

Jefferson County Agriculture Newsletter March 2019



Cooperative Extension Service

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Welcome Spring! Our days will become longer and warmer at last as the Earth tilts toward the Sun. Flowers and trees will be blooming with color and, of course, here in Kentucky, people will be celebrating the 145th Kentucky Derby. Along with all the blooming, there will be lots of people suffering from allergies because of the pollen. And there will be lots of animal breeding and garden seeding. Many people believe spring is the best season of the year because it brings hope and life once again.

Now is a great time to bring your soil in to the Extension office to get it tested!

Take multiple examples of the area to be tested, 4 to 8 inches down, and mix them together to equal 2 cups of soil. Allow to dry thoroughly. Put in clean baggy/container and bring to our office at 200 Juneau Drive, Suite 400. We are in Middletown in the East Government center.

The cost is \$7.00 per sample. You can bring a check or money order, as we no longer accept cash. The Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District is offering 2 soil vouchers per household to residents of Jefferson County. Each voucher is worth \$7.00. Please call them, 499-1900, and request 1 or 2 vouchers. They will email them to you and you can bring them with you when you bring your soil. You can also show them to us on your phone if you get your email on it.

If you are concerned about lead and heavy metals in your soil, we can help! We send your soil to the University of Massachusetts for this type of testing. You will receive results for the level of lead in your soil and the pH and nutrient levels, along with recommendations. The cost is \$17.00 and the results are very specific.





A winding stream in UK's Robinson Forest. Photo by Matt Barton

LEXINGTON, Ky., (Feb. 26, 2019) — Water is abundant in Kentucky with its more than 90,000 miles of waterways. KYH2O, a new podcast series produced by the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, uses multiple lenses to examine the importance of that precious natural resource.

“We’re looking at all things water in Kentucky. It’s not just purely science. There are also cultural aspects that are tied to water as well, and events with a water perspective that people might find interesting,” said Carmen Agouridis, extension associate professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and a co-host for the series.

Kentucky's streams and rivers are the primary driver of the state's great natural biodiversity and beauty, from its elaborate cave systems, fertile agricultural land and broad expanses of forest to its abundant wildlife, fish, invertebrates and plant life. When water is taken for granted, however, Kentucky's rich biodiversity can suffer. One of the goals of KYH2O producers is to make people aware that their actions matter.

“Every single person lives in a watershed and plays a role in maintaining the health of that watershed. It’s critical that we protect our water resources, because water is critical to our survival, but we tend to take it for granted,” Agouridis said. “Part of the reason we’re doing this podcast is to get people connected to the water that’s around them and understand its importance and what they can do as an individual to help protect that valuable resource.”

A new podcast is released every two weeks. Episodes cover such subjects as macroinvertebrates in streams and why they’re important; salamanders and the salamander search program at Raven Run Nature Sanctuary in Fayette County; Kentucky’s unique geology and how it is vital to the bourbon industry; streamside buffer zones and stream restoration; homeowner irrigation; and urban trees and their importance to the water cycle. Some episodes will examine environmental education, recreational opportunities and stream cleanup activities.

“We hope the variety of subject matter will help folks understand that all of us have an impact on the water quality, not only in Kentucky but beyond the state too,” said Amanda Gumbert, UK extension water quality liaison and podcast co-host. “Water cycles all through the whole earth, so everything we do has an impact to the water that is part of the global water cycle.”

To enhance the information delivered by KYH2O, numerous other sources of information are included on the program’s website, including publications, videos and links to other websites.

“When we put these resources together, we try to think about it from the perspective of educators and what they could use in their classrooms, though certainly we hope everyone will find this information fascinating and helpful,” Agouridis said.

Gumbert hopes the information gained from the podcasts will persuade people that small changes can make a big difference.

“Every little thing that any of us can do as individuals counts for the greater good,” she said. “We’re trying to give people a snippet of information with a small investment of their time to listen to the podcasts. Maybe they will become better consumers, better decision-makers and more informed global residents, so that we all just walk a little more lightly on the earth.”

The podcasts are available through podcast apps on any mobile device, iTunes or online at <https://www.uky.edu/bae/kyh2o>.

