

Cooperative Extension Service
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Fall 2024

Agriculture

Newsletter



Wayne Kirby, ANR Agent

Important Dates

- *September 17th @7:00 p.m. - Knox County Cattleman's (The Knox County Extension Office)*
- *September 19th @6:00 p.m. – Bull Value Assessment Program (3610 Slate Lick Church Rd. London, Ky 40741)*
- *September 26th @6:00 p.m. – Bull Value Assessment Program (3610 Slate Lick Church Rd. London, Ky 40741)*
- *October 1st @7:00 a.m. – News and Views (The Knox County Extension Office)*
- *November 19th @6:00 p.m. – Knox County Cattleman's (The Knox County Extension Office)*

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506



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with prior notification.

OFF THE HOOF

KENTUCKY BEEF CATTLE NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1, 2024

Timely Tips

Dr. Les Anderson, Beef Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

Spring-Calving Cow Herd

- Fescue pastures don't generally produce much this month. Some of us have had some rain but the heat has punished our pastures and cattle this summer. Most of you may have some forage going into the usually dry months. Keep rotating pastures to permit calves to continue gaining weight. Always keep minerals available.
- Bulls should have been removed from the cow herd by the end of the month. They should be pastured away from the cow herd with a good fence and allowed to regain lost weight and condition. It is a good time to evaluate physical condition, especially feet and legs. Bulls can be given medical attention and still have plenty of time to recover, e.g., corns, abscesses, split hooves, etc. If removing the bull is not practical for you then call your herd veterinarian and schedule a pregnancy diagnosis. Market your "late-bred" cows and keep those that conceived early in the breeding season.
- Repair and improve corrals for fall working and weaning. Consider having an area to wean calves and retain ownership for postweaning feeding rather than selling "green", lightweight calves. Plan to participate in CPH-45 feeder calf sales in your area.

Fall-Calving Cow Herd

- Dry cows should be moved to better pastures as calving time approaches. Cows should start calving next month. Yearling heifers may begin "headstart" calving later this month. Plan to move cows to stockpiled fescue for the breeding season, so it will soon be time to apply nitrogen fertilizer.
- Prepare for the fall-calving season (usually September). Get ready, be sure you have the following:
 - record book
 - ear tags for identification
 - calf puller
 - castration equipment

General

- Perhaps the most tedious aspect of agriculture is keeping records, generating reports, and using data to make management decisions. Consider using one of the many electronic data collection and management systems available on the market. We recommend Stocket.us for a simple, inexpensive web/app platform.
- Provide shade and water! Cattle will need shade during the hot part of the day. Check water supply frequently – as much as 20 gallons may be required by high producing cows in very hot weather.
- Select pastures for stockpiling. Remove cattle and apply nitrogen when moisture conditions are favorable. Stockpiled fescue can be especially beneficial for fall-calving cows after calving. Reproductive rates are highest in fall-calving cows grazing stockpiled fescue.
- Avoid working cattle when temperatures are extremely high – especially those grazing high-endophyte fescue. If cattle must be handled, do so in the early morning.
- Do not give up on fly control in late summer, especially if fly numbers are greater than about 50 flies per animal. You can use a different "type" of spray or pour-on to kill any resistant flies at the end of fly season.
- Keep a good mineral mix available at all times. The UK Beef IRM Basic Cow-Calf mineral is a good choice.
- Cattle may also be more prone to eat poisonous plants during periods of extreme temperature stress. They will stay in "wooded" areas and browse on plants that they would not normally consume. Consider putting a roll of hay in these areas and/or spraying plants like purple (perilla) mint that can be toxic.
- Take soil samples to determine pasture fertility needs. Fertilize as needed, this fall.

Winter Grazing Requires Planning

Hay is an important part of ruminant livestock systems in transition zone states like Kentucky. However, it tends to be an expensive feed source compared to allowing animals graze during the winter months. The cost of producing a ton of grass hay can vary, but if you count fertilizer, machinery, and a little labor will likely be more than \$100. Take a few minutes and calculate your hay costs. The other challenge is producing hay that is high enough in forage quality to meet the nutritional needs of lactating brood cows and even dry cows in some cases. On top of this, feeding that hay during the cold, wet, and muddy winter months is not fun, especially if you work off the farm since it is dark when you leave and dark when you get home.

