

Jefferson County Agriculture Newsletter June 2018

Cooperative Extension Service

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Choosing Housing for Small Poultry Flocks



Raising small poultry flocks on the farm or in the backyard has become very popular. The most important things to remember when choosing the type of housing are provisions for adequate shelter from weather, adequate ventilation and also protection from predators.

You should choose housing that is easy to build from readily available materials. Housing should also have a low maintenance cost and support the changing needs of your flock.

Over the years, a variety of designs for backyard flocks have hit the market, each with their own pros and cons. The best design for you depends on the number and types of birds you have and on how much you want to spend. It's a good idea to make the coop tall enough for you to stand inside; you'll clean it more often if you can get inside. If you need a lower coop for some reason, make sure you have easy access to make cleaning easier.



One popular option for backyard flocks is a bottomless, moveable coop. The owner can move it at regular intervals, so the birds always have access to fresh grass. These housing units also protect birds from predators.

This type of structure is also helpful for small production flocks. You can use the basic hoop design and amend it for the size of your flock. You can even make an easy and relatively inexpensive portable housing system with cattle panels.

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment compiled a series of videos from Kentucky State University showing step-by-step instructions for poultry housing construction on its website at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/smallflocks/Housing.html>.

The site also provides links to other housing plans.

For more information about backyard and small poultry flocks, contact the (County Name) Cooperative Extension Service.

Source: Jacquie Jacob, UK poultry extension associate

Make the Most of Manure



Manure can be a valuable fertilizer, if you know how to correctly use it. Having a nutrient management plan (NMP) can help you to understand how much manure your farm produces, to

pinpoint what areas need manure and to identify crops that can best use the manure without losing nutrients via leaching or runoff.

Under the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act, anyone who has animals in confinement for 45 or more days in one year, whether or not consecutive, must have a nutrient management plan. There are two types of NMPs, a Kentucky plan and a Comprehensive plan. You can write your own Kentucky Nutrient Management Plan or get assistance from a local office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service or the Kentucky Conservation District. The UK publication ID-211, Kentucky Nutrient Management Planning Guidelines, is available create your own plan, or you can use an online tool available at <http://www.bae.uky.edu/awqpt/calculators.htm>.

Your local National Resources Conservation Service office can help you find a technical service provider to write the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan and possibly provide funding for the service. You will need a CNMP when you apply for technical or financial assistance for manure-related practices such as a waste lagoon or covered manure stack pad.

To get started with either type, you will need representative manure and soil samples. This will help you understand the amount of nutrients you have available and which fields need it most. Soil samples are required for every field, including leased land, where you plan to apply manure. Your local extension agent can explain how to collect samples and help you send them to the UK Soil Testing Lab.

Soil phosphorus values and planned crops are two of the most important considerations when applying manure. If you plan to apply manure to a field with a phosphorus value of 75 pounds per acre and you want to plant soybeans, this would be a poor use of the manure. Any field with a phosphorus value above 60 pounds per acre does not need phosphorus unless noted

in the soil test results. So what about nitrogen? Soybeans are a legume which means when inoculated they can create their own nitrogen, so again, manure is not needed. Another field on your farm where you plan to grow corn silage has a soil test phosphorus level of 30 pounds per acre. Since corn is not a legume, it will need nitrogen and could benefit from the manure application, but you should follow the soil test recommendations and use University of Kentucky publication ID-211 Kentucky Nutrient Management Planning Guidelines as a guide.

Base the timing of your manure applications on the plants' needs. In spring, it's best to use manure on row crops. Summer applications tend to result in a loss of nitrogen, warm-season grasses will use the nutrients if they need them. During the fall, you can apply manure on cover crops, small grains or cool-season grasses. Applying manure to cool-season grasses in the fall should result in less weed pressure. You shouldn't apply manure during winter months, and you should have enough storage to hold the manure until the time when plants can use the nutrients. If you don't have adequate manure storage during winter months, follow the guidelines and regulations from UK publication ID-211, Kentucky Nutrient Management Planning Guidelines.

If you have questions concerning nutrient management plans, contact the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service.

