



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

STEARNS COUNTY

3333 W. DIVISION ST., SUITE 10

ST. CLOUD, MN 56301

320-255-6169 or 1-800-450-6171

E-mail: mnext-stearns@umn.edu

NEWS RELEASES

University of Minnesota Extension is a 100-year-old partnership between the university and federal, state and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to the public. Through Extension, the University of Minnesota "extends" its resources to address critical public issues in priority areas, including food and agriculture, communities, environment, youth and families. For more information, visit www.extension.umn.edu.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Livestock Safety Video Series Now Available](#)

FOR RELEASE: July 6, 2020

[Become an Extension Master Gardener](#)

[Are your Horses Protected from West Nile Virus?](#)

[Central Minnesota Tri-County Crops Update](#)

[Stearns County Extension Summer Intern Introduction](#)

CALENDAR

NOTE: With the dynamic situation surrounding the current COVID-19 outbreak these events are subject to change.

July 3 Stearns County Extension Office Closed – Independence Day Observance



Source: Katie Drewitz, Extension Educator-Horticulture
Small Farms and Local Foods
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

Release Date: July 6, 2020

Contact: Katie Drewitz
(320) 255-6169, ext. 1
wins0115@umn.edu



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Become an Extension Master Gardener

By Katie Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. CLOUD, Minn. (7/1/20) — Do you have an active interest in gardening? Do you have a desire to share your gardening interest with others? Are you willing to learn more about gardening and other horticultural topics? Are you able to communicate with groups of people? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you have the qualities we look for in the Extension Master Gardener program.

In 2019, 2,408 certified Extension Master Gardeners volunteered across the state of Minnesota contributing over 140,000 volunteer hours and reached over 195,000 Minnesota residents. These volunteers are extremely dedicated and put in time and effort towards continuing education. If you believe that you have the skills and passion it takes to be an Extension Master Gardener, applications open in early July!

The process of becoming an Extension Master Gardener begins with a Core Course which can be taken online or in person. The core course takes approximately 50 hours to complete and cost \$320. Financial assistance is available on a case by case basis. You can talk to your local program coordinator if this is a barrier to your ability to join the program. We are happy to work with you to find a solution that works for all of us.

Extension Master Gardeners work hard to give back to their communities each year. As a first year Extension Master Gardener you will put in 50 hours of volunteer time. Each year after that the required amount is just 25 hours. Many volunteers far exceed this number, because they are excited and passionate about the program. Your local program coordinator and fellow volunteers will help you discover volunteer opportunities in your county. These opportunities may be tailored to your specific areas of interests.

If you are interested in becoming an Extension Master Gardener or learning more about the program, please contact your local program coordinator. The applications are now available, and we look forward to welcoming new volunteers in 2021! All applications must be submitted no later than October 1, 2020. Residents of Stearns and Benton Counties can contact Katie Drewitz at 320-255-6169 ext. 1 or email wins0115@umn.edu to discuss local opportunities.

[Back to Top](#)



Source: Brenda Postels, Extension Educator-Agriculture
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton, & Morrison Counties

Release Date: July 6, 2020

Contact: Brenda Postels
(320) 203-6063 or post0060@umn.edu

NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Are your Horses Protected from West Nile Virus?

By Brenda Postels, University of Minnesota Extension

FOLEY, Minn. (7/1/2020) — Summer is when the West Nile virus poses the greatest threat to the health of horses in the United States. It's important for veterinarians to work with horse owners this time of year to prevent, detect and accurately diagnose a potential infection. West Nile virus became a major equine health concern after it was first identified in the United States in 1999, infecting at least 1,000 horses every year through 2006. Since then, the development of effective vaccines has decreased the number of cases significantly. In 2019, only 90 cases were recorded by the USDA: All cases were either unvaccinated or had no records of vaccination against West Nile Virus.

