Across the County

Livestock Producers Beware: Watch for Toxic Blue-Green Algae

Among the problems arising Environment. The toxins have been from this summer's extended heat wave is the potential for toxic bluegreen algae to show up in lakes and

"Blue-green algae is typically only a problem during the hottest part of the summer," said Kansas State University veterinarian Larry seeing an increase in cases this year because of the extended heat period and/or lack of additional rain.'

As in much of the country, July temperatures in Kansas have soared near or above 100 degrees for numerous consecutive days.

The algae are toxic to humans, as well as animals. Livestock species often serve as sentinels for human Research and Extension.

the Kansas state public health veterinarian and the Kansas State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to issue a joint request to Kansas veterinarians, asking that they report suspected illness in animals due to blue-green algae. Such reports go to the Kansas Department of Health and at 1-877-427-7317, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most of the samples the diagnostic lab has tested so far this summer have had blue-green algae present, sometimes in very high numbers, Hollis said.

Blue-green algae details for humans and animals

conditions, harmful algal blooms (also called HABs) produce toxins Kansas Department of Health and dries. The first signs of animals'

responsible for several dogs' death.

These blooms are an emerging public health issue in Kansas. In 2010, public health advisories or warnings were issued for public waters in seven counties, due to harmful algae blooms.

So far in 2011, the department Hollis. "It appears that we are has received reports of at least two cases of human illness, due to contact with harmful algal blooms. An interactive by-county Kansas map at http://maps.kdhe.state.ks.us/ bgacountycurrent/ displays the lakes currently implicated by these

Cyanobacteria and their toxins in fresh waters have been associated with human and animal illness in illness, said Hollis, who specializes at least 36 U.S. states. The greatest in beef cattle care with K-State risk of adverse human health effects is after exposure through ingestion The conditions have prompted or inhalation of water droplets and cyanobacterial cells during recreational activities, such as swimming and water skiing. Skin contact with high concentrations of cyanobacteria, independent of the level of toxins, may also cause adverse health effects.

Human health effects can vary and are dependent upon the type Environment Epidemiology Hotline of toxin and route of exposure. The most common complaints after recreational exposure include vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes, eye irritation and respiratory symptoms.

Cyanobacterial toxins classified in two categories: hepatotoxins and neurotoxins. The most common in Kansas is Mycrocystis species, which Cyanobacteria, also known as produce hepatotoxins. But, blooms blue-green algae, are prominent in of Anabaena spp., which produce Kansas waters. And, under certain neurotoxins, have been identified recently.

Some animals become ill after that pose a health risk to people swimming in contaminated waters and animals, according to the and grooming their coat after it



blue-green algae poisoning usually occur within 30 minutes of exposure and include vomiting and diarrhea. These symptoms are followed by progressively worsening signs of liver failure, such as anorexia, lethargy and depression. Jaundice, abdominal swelling and tenderness in the abdominal area may also occur. Blood values of liver enzymes are typically very high.

Marty

If an animal survives the initial phase of liver failure, neurological dysfunction that's secondary to liver failure is possible. If a neurotoxin is involved, neurological signs can occur minutes to hours following exposure and may include tremors, salivation, seizures, weakness and respiratory paralysis. Acute deaths are possible if the toxin dose is

No specific antidote is available, according to Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Handlers should bathe animals' contaminated skin, but wear protective clothing and gloves to prevent their own skin contact. Livestock producers and pet owners also should contact their veterinarian if they think an animal has been exposed to bluegreen algae. The prognosis is poor for animals that develop severe liver failure.

The basis for diagnosis in animals is usually clinical signs and the presence of cyanobacteria in water the animal has contacted. Identification of cyanobacteria in water, stomach contents and hair coat samples is available at the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (KSVDL) in Manhattan. The laboratory can be contacted at 785-532-5678 to coordinate sample and specimen submission.

More information, including current public health advisories, warnings and instructions on how to report a suspected case of bluegreen algae poisoning, is available at the KDHE website:

www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/ index.htm.

Please contact the Cheyenne County Extension office at 332-3171 or cfear@ksu.edu with questions or comments. Until next week - Marty



Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

The Gardener

Kay Melia vkmelia@yahoo.com

Some fairs are over, some are underway, and others are still to come. If you can possibly stand this terrible heat, try to get out and see the fair exhibits. In some cases here in Northwest Kansas, it's a matter of surviving some of those unusual July gully-washers that have dumped several inches of rain overnight. And then there are our friends in southern Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas that are enduring day after day of debilitating, triple-digit temperatures and hardly a cloud in the sky anywhere.

To talk about unusual gardening seasons is a bit trite of course but this has been an unusual gardening season, trite or not. And you can see the unusualness of the season

quality of the produce isn't quite up to par.

Triple-digit temperatures, day after day after day, will do that to garden produce, as well as to garden producers. In many cases, it becomes a matter of doing our garden chores in the very early hours of the morning, or not at all.

For those of us who managed to keep things going in the backyard, most of us have removed the pressure cooker or the hot water bath kettle from storage and are trying to preserve some of the remaining goodness. It's pickling time at this elderly household, and while I'm grateful for even an unusually small crop of Leave their tops on until you are cucumbers, I'm also happy for a bumper crop of dill.

Dill is one of those herbs that

with a visit to just about any county has so very many uses in most fair around, where the normal fine gardening households. Not only is it a must for pickles, but in the early spring, it's fern-like young leaves make wonderful seasoning agents for spinach salads, for soups, or for almost any other cooked vegetable.

I haven't planted any dill for years in my garden. Those plants that are not used each summer always drop their seeds to the ground in the fall and new plants emerge the following spring when the soil is tilled for the new

Keep an eye on those big sweet onions as they mature. About a week after the tops fall over, pull them and store in a shady place. ready to use them, or to store them for the winter. And please....try to stay cool!