Source: Macy Fawns, UK nutrient management planner

Transferring Your Farm to the Next Generation

The average age of farm operators in Kentucky is increasing, and over the next several years, many farm families will consider transitioning their farm to the next generation. The decision of when and how to begin the farm transition process can be difficult; often, farm families avoid the issue because it can be a difficult topic to discuss.

It is important to realize that at some point every farm business will experience a transfer of ownership, either with or without owner participation. The farm business can transfer in one of two ways: either as a viable farm business or as a set of assets. Typically, the goal of many families is to successfully transfer a viable farm business. But only about 30 percent of family farm businesses



successfully transfer to the second generation, with less than 10 percent successfully transferring to the third generation. The majority of failures occur following the owners death due to limited foresight, planning and capital. However, with proper planning and family communication your farm business is less likely to become a failed statistic.

Creating a will or an estate plan is a step in providing a way to distribute assets. However, a comprehensive farm transition plan takes a more in-depth look at the farm business. For many with a family farm, the primary goal of a comprehensive plan is to facilitate the transfer of ownership and management of the farming operation. However, transition planning is also a tool to reduce estate taxes, help secure the financial future of both the new and retiring generations, develop management skills, and to establish goals for your farm, such as keeping your land in agriculture. Ultimately, a sound farm transition plan can provide peace of mind about the future plans for your operation.

Good family communication is one of the key factors to a successful transfer. Farm family transitions are typically smoother if heirs can provide input and when family members have a shared vision. You may find it difficult to treat all heirs equally during the transition; however, it is possible to treat all heirs fairly. Good communication can help both on-farm and off-farm heirs understand the reasoning behind decisions. Each family is unique, and it's important to be conscious of the relationships between heirs and spouses, as well as the family business needs.

To ensure your goals for the family farm reflect the vision of other family members, the first step is to schedule a family meeting and start an open dialogue about the process. A good family meeting typically takes place at a neutral location, not at the kitchen table or in the barn. Everyone needs to feel comfortable enough to share their opinions. Additionally, do not try to tack a family meeting onto another family event such as a holiday dinner. Schedule it just as you would other important business meetings.

During the first family meeting, begin a conversation about transitioning the family farm. Talking points to start the conversation include discussing how each heir perceives their role on the farm. Talk with them about what role they would like to play during the transfer process and ask them about their goals for the future of the operation. Find out if your goals are similar to their future goals.

Once you begin the dialogue, you can address more detailed issues and key questions. You may find it helpful to work with a transition team to develop and implement the plan. Team members may include a facilitator, accountant, attorney and an extension educator. Each member of the team can provide expertise in establishing a transition plan that will work for your family.

Source: Jennifer Hunter, associate extension professor for family finance and resource management



Help Livestock Beat the Heat!

Summer is almost here. We've already experienced some heat, just a taste of what's to come. Humans aren't the only ones who suffer when the temperatures rise. Farm animals feel it, too. You can recognize when your livestock may be in danger from the heat and what you can do to increase their comfort.

Livestock become uncomfortable when the heat index reaches about 90 degrees. The heat index is a combination of air temperature and humidity, and is used to describe how it feels outside.

The University of Kentucky Agricultural Weather Center regularly monitors heat indices across the state and provides an index of its own – the Livestock Heat Stress Index – to help producers know when heat stress could create a problem for their animals. The county-by-county index indicates three levels of heat stress: no stress, danger stress and emergency stress.

Periods of heat stress call for livestock producers to be vigilant in making sure their animals are adequately prepared. One of the most important things you can do is provide cool, clean drinking water. Providing an adequate source of drinking water helps keep animals'

internal body temperatures within normal limits. You should shade above-ground water lines so they do not act as solar water heaters and make the water too hot to drink.

It is also important for animals to have shade and for buildings to be as open as much as possible for adequate ventilation. Sprinkler systems that periodically spray a cool mist on the animals can also be beneficial.

It is best to avoid working your animals during periods of heat stress. You should also avoid transporting livestock during those times. When you must transport livestock, haul fewer animals per load. Planning trips so the animals can be loaded immediately before leaving and unloaded quickly upon arrival can likewise help you minimize the risk.

