

DAWG TRACKS SAFETY NEWSLETTER

**MS Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station
MSU Extension Service**



As I write this newsletter it's 83 degrees outside but feels like 90. Yes, summertime in Mississippi is here along with its unwelcomed brother, humidity.

Why is high humidity a concern?

When humidity levels increase it makes it more difficult for our sweat to evaporate. This evaporation of sweat is what naturally helps cool down our body's temperature. When humidity increases to over 50%, this humid air also makes it more difficult for our respiratory system to extract oxygen from each breath we take. These conditions are part of the reason why we can feel lethargic in humidity, and why physical activity can be even more taxing than normal.

How do we fight against thermal overload?

Just as you may have heard before...

- Hydration – replace the water you sweat out.
- Cooling – seek shade, wear loose & light-colored clothing, take frequent breaks.

or as you may not have heard before...

- Eat cooling foods.

The Creator made all things, which includes our bodies and this hot weather. It also stands that in His omniscience He made what will help regulate our body's temperature – water for hydration, trees for shade, & cooling foods for internal regulation.

According to nutritionist, Dr. Axe, how a food affects one's digestive system and metabolism is what makes it a "cooling food", not its physical temperature. They help do this in part by promoting hydration, supporting digestive processes and encouraging sweating/perspiration in some cases.

Some of these same cooling foods also contain beneficial electrolytes capable of helping regulate blood sugar and blood pressure.

What foods are cooling to the body?

- Water-rich vegetables - cucumbers, celery, tomatoes, asparagus, various greens, zucchini and radishes.
- Water-rich fruits - strawberries, cherries and other berries; tropical fruits, melons, grapes and kiwi.
- Tofu and soy products.
- Coconut water and milk.
- Goat's milk and cheese.
- Kefir and yogurt, almonds, and raw honey.
- Grains, including rice, quinoa, spelt, barley and oats.
- Cilantro, spearmint, peppermint, dill, rosemary, and even cayenne pepper.
- Lavender, lemongrass, aloe, and green tea.

In conclusion, as you prepare for a day in the heat and humidity maybe try replacing some of those sports drinks with a bag of mandarin oranges or grapes to help regulate body temperature naturally. Not only do they hold up well in a cooler full of ice, but the mandarins are also packed with potassium. The essential mineral that keeps your muscles from locking up with debilitating cramps and, more importantly, can help regulate a steady, healthy heart rhythm under strain.



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