

NEW USDA CATTLE TRACEABILITY LAW & TRANSITION TO RFID EAR TAGS

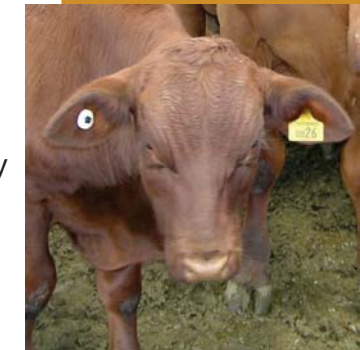
Article courtesy of Richard Hood with American Marketing Services

Jacklyn Jones, County Extension Agent, Agriculture/Natural Resources



I am finding that many cattle producers are not aware of the new USDA cattle traceability policy and transitioning timeline. This is going to affect all ranchers!!

Here are the facts and the timelines to the new laws on traceability as of today.



December 31, 2019-USDA will discontinue providing free metal tags. However, approved vendors will still be permitted to produce official metal tags for one additional year. Approved vendor tags will be available for purchase on a State-by-State basis as authorized by each State Animal Health official through December 31, 2020.

January 1, 2021-USDA will no longer approve vendor production of metal ear tags with the official USDA shield. Accredited veterinarians and/or producers can no longer apply metal ear tags for official identification and must start using only Official RFID tags.

January 1, 2023 RFID ear tags will be required for beef and dairy cattle and bison moving interstate. Animals previously tagged with metal ear tags will have to be re-tagged with RFID ear tags in order to move interstate. Feeder cattle and animals moving directly to slaughter are not subject to RFID.

Animals that will require official, individual RFID tags include:

- ▶ Beef cattle, bison, and dairy cattle
- ▶ Sexually intact beef cattle 18 months or older
- ▶ All female dairy cattle
- ▶ All cattle used for rodeo or recreational events (regardless of age)
- ▶ All male dairy cattle born after March 11, 2013
- ▶ All cattle used for shows or exhibitions.

A premises identification number (PIN) is required to purchase official ID tags.

USDA has a new interactive map that helps direct producers to state-specific resources for obtaining a PIN: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/traceability/state-pin/>

States will approve and allocate discounted tags, managing the process through the current infrastructure. Accredited veterinarians may continue to inventory and apply official ID tags but must adhere to record keeping requirements, USDA will maintain a list of approved manufacturers. Accredited veterinarians or producers may purchase official, approved tags directly from tag manufacturers or retailers.

Source:
USDA FACT SHEET: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/downloads/plan-to-achieve-eid-factsheet.pdf>



New Tarrant County Extension Director

SOURCE: AGRILIFE TODAY

FORT WORTH - Courtney Davis

will become the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's extension director for Tarrant County on Oct. 1.

Davis is now county extension agent for family and community health, or FCH, in Denton County.

"Courtney continues to provide leadership to a dynamic and large program in one of the state's fastest growing counties, Denton," said Jeff Ripley, AgriLife Extension associate director for county operations. "We are thrilled to welcome her into the director's role for Tarrant County. She will be invaluable in shaping the Extension mission of outreach for public health in North Texas."

Davis began her career with AgriLife Extension in 2006 as FCH agent for Bowie County, and she entered the Denton position in 2015. In her current role, Ripley said, Davis fostered the success of the Lake Dallas Independent School District 4-H Program — now the model for the agency's Champion Schools initiative.

The program reaches school students with extracurricular, hands-on activities in health, wellness and STEM learning. They take part in healthy cooking demonstrations, coding and robotics, and they conduct agricultural laboratory experiments alongside Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists among other activities.

"Courtney is a major asset to our district, and we look forward to continuing and expanding our important work with her in this exciting new role," said Hurley Miller, AgriLife Extension administrator for the agency's District 4. The district encompasses Denton, Tarrant, Dallas and 19 other North Texas counties.

In Tarrant County, Davis said she plans to build new partnerships and encourage more interdisciplinary programming. Her efforts will aim to increase visibility and public engagement with AgriLife Extension.