To keep up-to-date with the livestock heat stress index, access the Agricultural Weather Center's website <http://www.agwx.ca.uky.edu> or go to the Jefferson Cooperative Extension Service's website jefferson.ca.uky.edu and click on the weather link.

Sources: Tom Priddy and Matthew Dixon, UK agricultural meteorologists

Interested in Joining a Community Garden?

Jefferson County Extension helps coordinate 10 community gardens, with plots ranging from 10 x 20 to 30 x 30, available from \$10 - \$20 per year. Think about the satisfaction of growing your own produce just so you know what you're eating, or teaching your child/grandchild about the wonderful science of vegetable gardening.



Interested in Your Own Community Garden?

If you are interested in developing a community garden in your neighborhood, please give me a call and I will work with you to get started. This is where soil sampling is so important. We can check to see if the soil should be tested for more than nutrients – perhaps lead testing would be smart.

If the place where you want to garden has been near an old garage which has been painted with lead paint or has questionable looking soil, it is always a good idea to be sure you are starting with the healthiest soil possible.

Speaking of Gardens

The Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District just secured another grant, which offers two soil vouchers per household in Jefferson County is offering two soil vouchers per household. Soil tests at the Extension office are normally \$7.00 each, so if you have two soils tested, that is a savings of \$14.00. Their number is 502-499-1900. Ask for one or two vouchers. They will send them to you by mail or email and you can bring them to our office with your soil.

******* SEE YOU SOON WITH YOUR SOIL VOUCHERS *******

Local Farmers Markets

Below is a link to the Jefferson County Farmers Markets. You can decide which is nearest you.

https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/final_printed_lfma_local_food_resource_guide.pdf



Marketing for All

Adaptable Marketing Training for Small Farms

Marketing Basics

We'll talk Product, Price, Place, and Promotion as well as key variables specialty crop marketers should consider.

Social Media Basics

This intro course shows how small businesses can use social media to reach new customers and learn about what their clients want.

Basics of Web Design

Designing simple professional online content is now possible for even the most computer illiterate among us. We touch on principles and tools to get you going.

Hands-On Visual Merchandizing

We take a show-don't-tell approach to learning about display design. Participants can brainstorm and discuss the merits of different designs in a hands-on workshop.

Market Signs That Work

Whether you are getting people to your market or business or trying to communicate with them once they've arrived, this workshop can help.

Identifying and Exploring New Markets

There are pros and cons to every market channel. Learn how to find and compare opportunities to grow your business.

Understanding and Using Analytics

Big companies collect BIG data. Learn how you can leverage their technology for your business.

Record Keeping for Specialty Crops

It's not the most exciting course on the list, but record keeping tells you how your business is doing. We focus on basics and making small changes for big results.

Using Price Data to Make More Money

Once you've figured your costs, how do you set your price? We show how to use CCD price data to make sure the price is right.

Value-Added Product Development

Value-added production is one of the big steps many of our producers take. We make sure you know the lay of the land before you get started.

Accepting More Than Just Cash

Customers don't always carry cash any more. We take a look at how and why you may want to think about taking plastic.



Each training lasts ~ 1 hour.

Mix & match topics to meet your group's needs.

To schedule: [email brett.wolff@uky.edu](mailto:brett.wolff@uky.edu) or [call 859-218-4384](tel:859-218-4384)

Center for Crop Diversification: <http://www.uky.edu/ccd/>

Below are some Agricultural links you might find useful:

Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality:

<http://www.uky.edu/bae/sites/www.uky.edu/bae/filesKentucky%20Agriculture%20Water%20Act%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

<https://kycattle.org>

[College of Ag](#)

[Agricultural Communication Services](#)

[Agricultural Information Center](#)

[KY Master Logger Program](#)

[KY Tobacco Research and Development Center](#)

[Division of Regulatory Services](#)

[Extension – Plant and Soil Science](#)

<http://pss.ca.uky.edu/extension15>

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne Long".

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