



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
October 2017

The nights are noticeably longer than the days by now, and many farm and ranch activities are being put to rest for the season. With that thought, we're focusing this issue on **tasks for the so-called slack months** in the agricultural calendar. (After all, it's October - and is there anything spookier than the thought of being caught unprepared?)

David Redhage shares an article on something few would've even thought to plan for: a **long-term decline in the nutritional value of pollinators' pollen food source**.

We **report on our latest hoophouse workshop**, held earlier this month, and point to a **brand new (and free) set of plans for building your own hoop house**.

We've made **updates to our series of pollinator resource guides**, and offer a reminder of some valuable resources for helping to decide **how to keep cattle fed through the cooler months**.

As always, **if you value our work, [please consider supporting it!](#)**

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President's Note: The Great Nutrient Collapse

[In 2016 I wrote about a book entitled *Eating on the Wild Side*, by Jo Robinson, which discussed the issue of nutrient density in food and how plant breeding has resulted in a loss of nutrients compared to the wild plant ancestors.](#)

As it turns out, the answer to this nutrient loss may be a little more complicated. I am providing a link to an article which covers a little-known area of research looking at how changes in the atmosphere may be changing the nutrient levels in plants, and speculation on how this may be affecting humans and other wildlife.



[The Great Nutrient Collapse](#)

Within the article is some research being conducted at USDA looking at changes in the protein content of goldenrod pollen over time, and how those changes may be affecting bee populations. Looking at goldenrod allows a comparison of how a plant not subjected to breeding improvement has been affected by atmospheric changes. The study is showing a 1/3 drop in goldenrod pollen protein levels since the start of the industrial revolution. How is this affecting bees? The suggestion is that lower protein levels may be hurting bees worldwide.

Choctaw Hoop House Workshop Recap - And Updated Plans!

The Choctaw Nation hosted one of the Kerr Center's popular hoop house workshops at its Community Center in Poteau on October 7.

The workshop treated participants to a **hands-on experience assembling an affordable, 1,700 square-foot hoop house** in under three hours. (Many hands, prior preparation, and experienced on-site trainers made this timing possible, but a pair of people working alone for the first time can still easily get the same project completed in a weekend.)



The training covered the **latest refinements** that have emerged from the work the Kerr Center has done using the design over the past few years, including both a **more secure anchor design**, and an **improved approach to endwall construction and attachment**. Workshop participants received a printed set of **plans and instructions for building a hoop house of this design**, streamlined to just 8 pages, and including a materials list and estimated costs.

The [complete set of updated plans and instructions](#) is available free from the Kerr Center website.

[Continue reading...](#)

Pollinator Resource Guides Updated

Four of the Kerr Center's [pollinator resource guides](#) have been updated with new information and links. They are:

- [Pollinator Plant Propagation Guides](#),
- [General Pollinator Plant Landscaping Guides](#),
- [Native Plant Identification Guides](#), and
- [Native Pollinator Books](#).



There are **six different pollinator resource guides on specialized topics available free** from the Kerr Center's online [Native Plant and Pollinator Library](#).

In addition, a master [Resource List for Native Pollinators and Plants](#) compiles all the information in a single document.

What'll the Cattle Eat When It's Cold?

Oklahoma doesn't see too many days like the one in this photo, but it does see **several months when warm season forages aren't growing quickly enough to keep up with cattle's nutritional needs.**



Those months are nearly upon us - **are you ready?**

Have you **stockpiled forage** to graze during the winter?

Have you **baled or bought hay** to feed?

Do your pastures contain enough **cool season forages** to provide grazing for some or all of the winter?

If you don't have answers to those questions, or are interested in taking a fresh look at the answers that you do have, the Kerr Center's [hay page](#) has some resources to help get you started.

November Events: Conferences!

The winter-downtime conference season is off to an early start this year, with November offering no fewer than **half a dozen conferences in Oklahoma and neighboring states.**

Have a look at the calendar and pick a couple!

The Kerr Center's online [events calendar](#) provides full details on these and many other upcoming sustainable agriculture events around the state

and region. It also serves as a reminder for the dates of **monthly Kerr Center [tours](#)**, which run all year round, every second Tuesday by appointment.

Don't forget that you can also use our online calendar to **keep yourself and your friends up to date** on these and other upcoming events, including our tours:

- **Subscribe to our feed** and receive **updates to your personal calendar** (Outlook, Google+, etc.) as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Date	Event	Location	Duration	Notes
NOV 14 (Tue)	America's Grasslands Conference	Fort Worth, TX	Nov 14 - Nov 16	all-day, Tickets available
NOV 14 (Tue)	Tour the Kerr Center	Kerr Center	Nov 14 @ 9:00 am	
NOV 15 (Wed)	Quivira Conference: Ranching & Farming at the Radical Center	Albuquerque, NM	Nov 15 - Nov 17	all-day, Tickets available
NOV 15 (Wed)	Conference: Partners in Community Forestry	Tulsa	Nov 15 @ 2:16 am - Nov 16 @ 3:16 am	Tickets available
NOV 17 (Fri)	Kansas Rural Center Annual Conference	Manhattan, KS	Nov 17 - Nov 18	all-day, Tickets available
NOV 17 (Fri)	Small Farm Conference: Strengthening Oklahoma Farmers & Ranchers through Awareness, Education	Oklahoma City	Nov 17 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm	
NOV 28 (Tue)	Southern Soil Health Conference	Wichita Falls, TX	Nov 28 - Nov 29	all-day

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