"I am excited to get started in Tarrant County," she said. "And I'm eager to help expand on the county's already robust offering of extension initiatives."

Davis holds a bachelor of science degree in health from Texas A&M University and a master of science in adult education from Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

SNACK ATTACK

Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program - Adult

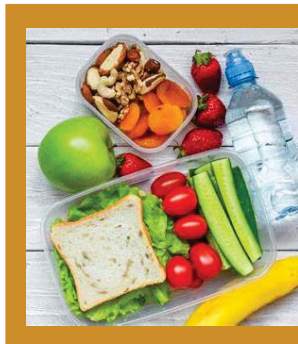
Over the last few decades the American diet has changed to include more snacks as opposed to the three square meals families once enjoyed. According to research, 50% of all eating occasions involve snacks and 91% of consumers snack multiple times per day.

Nonetheless, it is still important to maintain a healthful diet even while snacking takes precedence over meals. How can you ensure that your kids' diets are balanced, wholesome, and nutritious if they're snacking so much? And if some of their snacking is unsupervised (e.g., at school, after school, with friends), what suggestions have you heard for easy, appealing, grab-and-go options that will keep your children's bodies growing strong?

Follow some of these snacking tips or try one of these simple snack recipes designed to keep your family healthy and thriving!

Snacking Benefits and Tips

- Snacking is a great way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption; try getting a fruit or a vegetable into every snack.
- Snacks help maintain energy levels, whether it's over the long term or to give you a quick burst of energy.
- Snacks can be easily prepared and affordable; fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods fit into both categories. Make sure the refrigerator and pantry are stocked with nourishing foods that are ready-to-eat.
- "Snack boards," also known as grazing boards are trendy, easy, and quick to prepare; create your own by rummaging through the fridge and assembling everything on a big board. Add things like almonds, whole grain crackers, dried fruits, vegetables, cheese, deli meat, pretzels, hummus, and olives; these items help to create a family-fun snack that can also become dinner.



Black Bean & Veggie Quesadillas

Serves 4

Ingredients

½ red bell pepper, diced
 ½ cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
 ½ cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
 ½ cup shredded low-fat cheddar cheese
 2 T salsa
 2 T chopped fresh cilantro, optional
 1 green onion, trimmed and thinly sliced
 ½ tsp ground cumin
 ¼ tsp chili powder
 Four 8-inch flour tortillas
 4 tsp olive oil or other vegetable oil, divided

Optional toppings: Salsa, plain Greek yogurt, guacamole

Directions

1. Place all ingredients except for the tortillas, olive oil, and optional toppings in a large bowl and stir to combine. Spread the mixture evenly over half of each tortilla. Fold over, press down gently, and set aside.
2. Heat 1 tsp of the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add two of the quesadillas and cook pressing down occasionally with a spatula, until the bottoms are crisp and golden, about three minutes. Flip them, add one more teaspoon of the oil, and cook until the other sides are golden, about two minutes. Adjust heat as you go if the bottoms brown too quickly.
3. Repeat with the remaining oil and quesadillas. Cut into thirds and serve with salsa, yogurt, and/or guacamole as desired.

Nutty, Chewy, Breakfast Cookies

Makes 10 to 12 cookies

Ingredients

¾ cup quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats
 ½ cup whole wheat pastry flour
 ¼ cup raisins
 3 T unsalted, roasted sunflower seeds
 3 T unsalted, toasted sliced almonds
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp baking soda
 ½ tsp salt
 1 large egg
 ½ ripe banana, mashed (about ¼ cup)
 3 T honey
 3 T canola or other mild-flavored vegetable oil
 2 tsp vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a large baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray lightly with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Whisk together the oats, whole wheat pastry flour, raisins, sunflower seeds, almonds, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl until well combined.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg, banana, honey, oil, and vanilla until well blended. Pour the liquid ingredients over the dry ingredients and stir until just moistened.
4. Scoop the batter into 2-tablespoon portions on the prepared baking sheet. Flatten slightly (the unbaked cookies will be between 2 to 2 ½ inches in diameter.) Leave about 1 ½ inches between each cookie.
5. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until the cookies are brown. Cool slightly on the baking sheet before transferring the cookies to a wire rack. (Best if stored in the refrigerator.)