In contrast to hay, allowing animals to graze during the winter months can significantly reduce winter feed costs. Extending grazing requires careful planning and timely implementation of practices designed to provide forage during the winter months. Practices include stockpiling cool-season grasses and planting winter annuals.



The following are tips for Stockpiling Perennial Grasses: Stockpiling is simply allowing forage growth to accumulate during one part of the year and using that growth for deferred grazing at a later date. In transition zone states like Kentucky, cool-season pasture growth is commonly stockpiled in late summer to extend grazing during the winter months. Tall fescue is by far the best adapted grass for stockpiling. Tall fescue stockpiled for winter grazing is almost always higher in nutritional value than most of the hay that we make in Kentucky and will in most cases meet the requirements of a fall calving cow during peak lactation. In addition,

grazing stockpiled grass costs about half as much as feeding hay that is supplemented. Stockpiled tall fescue maintains its quality further into winter compared to other cool-season grasses. The following steps will help to optimize your stockpiling program.

Choose a strong tall fescue sod in a field that is well drained. To get the maximum yield response to nitrogen applications you will need a healthy stand of tall fescue. Choosing a field that is well-drained will help to ensure that the stockpile can be grazed with minimal pugging damage during the wet winter months.

Clip pastures that will be stockpiled to 3-4 inches prior to applying nitrogen. Clipping pastures removes old growth and increases the forage quality of the stockpiled grass.

Apply 60-80 lb of nitrogen per acre in mid-August to early-September. Applying nitrogen too early can stimulate warm-season grass growth in pastures, while applying nitrogen too late decreases dry matter yield. When applying nitrogen in early to mid-September, decrease application rates to 40-60 lb/A.

Allow growth to accumulate until mid-December before grazing. If limited grazing is available, feed hay during late summer and fall to allow pastures to stockpile.

Graze stockpiled pastures that contain legumes first. Legumes deteriorate at faster rate than grass and should be grazed first to minimize losses.

Strip graze tall fescue to maximize grazing days. Ideally, allocating only enough stockpiled grass for 2-3 days will increase grazing days per acre by 30 to 40%. However, if you work off the farm, it may make more sense to allocate 7 days of grass. This would allow you move fences on days off.

Frost seed legumes on grazed areas. Closely grazed stockpile provides an excellent opportunity to establish legumes in grass dominated pastures. Broadcasting the seed as the pasture is being grazed can enhance soil-seed contact and increase overseeding success.

Benefits of Proper Fertilizer Usage

**Following these fertilizer recommendations offers
several benefits to farmers:**



- Optimized nutrient delivery boosts crop yields through timing and application.
- Enhanced soil health fosters long-term productivity and sustainability.
- Fertilizer application based on soil tests maximizes efficiency and reduces costs.
- Sustainable resource management through efficient fertilizer use protects soil quality for future generations.

**For more information on fertilizing crops and soil health,
contact your local county extension office!**

*Source: John Grove, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences professor
An Equal Opportunity Organization.*

Return of the Fall Armyworm?

In 2021, Kentucky was one of many states that were impacted by a historic outbreak of fall armyworms. That year marked perhaps the worst year for the pest since the 1970s and has inspired fear and dread about these hungry, hungry caterpillars rearing their head again. In the past week, reports from western and central Kentucky have indicated that some folks are seeing fall armyworms in turfgrass areas. It doesn't seem to be at the same levels we experienced in 2021 but it doesn't hurt to review how this pest works and what can be done about it.

Fall Armyworm & Kentucky

Fall armyworms do not overwinter in this state. They are a tropical species, and they typically overwinter in southern Florida and southern Texas. These spots stay warm enough for them to persist and then mate to start the generations that will migrate northward. They usually move from these toasty states into states like Mississippi and Alabama in April and May, arriving next in Tennessee by May or June. Typically, they start to appear in Kentucky by June.

