Watch Out for Unwanted Hitchhikers – Bed Bugs

I am sure you have heard the old saying “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” When it comes to bed bugs these are certainly words of wisdom. It is possible to bring these unwanted pests into our homes in unexpected ways.

If your favorite warm-weather activities include shopping at garage sales or traveling, you might be at a greater risk of a bed bug infestation. These biting insects often reside in places where they come into repeated contact with humans, places like hotel beds or furniture found at garage sales.

A great way to prevent getting infested with bed bugs is to understand where they like to live, what they look like and how they get around. “Bed bugs are excellent hitchhikers,” says University of Tennessee Extension entomologist Karen Vail. “They can enter homes via infested luggage, backpacks, purses, clothing and furniture. They are beige to rusty red and may be one twenty-fifth to one third of an inch in size depending on their life stage.”

There are some easy-to-follow tips that can greatly reduce your chances of bringing home the unwanted pests:

While traveling:

• Store luggage away from beds. Store luggage in the bathroom or place it in a sealable plastic bag.
• Inspect the hotel room before you unpack. Check behind the headboard, along the mattress seams, and other accessible cracks and crevices. Ask for another room if you find bed bugs.
• Inspect luggage for bed bugs before leaving the hotel. Upon your return home, wash and dry clothes immediately.
• Leave luggage in a sealed bag until you have time to inspect and clean it.

At garage sales:

• When acquiring new-to-you beds, bedding, furniture, appliances and other items that may harbor bed bugs, inspect them before purchasing or bringing them to your home. This goes for rental furniture, too.
• Inspect new-to-you clothing, purses, backpacks and briefcases before entering your home.

It is important to follow these precautions because bed bugs are a major pest concern for Tennessee, and the problem is growing. According to Vail, “In 2005, nearly 20 percent of
Tennessee counties reported bed bugs. By December 2012, bed bugs were reported in 60 percent of Tennessee counties and could well be more widespread than reported.

For more information on bed bugs, including images to help you recognize them, you can review the UT Extension publication “Affordable Bed Bug Management” (SP 761), available free online at the UT Extension website: extension.tennessee.edu. Just click on the top link to “publications” and enter the search term “bed bug” to see links to this and other resources. You may also contact your local county UT Extension Office.

Know the Regulations for Direct Selling of Cattle for Freezer Beef
There is still time to register for the Direct Selling Cattle for Freezer Beef workshop which will take place March 9 at the James E. Ward Ag. Center. There are legal considerations you should know about if this is one of your chosen methods of marketing. Topics will include regulations for selling live animals for custom processing, how to develop a bill of sale to document live animal transactions, communications and expectation with the processor and how much meat to expect from a beef carcass, and March 9, 6-9 PM, James E. Ward Ag. Center. Pre-registration by March 5 is required. Call 615-444-9585 to make your reservation. There is limited space available.

Agricultural Market Summary
Cattle Market Trends
Calf and feeder cattle prices have gained the past two weeks. The expectation is for the price of grass cattle to continue to surge into middle or late March. Feeder steers $1 to $10 higher, $170.00-$345.00; Feeder heifers $5 to $8 higher, $164.00-$305.00; Slaughter cows $3 to $4 higher, $86.00-$113.00. Slaughter bulls $3 to $5 higher, $123.00-$138.50.

Grain Market Trends
Corn, soybeans and wheat were up for the week. Corn – Cash price, $3.75-$4.16. March futures closed at $3.87 up 2 cents a bushel. Soybeans – Cash price, $9.64-$10.13. March futures closed at $9.90 up 17 cents. Wheat – Cash price, $4.81-$4.89. March futures closed at $5.33 up 6 cents.

Goat and Sheep Market Trends
Goats - Slaughter kids, $192.50-$315.00; Yearlings, $147.50-$205.00; Slaughter bucks, $140.00-$210.00; Slaughter nannies, $100.00-$152.50; Feeder kids, $107.50-$130.00. Sheep – Slaughter lambs, $140.00-$270.00; Slaughter ewes, $93.00-$105.00; Slaughter rams, $60.00-$97.00.

For additional information on these and other topics, contact the UT Extension Office, 925 East Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, TN 37087, 615-444-9584 or acorrell@utk.edu. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in all programs. Visit the UT/TSU Extension webpage at http://utextension.tennessee.edu/wilson or look for UT & TSU Extension, Wilson County on Facebook.

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