Article adapted from: Smart Snacking for Families on the Go. By Liz Weiss, MS, RDN. Today's Dietitian. Vol. 21, No. 8, P. 8

TOP 7 REASONS TO EAT MORE FIBER

Alaina O'Daniel and Alyssa Witt, County Extension Agent's,
 Family & Community Health



1. Promotes a healthy balance of bacteria in your gastrointestinal (GI) tract
 - Did you know that there are over 4 pounds of bacteria in your GI tract? Research shows that the more nutritionally dense and varied diet you eat, the better intestinal bacteria you have. And this includes fiber: fiber helps feed the good bacteria. More fiber = happier bacteria = happier you.
2. Type II Diabetes and Glycemic Control
 - Foods containing fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole-grains are most associated with reduced chronic disease risk, including diabetes. When these are consumed in whole form (their nutrients and fiber together), the digestion process is slowed and more nutrients are absorbed which moderates your blood sugar level and insulin response, you feel full longer, and you prevent weight gain. All of this reduces the risk of diabetes.
3. You feel fuller, longer
 - Fiber slows digestion; hence, you feel full longer. No more mid-afternoon guilty snack binges in the breakroom. Fibrous foods are low-calorie and high-volume. This means they take up more room in your stomach, which increases satiety. Fiber also slows your stomach's emptying, increasing our body's time to release hormones which tell our brains "I'm full."
4. Fiber protects your health
 - Fiber reduces the risk of developing chronic conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, diverticular disease and constipation. It reduces LDL levels and other heart disease biomarkers. Soluble fiber helps reduce cholesterol levels by absorbing excess bile in the GI tract. Bile, which comes from the liver, is a major route for eliminating cholesterol. Once cholesterol is bound up in fiber in the GI tract, the body cannot re-absorb it; therefore, you have less cholesterol in your body.
5. Fiber is easily found in vegetables
 - When planning out your meals, try asking yourself the question: "How can I get more vegetables onto my plate?" When there are more vegetables, there is more fiber. Both insoluble and soluble fibers are found in fruits and vegetables. Legumes are magical foods that count as a protein and vegetable food, so you can count them here!
6. Vegetables and legumes are cheap, easy ways to extend meat and get fiber
 - Foods like mushrooms and lentils are great ways to extend your meat. They blend in well with ground meat and you get the bonus of fiber as well as other nutrients.
7. Make the jump to whole-grain
 - Make at least half of your grains whole. When there's whole-wheat or whole-grain present, there's more fiber too. Try including things like brown rice or whole-wheat bread in your cart this week.
 - If pasta is on the menu, consider trying some whole-wheat pasta or spiralized vegetables instead of the traditional white pasta. You'll get more fiber, more vitamins and nutrients and fewer calories for the switch.
 - When baking, sub out some of the white flour for whole-wheat flour. The taste and texture will remain the same, but you'll get the added boost of fiber.

Sources:

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- Fiber. (2019, June 4). Retrieved from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/fiber/>
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MULCH, LOW TECHNOLOGY, HIGH IMPACT!

Steve Chaney, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Mulch is simply a layer of material covering the soil surface around plants. There is nothing glamorous about mulch, but it is by far the lowest-technology, highest-impact gardening practice of all!