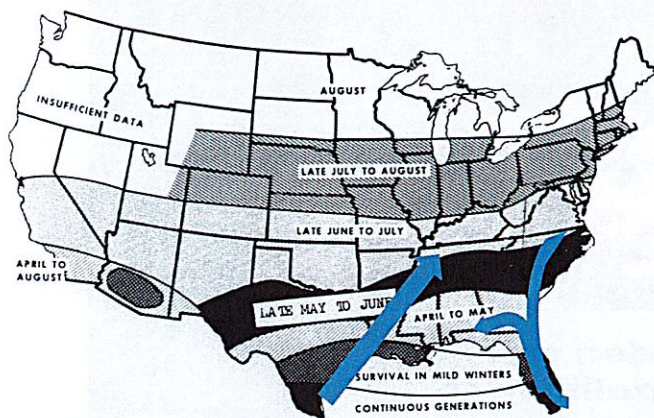


Figure 1: Historically, fall armyworm migration starts in the deep southern tips of Florida and Texas. By late June, successive generations will have migrated to Kentucky. (Graphic adapted from: Sparks, A. 1979. *A Review of the Biology of the Fall Armyworm*. *Fla. Entomol.* 62(2):82-87)

In the Bluegrass State, fall armyworms are usually associated with issues in pastures and crops. In this state and others, they will cross over into the home landscape to feed on turf in lawns. Initially when they feed, the tips of the blades of grass will have windowpane-like damage. As the caterpillars grow, they will progress into consuming whole blades of grass. The term "armyworm" also comes from the fact that these pests move in a group across the grass, creating a distinct line of damage opposed to undamaged grass. Newly planted sod is

more susceptible to being killed by these pests than established turf areas.



Figure 2: Fall armyworm caterpillars can feed on many plants and can be found in agricultural settings in addition to home landscapes. (Photo: Russ Ottens, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org)

What should you do now?

If you live near pastures or agricultural production fields that have been affected by fall armyworm damage, it might be a good idea to check your lawn for initial signs of damage. Additionally, if you noticed large numbers of egg masses, it would behoove you to check in with your lawn. Infested stands of turf will appear thinned out, often with exposed crowns or soil where caterpillars have completely consumed the plant.

Some folks won't have to worry. If you have a yard that was treated with Acelepryn or Scott's GrubEx in the spring/early summer for grub control, you likely won't get fall armyworms. These systemic products last through the whole summer and are effective against both beetle grubs and moth caterpillars.



Figure 3: Fall armyworm egg masses are fuzzy in appearance, often with hundreds of eggs underneath the fuzz. They may lay them on nearly any surface. (Photo: Richard Sprenkel, University of Florida, Bugwood.org)



Figure 4: Representative damage to grass plants; note the thin appearance of the grass and visible soil underneath. (Photo: Chazz Hesselein, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Bugwood.org)

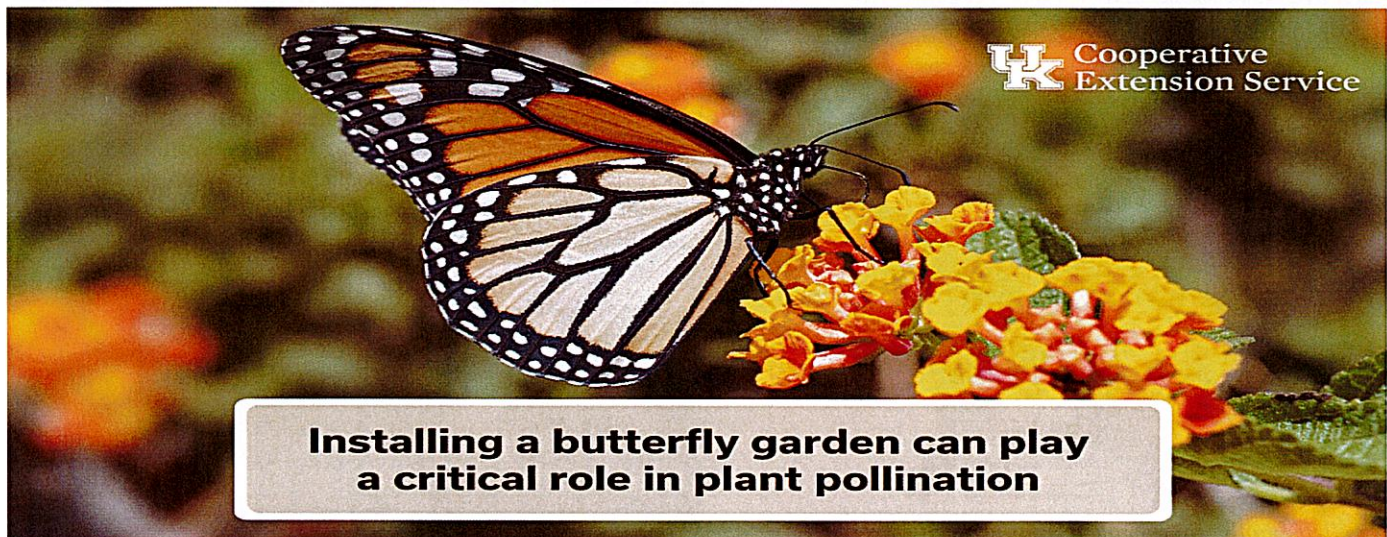
Pub of the Month – Tall Fescue Novel Endophyte Varieties and Establishment for Livestock and Horse Farms