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UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, through its land-grant mission, reaches across the commonwealth with teaching, research and extension to enhance the lives of Kentuckians.

UK Researchers Partnering with National Group to help CSAs Thrive



2018 sweet corn harvest at the UK Horticulture Research Farm for UK's CSA. Photo by Matt Barton, UK agricultural communications.

February 14, 2019 | By: Katie Pratt
Lexington, Ky.

University of Kentucky researchers are part of a national group working to increase opportunities and the economic viability of Community Supported Agriculture operations. A CSA is a subscription-based program where consumers buy “shares” in a farm’s output throughout a growing season.

Tim Woods, and Jairus Rossi, faculty in the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, are partnering with seven CSA technical assistance groups from across the nation to develop a community of practice for CSAs so they can more easily share marketing innovations and other best practices. The community of practice will allow all of the partners to combine their own extensive marketing expertise and resources for the betterment of CSA farmers across the United States.

“We have a unique opportunity to build a knowledge-sharing network between organizations with innovative approaches to CSA,” said Rossi, an assistant research professor in the college’s Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky. “By providing space for collaborations, we can facilitate the exchange of hard-won lessons and novel ideas between service providers across the nation.”

In CSAs, members purchase their share at the beginning of the season with the understanding that they will take part in the bounty or lack thereof with the producer. This model is a win-win for producers and consumers as it helps take some of risk out of farming by providing producers with a stable income, while at the same time CSA members receive benefits from receiving farm fresh fruits and vegetables each week during the growing season.

In recent years, CSAs have faced marketing challenges including nationwide market stagnation, retention rates and competition from CSA-like services. Many of these issues are related to consumers’ lack of education about CSAs and their benefits.

“We have been growing and marketing organic produce through the CSA system since 2005 and have noticed over the past few years that there is an increasing trend toward modifying traditional CSA models,” said Mark Williams, interim chair of the UK Department of Horticulture and director of the college’s organic farming unit. “It seems that this CSA community of practice could be a substantial step forward in increasing CSA production while addressing key challenges for growers.”

The three-year project is led by the Wisconsin FairShare Coalition and is funded by a nearly \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Local Foods and Promotion Program. The California-based Community Alliance with Family Farms is also a key partner on the project. Additional collaborators include CSA technical assistance programs in New York, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Oregon and Michigan. All partners have developed innovative ways to address CSA marketing challenges in their areas.

“The project will bring all of these resources together and allow us to address challenges that CSAs face as a group. This includes ways to access non-traditional markets like employer wellness programs and virtual shoppers, as well as new approaches to managing the CSA business in an effort to strengthen retention rates,” said Woods, UK extension professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. “Engaging with the community will always be a central tenet, but there are many creative ways to do this, and we want to be able to freely share ideas.”

Partners will offer strategies on marketing, retention rates, workplace wellness and employer-based programs, farm business management, health and wellness discount programs and ways to

increase access to low-income individuals and families. Ultimately, results from this project will give U.S. farmers greater access to these new and innovative strategies to grow their businesses.

Woods and Rossi are developing the community of practice for the grant. UK is renowned for developing innovations in both CSA production and marketing, having developed a number of nationally recognized resources for CSA producers with varying experience levels. Directors of UK's student-run CSA farm have developed a detailed breakdown of business costs for small-to-medium-sized CSAs. UK researchers continue to study the potential health benefits of CSA participation and employer return on investment associated with partial sponsorship of CSAs as part of worksite wellness programs.

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Writer: Katie Pratt, 859-257-8774

Small Ruminant Short Course



**Date/Time: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 6:00 PM
Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 7:30 PM**

**Location: Shelby County Cooperative Extension
1117 Frankfort Rd
Shelbyville, KY 40065**

Description: Guest speakers Dr. Don Ely, Dr. Debra Aaron and Dr. Ken Andries will cover topics including sheep nutrition and reproduction/genetics, goat management and FAMACHA, Walnut Cliff Farms will host the group for an on-farm share session.

Call 502-633-4593 to reserve your space by March 11.

Cattle Taking a Hit From the Wettest Year on Record

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Feb. 11, 2019) — 2018 was Kentucky's wettest year on record, and the new year seems to be more of the same. This means most livestock producers are dealing with less than ideal conditions, and cattle are showing signs of stress.