Mosquitoes contract the virus from birds and then spread it to mammals (and reptiles), most commonly humans and horses. The virus does not pass directly between people and horses. The incubation period in horses is between three and 15 days. Many infected horses are asymptomatic. However, for other horses, it can be deadly. West Nile Virus has no cure, but some horses can recover with proper care. It is estimated that 50% of WNV cases will fully recover, 17% will have incomplete recovery or a relapse, and 33% will die.

Symptoms of WNV in horses include depression, appetite loss, drooping eyelids and lower lip, fever, weakness, twitching, paralysis or lack of coordination, aimless wandering, circling, and blindness. Horses may also go down, be unable to rise, exhibit seizures, or become unresponsive. Clinical signs can be similar to those seen with other neurologic diseases including rabies.

Because the viruses follow mosquito populations, the threat varies depending on the weather but normally starts in mid-July to late summer and remains until the first killing frost.

Disease risk can be reduced by limiting exposure to mosquitoes. This can be accomplished by changing horses' drinking water regularly, mowing tall grass, draining stagnant water, maintaining screens, installing fans at horse stables, and using insect repellents on both horses and people. Also, mosquitoes primarily feed at dawn and dusk, and keeping horses indoors during these times can reduce risk.

Horse vaccines are available and have been used extensively, contributing to the decline in the number of affected horses. Horses that have never been vaccinated will need two doses of the vaccination initially, and then boosters at least annually. It takes at least two weeks to build up enough antibodies to protect the horse and the vaccine will not protect the horse if given after the horse is infected. Horse owners should check with their veterinarian to ensure their horse's vaccines are current.

Please contact Brenda Postels, Extension Educator Interim for Stearns, Benton and Morrison counties with any questions at 320-203-6063 or post0060@umn.edu

[Back to Top](#)



Source: Nathan Drewitz, Extension Educator-Crops
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

Release Date: July 6, 2020

Contact: Nathan Drewitz
(320) 968-5077; (608) 515-4414 (cell)
ndrewitz@umn.edu



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Central Minnesota Tri-County Crops Update

By Nathan Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension

FOLEY, Minn. (7/1/2020) — So far this year is best one I have seen since moving to Minnesota. That might not mean a whole lot given the last couple of years have been above average for rainfall. Either way, it is nice to see all crops progressing nicely as we enter July. Although we have managed to miss many of the pest issues that have been seen in other parts of the state we should be aware of the next potential issues that might be headed our way.

Starting with Armyworms, there have only been a couple of reports of Armyworms in the area and both were in Stearns County. There have been some cases of economic thresholds being reached in Minnesota; however the reports I have heard indicate that has yet to happen here in central Minnesota. Lush grasses are the preferred sites for egg laying. These can include stands of small grains, cover crops, and grass field borders. They seldom feed on broadleaf crops. The risk is increased in fields where a live grass cover crop or grass weeds are present at the time when moths are laying eggs. Since true armyworms cannot overwinter in Minnesota they migrate into the state each spring. The larvae are active at night or on cloudy days. Scout using a sweep net in grassy borders and in small grains. Also, shake the small grain canopy and search the ground for larvae. The economic threshold for small grains is 4-5 larvae per square foot and/or once larvae begin to clip grain heads. The threshold in whorl stage corn is 25% of plants with 2 larvae per plant or 75% of plants with 1 larvae per plant.

The next potential pest issue is the Soybean gall midge. While we have yet to identify this particular pest in the area, we still need to be diligent in scouting for this pest. While you are unlikely to spot the adult in the fields due to its size, the larvae are what you will notice. Earlier plantings of soybeans are more likely to encounter this pest. The larvae are the concern when looking for damage. The adults lay eggs in the naturally occurring cracks in the lower stem of soybean plants. This is where the larvae will develop and where you will want to scout. The larvae will appear to be pale and will become bright orange as they mature. They feed under the surface of the soybean stem and visible symptoms occur after the V3 soybean stage. The feeding causes blackened areas at the base of the stem with infestations resulting in plants that are stunted, wilting and even dead. Damaged stems will break or lodge easily. When looking for the larvae, peel and look under the outer layer of the stem.

