

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Lindsay Shorter

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

With the sudden amounts of rain, we have received lately (that we are so very thankful for), we went from winter browns to bright spring greens throughout the county. And as we know the plants and cattle aren't the only living things that are thriving in our pastures...

Over the last several evenings, my husband (Morgan) has seemed to bring more and more little creatures home from the pastures with him. I bet most of you can guess what I'm talking about, our favorite summer pest, ticks!

"While it's hard to know for sure if there are more ticks than normal, the cool rainy weather in parts of Kansas followed by a quick profusion of plant growth may have boosted the tick population", says Raymond Cloyd who is an entomology professor with K-State Research and Extension.

Ticks tend to flourish when vegetation flourishes, especially in weeds and unmanaged areas. To minimize the number of ticks on your property, it's best to keep lawns mowed and generally reduce unmanaged areas.

A few options to help manage ticks (that doesn't include a blanket spray of insecticide for your yard) would be as follows:

- When outdoors, wear repellents based on DEET or permethrin. Permethrin-based products however, must not be applied directly to the skin.
- Tuck your pant legs into your socks (stylish I know!), white socks are best because it's easier to see ticks on them.
- After coming in from potentially tick-infested areas, inspect you or your children's skin and remove ticks immediately. Also, check pets that were outdoors.
- Take a shower as soon as possible after coming indoors.

If you find a tick that's already embedded, gently pull it out with tweezers, including the head. A tick head broken off and left in the skin can potentially lead to an infection. The most common ticks found in Kansas include the American dog tick, Lone star tick, the Brown dog tick and the black legged tick. Because some ticks carry pathogens such as Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or Lyme disease, it's a good idea to have them identified if they were embedded in the skin. If flu-like symptoms (headache, skin rash, and fever) occur 10 to 14 days after tick removal it's advised to see a physician immediately and take the tick with you or send it to your local K-State Research and Extension office for identification.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.