"It is important to understand this winter has been relatively easy temperature-wise but difficult for cattle in Kentucky," said Michelle Arnold, ruminant extension veterinarian for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. "Cows of all ages are losing weight now at levels typically seen in late winter."

Prolonged cloudy, wet weather with regular bouts of rain has resulted in muddy conditions that require substantially more energy in feed just to maintain body heat.

"Hay quality is also exceptionally poor this year, as much of it was cut very ripe, rained on while curing and baled with enough moisture to support mold growth," Arnold said.

Winter feeding programs on many farms aren't enough to support cattle this year, especially those in late pregnancy or early lactation, or their newborn calves, even though bitter cold hasn't been a factor to this point.

Arnold explained that cattle have several defenses against cold, the first of which is their hair coat. The coat grows longer in the winter and helps conserve heat and repel cold. If an animal's coat cover is wet and muddy, its energy requirements can easily double, especially if the animal has no wind protection.

"Energy from intake of hay that is adequate for maintenance in normal years is falling far short of the requirement this year," she said. "Cold conditions are not too difficult for cattle, but when rain and wind are added, heat loss is multiplied several times by the effects of conduction and evaporation. Under these circumstances, the 'wind chill factor' referred to by the meteorologist has real meaning to a cow."

To combat this, producers need to supplement cattle with adequate energy and protein sources. Hay of unknown nutritional quality often does not provide enough nutrition to meet the animal's basic requirements. This will result in depletion of body fat stores, followed by breakdown of muscle protein and finally death due to insufficient nutrition.

"Typically, near the end of most winters, both veterinary diagnostic laboratories in Kentucky receive older beef cows for necropsy," Arnold said. "This winter, malnutrition cases include young cows and pre-weaning/weaning age calves, indicating serious nutritional deficiencies in the feedstuffs, especially the hay produced last summer. The producer may first notice a cow getting weak in the rear end. Later she is found down and is unable to stand. Death follows within a day or two after going down. Multiple animals may die within a short period of time."

At necropsy, the pathologist may find a thin animal with no body fat stores, but the rumen is full

of bulky, dry forage material which is poor quality hay. Even the small seam of fat normally found on the surface of the heart is gone, indicating the last storage area in the body for fat has been used up.

Despite having had access to free choice hay, these cattle died from starvation. Although hay may look and smell good, unless a producer tests the hay for nutritional content, he or she does not know the true feed value of that harvested forage.

“It is often difficult for producers to bring themselves to the realization that cattle can actually starve to death while consuming all of the hay they can eat,” Arnold said.

She also encouraged producers to look at their mineral supplementation, as copper and selenium levels have been far below acceptable levels this year. Deficiencies can lead to multiple problems, and it’s best to address them before they get to that point.

“We want producers to understand how important it is to test their hay. It is simple, inexpensive, and the results are easy to interpret,” Arnold said. “Your local Cooperative Extension Service office can help you. Other than that, review your nutrition program, and if your cows are losing weight, consider supplemental feed to get them through the rest of the winter.”

UK beef specialists Kevin Laurent, Jeff Lehmkuhler and Roy Burris created an online supplemental feeding tool at <http://forage-supplement-tool.ca.uky.edu/>, where producers may enter hay test values and stage of production to help find appropriate supplements for many operations. Producers should still monitor intake and body condition through the winter and make sure cattle have clean drinking water and access to a complete mineral supplement.

Your Extension Office is Here to Serve YOU!

Please call our office if you have any questions regarding Agriculture, Horticulture, Family & Consumer Sciences or 4-H Clubs. We are happy to talk with you and give you researched-based answers!

Our Horticulture Technician is available to answer your questions about plants, , bugs, trees, flowers, lawn problems and vegetable gardening.

Our hours are Monday thru Friday from 8:00-4:30. We are closed for lunch from 12:00-1:00 PM.

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)

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 Master Naturalists Program](#)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_XYwSY9Da_KbVMLB074HIA

[KY Tobacco Research and Development Center](#)

[Division of Regulatory Services](#)



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