mug Mingle



Grab a mug and mingle with your local

Butler County Extension Staff

Friday, June 28th from 7:45-9:00 a.m.

Save the Dates : October 11th

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CALLA EDWARDS, HORTICULTURE AGENT, AND
BONNIE BREWER, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE
AGENT, ARE TEAMING UP TO BRING YOU THIS GREAT
EVENING OF LEARNING



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- WHAT HERBS GROW WELL IN THE AREA
- HOW TO GROW HERBS
- HOW TO PRESERVE HERBS
- HOW HERBS CAN SPICE UP YOUR MEALS
- WHAT HEALTH BENEFITS HERBS OFFER

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:



CALLAE@KSU.EDU
BJBREWER@KSU.EDU



316-321-9660

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