This information on armyworms and Soybean gall midge was taken from the UMN Extension Crop News. Visit <https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/> for the more detailed articles on these pests.

For local information on the above pests, IPM, or have general crops questions please feel free to contact me at (608) 515-4414. In addition, if you would like to have a voice in future local Extension programming please

fill out my short survey at z.umn.edu/TriCountyCrops.



Picture of True armyworms
Photo Credit: UMN Extension Crop News



Soybean gall midge larvae
Photo Credit: Bruce Potter, U of MN

[Back to Top](#)



Source: Eliza Carlson, Extension Educator Intern-
Horticulture and agriculture
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

Release Date: July 6, 2020

Contact: Eliza Carlson
(320) 255-6169 ex. 1



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Stearns County Extension Summer Intern Introduction

By Eliza Carlson, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. CLOUD, Minn. (7/1/20) — Greetings! My name is Eliza Carlson and I am so excited to introduce myself as the new University of Minnesota Horticulture and Agriculture Extension Educator summer intern for Stearns County! I began work with the Stearns County office in St. Cloud on July 1st. I am currently studying Agricultural Leadership with minors in Agbusiness and Marketing at South Dakota State University.

I grew up near Paynesville, MN by Lake Koronis, where I was able to participate in multiple activities such as FFA and 4-H. In my 8 years within 4-H, I actively participated with club and county events, held leadership positions, helped at my county fair and was able to compete at the State Fair for 5 years. My favorite events included performing arts, horseless horse, and citizenship. My time with the 4-H lead me to amazing opportunities, skills, and experiences. I hope to expand my knowledge, leadership capabilities and agricultural experience in my time with Extension this summer.

My passion for the agricultural industry and drive for advocacy motivated me to pursue an education at SDSU, where I got to be a part of the Forensics: Speech & Debate Team in which I was able to perform a speech about the female farmer movement. In the summer of 2018 & 2019, I worked with Koronis Ministries as a Kitchen Assistant and Housekeeper and learned abundant skills within the food production community. I plan to use and build upon my past experiences in Extension programming this summer. I will be working with all 3 of the local Extension Educators in Stearns County on projects in Horticulture, Livestock and Crops. I love interacting with so many different aspects of agriculture and I am so excited to gain new experiences in the St. Cloud and Stearns County area this summer!

[Back to Top](#)

Source: Emily Krekelberg, Extension Educator
Farm Safety & Health
University of Minnesota Extension

Release Date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Emily Krekelberg
(612) 756-3977, krek0033@umn.edu



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Livestock Safety Video Series Now Available

By Emily Krekelberg, University of Minnesota Extension

ROCHESTER, Minn. (7/1/20) — University of Minnesota Extension recently released a series of three short videos related to livestock safety. Handling livestock in a safe manner is crucial on any farm to prevent accidents, injuries, and even death. Large livestock especially pose a threat to our safety. Additionally, safely handling livestock protects the animals as much as it protects us.

The series of videos provides information and tips on working with livestock safely. The first video covers stockmanship and livestock behavior. The second video discusses recognizing hazards and moving livestock. The third and final video is about personal and farm safety. The videos can be found online at <https://z.umn.edu/LivestockSafetyVideos>.

The videos are great for use with families, children, farm employees, and anyone that may encounter livestock in some way. Each video is between three and four minutes long and provides practical tips for understanding and avoiding hazards related to working with livestock. The information shared in these videos is applicable to any species of livestock and is a great introduction or refresher for farmers of all ages.

If you have additional questions or comments about UMN Extension's Farm Safety & Health Programming, please contact Emily Krekelberg, Extension Educator, and krek0033@umn.edu or 612-756-3977.

[Back to Top](#)