Spring – Soil sample and remove/prevent tall fescue seedheads. Take soil sample in May or earlier. Follow lime and fertilizer recommendations from the soil test report. Mow the pasture closely in early May as soon as seedheads begin to elongate. Mow again in late May to remove any seedheads that escaped earlier mowing. Timely clipping is important since tall fescue seed can be viable 15-20 days after pollination and then will germinate in the fall, contaminating the new seedlings.

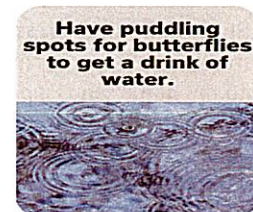
Mid-Late Summer – Apply broad spectrum herbicide like glyphosate to kill existing tall fescue stand before planting novel endophyte tall fescue or other forage grasses. Graze tall fescue heavily during late spring and summer, during periods of growth, stopping to allow regrowth to 4-5 inches in height. Apply glyphosate in mid to late July. Allow weeds and toxic tall fescue to germinate or re-grow. Re-apply glyphosate immediately before planting in early to mid-September.

Early Fall – Plant novel endophyte tall fescue seed. Using a no-till drill, plant a novel tall fescue variety by early to mid-September, after the last glyphosate application. Plant 20lb/a at a depth of ¼ to ½ in. To achieve better ground cover, set the drill to deliver 10 lb/a and go over field twice, with the second set of rows perpendicular to the first.

Late Fall and Early the Following Spring – New stand management. Apply 40 lb N/a in late fall and early spring to enhance stand establishment. Herbicides such as 2,4-D can be used to control broadleaf weeds after tall fescue seedlings have reached the 4-leaf stage (4-5 inches tall). Allow the tall fescue to become well established before grazing the following spring. Wait until plants are 8 inches tall and lightly graze or mow to a residual height of 4-5 in or simply cut for hay in the spring (4 in stubble height). Cool season grasses require 18 months to become fully established. Light grazing during the first season will allow for the development of a strong sod and dense stand that should last 10 to 15 years or more.



Butterfly gardens aren't just for butterflies! They create a haven for many pollinators, and you can easily create your own. Here are some tips to get you started. To learn more about native plants in your area, reach out to your local extension office.





Wildfires and Weather A Potentially Deadly Combination

Tony Edwards - National Weather Service Charleston, WV



Wildland forest fires are fairly common across the Commonwealth, but especially so in the forests of eastern Kentucky. The Kentucky Division of Forestry reports that, on average, there are over 1,400 wildfires each year across Kentucky. Arson is the number one cause of those fires, with uncontrolled burning ranking second. Ninety-nine percent of all wildfires in Kentucky are caused by humans!

Many of us have seen what look like harmless fires burning in the leaf litter in our forests during the dry fall and spring seasons. Some of us may have even been responsible for a burn pile or two getting "out of control". These situations shouldn't be taken lightly, however, as given the right conditions, these fires can become deadly.