The primary benefit of mulching is water conservation, but it also does the following:

- Reduces soil erosion (especially vital on slopes) from wind and rain, protecting your soil preparation investment.
- Moderates soil temperatures by keeping soils warmer in winter and cooler in summer. (Buy an inexpensive meat thermometer and measure your bare soil during the middle of summer, you will be shocked!)
- Reduces weed populations by keeping weed seed in the dark, smothering weeds, restricting weed growth, or simply making them easier to pull.
- Reduces soil borne plant diseases by preventing rain or irrigation water from splashing soil fungi up onto the stems, foliage, flowers, and fruit.
- Provides organic matter to the soil by decomposing into the soil or with tilling into the soil annually.
- Creates aesthetically pleasing soil covering (research at WSU has indicated that a newly mulched bed with no plants has nearly the same aesthetic rating as a bed filled with plants. What were not acceptable were weedy beds.)

Mulches can be organic materials, such as shredded bark, compost, recycled paper, pine straw, and wood chips; or inorganic materials, such as chipped granite, lava rock, limestone, woven plastic, river rock, and even recycled chipped tires.

Organic mulches are preferred by most, but rock mulches have their place as well in our landscapes. Take a hint from the natural environment in your area. Pine straw mulch looks natural in East Texas where there are lots of native pines. Stone and rock

mulches are natural in West Texas. Yet a constructed arroyo (streambed, dry or wet) can be a great landscape addition throughout Texas.



Organic mulches still have the advantage over rock mulches in most situations. Organic mulches decompose and add organic matter back to the soil. They also reflect less sunlight, reducing heat loads on plants and surrounding buildings. The disadvantages of organic mulches are they can wash away during heavy rains and they need to be replenished annually.

One of most often asked questions about the use of mulch is: Can mulching with sawdust or wood chips rob nitrogen from the soil? The answer is yes they can rob nitrogen from the soil because the microorganisms use nitrogen to decompose the sawdust or wood chips in question. No big problem! Simply add some nitrogen fertilizer to your plantings to compensate for what's used to finish breaking down the material. The many benefits far outweigh the extra step and then as the mulch breaks down into the soil it gives you a slow release Nitrogen bath for many months to come! So if you have an inexpensive source of sawdust or wood chips, then by all means use it!

One last comment on mulch, there are many out there to choose from, it's up to you what you use, just use it! There are lots of colored and dyed mulches out there that often cost more for the color, just remember they dye will fade out in our hot temperatures so probably not the best choice unless you want to re-dye it. My favorite saying in the landscape business is "Compost once, Mulch forever."

Happy Gardening as we go into 2020 my friends!

PROVISIONS AND PROTECTIONS FOR POLLINATORS

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Decreasing populations of pollinators have many people concerned about food security. Almost one third of the food we eat relies upon pollinators, mostly insects. While the causes of pollinator decline are many and varied, including habitat loss, mite pests of those insects, and the use of pesticides to control less desirable insect species, everyone can take simple steps to help pollinators.

Picture a Pollinator

Many people's mental pollinator picture would be the honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. Domesticated honeybees are essentially livestock. Farmers, aka beekeepers, move them around and provide supplemental food when needed. These European immigrants are quite unusual in the world of pollinators and even among bee species. Less than 4 percent of bee species make honey and fewer than 3 percent live in hives. The average bee is much more likely to live alone underground. Many insect pollinators aren't bees at all. Butterflies, Moths, Wasps, and Hoverflies all move pollen.

Provide Habit

Be they bees, butterflies or flower flies, pollinators pollinate because they are looking for food in flowers. That food can be nectar, pollen or both. As they fly from flower to flower, some pollen will be coincidentally transported and delivered. In addition to flowers, pollinators also need water and nesting sites. In many ways, creating pollinator habitat is just like creating habitat for birds or even polar bears. While creating polar bear habitat in an urban landscape is neither practical nor desirable, pollinator habitat can be as small as a window box or a patio container plant and urban environments can provide lots of habitat for pollinators.

In February 2019, the National Pollinator Garden Network (NPGN) announced that they had reached their goal to register one million pollinator gardens in just three years. The 1,040,000 registered gardens make up approximately five million acres of new or enhanced pollinator habitat. To build on that national network of pollinator gardens, NPGN called for everyone to look for and plant species that bloom in different seasons and to participate in citizen science projects to help pollinators.