On April 6, 1999, rapidly changing weather conditions and steep terrain combined on a wildfire (named the Island Fork Fire) in Rowan County, resulting in the death of two volunteer firefighters, ages 28 and 30. These firefighters were overrun by the wildfire which likely started when a landowner lost control of a fire while clearing a fence line. The wildfire advanced quickly up the steep terrain, with flames as high as 20 feet and winds increasing rapidly to over 35 mph! Char marks on the tree bark were up to 50 feet high! While such fire conditions are rare in Kentucky, they illustrate how dangerous wildfires can be and why you should take measures to prevent them from occurring.

The National Weather Service issues Red Flag Watches and Red Flag Warnings to inform fire management agencies and the public when weather conditions are right for rapid wildfire growth. A **Red Flag Watch** means to be prepared as dangerous fire weather conditions are possible in the next few days but are not occurring yet. A **Red Flag Warning** means dangerous fire weather conditions are occurring now or are expected to occur shortly. During a Red Flag Warning, you should use extreme caution when dealing with anything that could pose a wildfire hazard.

When fire danger is elevated, you may see a burn ban go into effect. Usually these are on a local county level, and are enforced with assistance from local law enforcement. Burn bans generally prohibit burning of forest, grass, crops, woodlands, marshes and other similar areas. Make sure to check with your local fire department or county officials before burning.

Keep in mind that during fire seasons in Kentucky, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The **Spring Forest Fire Season runs from February 15 - April 30** and the **Fall Forest Fire Season runs from October 1 - December 15**. Violation of the burn ban is a misdemeanor punishable by law!

What Causes Wildfires?

A spark, in the presence of fuel and oxygen, can cause a fire, which can further spread depending on various weather conditions.

A SPARK + FUEL & OXYGEN = FIRE! X WEATHER CONDITIONS

Fires can be sparked by natural causes, but most wildfires in the U.S. are caused by human activity.

Natural causes:



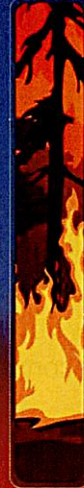
Human activity:



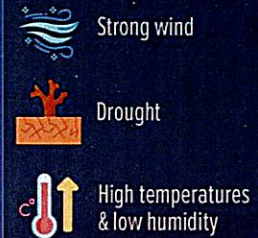
Fuel is usually dry vegetation.



Oxygen is almost everywhere.



Certain weather conditions can make fires bigger, faster, and more dangerous.



weather.gov



FIRE WEATHER WATCH

A Fire Weather Watch is issued when **critical fire weather conditions are possible.**

“Critical fire conditions” means warm temperatures, low humidity, and strong, gusty winds.

Be Prepared.



weather.gov

RED FLAG WARNING

A Red Flag Warning is issued when **critical fire weather conditions are happening or are about to happen.**

Avoid burning, be careful around open flames, safely dispose of cigarettes. Fires can spark and grow very quickly.

Take Action!

Bull Value

Assessment Program

September 19th & 26th

6 PM

3610 Slate Lick Church Rd.
London, KY 40741

Topics Covered

Breeding Soundness Evaluations
Nutritional Management
Sire Genetics
Target Market Selection
Tools for Bull Selection



This will be a **two-part educational program** with a significant producer participation component. The first session will be formal classroom education. At the end, each producer will be assigned one of five scenarios, receive a sales catalogue with the task to research the bulls and determine which ones would be suitable in their assigned scenario. Videos of the bulls will be available online. Participants will return the following week for the second part of the curriculum with the responsibility of buying a bull to fit their assigned scenario at the “Mock Auction”. Producers can come early and view the bull videos and ask questions of the sales team. At the designated time the auction will begin, and all bulls will be sold to the highest bidder while viewing the video of each bull. At the conclusion of the sale the “sales team” will determine the relative value of each sale; this will be done by comparing the sale price against the determined value of each bull. An informal educational program will conclude the auction to discuss which bulls fit each scenario the best. This discussion will include common mistakes, missed opportunities and other teachable moments from the auction.

YOU MUST REGISTER BY CALLING YOUR LOCAL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE



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September 5, 2024

Knox County Extension District Board Members

A Board Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 25th at 12:00 P.M. Lunch will be provided at this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss tax rates other important business. Thank you for your continued support.



Renata Farmer
4- H Agent



Wayne Kirby
Agriculture Agent



Kelsee Dewees
FCS Agent