During the summer of 2019, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Entomology Specialist Dr. Mike Merchant joined forces with entomologists at Tarleton State University, Texas Tech University and Oklahoma State University as well as a plethora of citizen scientists to determine the attractiveness of commercially available ornamental plants to pollinators in Texas and Oklahoma. Some of the results of this project are online at <https://sixleggedaggie.com/research/pollinator-project/>

The plant species most frequently observed attracting pollinators this summer in Texas and Oklahoma was salvia. This is great news for gardeners because salvias are widely available and come in a wide range of colors from deep blue to purple to red to orange to yellow and even white. There are even *Salvia guaranitica* cultivars with prominent black calyxes.



Protect Pollinators

Pesticides, specifically insecticides, are designed to kill insects and pollinators are sometimes innocent bystanders in chemical warfare against invading insect pests. Other pollinators are pests in certain circumstances. For example, paper wasps are pollinators but if they build a nest next to the front door,

someone will probably grab a can of wasp spray.

To help pesticide users avoid unintentional pollinator extermination, in 2013 the Environmental Protection Agency created a bee advisory box on pesticide labels to call attention to application restrictions such as applying the product only when plants are not flowering. The bee boxes also highlight the importance of avoiding pesticide drift and instructions for reporting incidents.

Simply paying attention to times when pollinators are active can help all pesticide users target applications to pests that are constantly feeding on plants and pollinators that occasionally visit. Use of active ingredients that target specific insect families rather than broad spectrum insecticides is also helpful. Adopting an Integrated Pest Management program will include pest management strategies other than pesticides.

THE PLACES 4-H CAN TAKE YOU

Jordan Peldyak, 4-H Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program

It has been said that 4-H is America's best kept secret for youth development programs. 4-H is actually America's biggest youth development organization and has been running for more than 100 years. Every state and almost every county in the country has a 4-H program. This allows the 4-H structure to work on a club, county, state, and national level.

The way to get started is to choose a club within the county that may be working on specific projects, in which members may be interested. These projects range from animal projects, robotics, leadership, photography, community service, and more. Once a member has signed up they are able to attend any club that is available. Within each club there may be contests associated with specific projects. This allows youth to compete on the county level, district level, and possibly the state level and national levels. Just like any competition it can be tough to make it to the higher levels but with year by year improvements, it is possible. Competition is not what defines what 4-H is all about, 4-H is a long list of life skills that can benefit youth throughout their lives. Many of these skills are learned at the club and county levels.

The dedication of many wonderful volunteers and agents throughout the county and around the country allow 4-H members to develop these great skills. Projects that peak youth's interests can really help drive what they may be interested in doing for college and even a potential career. The slogan for 4-H is "Learn by doing." This can really make what youth may be interested in a working reality. The structure that 4-H provides allows students to work towards their interests and dreams while learning to accomplish them.

Career exploration is one of many key factors that youth will learn while in 4-H. The benefits of youth being involved in after school programs and clubs have a large impact on social and life skills development, that can give youth a step ahead moving through the early years of life. 4-H clubs can open up doors for youth trying to find what they may be passionate about, or continue to enjoy activities and projects they have been successful with in the past. Youth programs allow students to learn from peers and share their knowledge of different skills with each other. Clubs can make it easier for youth to work with other students who may share their same interests.

During the developmental years of children, the fear may come across that they do not belong within a group or organization. 4-H youth programs, along with others, create a positive learning environment for any child to explore their interests no matter their prior experiences. Many benefits for youth come along just by being involved in the community with positive groups. The structures of positive youth development creates increased self-discipline and time management skills. Youth may also benefit from helping in the community to create change. This could lead into potential career choices that develop through engagement in the community and youth programs. The more exposure for youth to learn and participate in educational programs and clubs, the better well-rounded they will be going into adult hood. The environment that we live in is a constant evolving place that requires everyone to learn new things to be successful moving forward.



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