

**AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

# OF COWS AND PLOWS

## November 2011



**Cooperative  
Extension Service**

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The Franklin County High School FFA Land Judging Team hosted the Bluegrass Regional this past week at the farm of Martin Henson off Shad-

drick Ferry Road. Eight area schools participated. Pictured (left to right) are team members Alexa Ferrell, Emmy King, Rachel Young, Ryan Halligan and Vocational Agricultural Teacher Mr. K. Douglas.

## Beef Conference Held at Fayette County Office

The Beef Conference was held once again at the Fayette County Extension Office with a full crowd. As usual, attendees received up to date market info and expert predictions.

Randy Blach, CattleFax, highlights:

\* We are finally exporting more beef than importing which hasn't happened for decades and more markets are anticipated to open or expand soon. This is important to us since other cultures value cuts that we don't tend to utilize. For example, the tongue is worth about \$2 in the U.S. but can fetch \$14-18 in Asia.

The only bad news was the drought and the resulting sell off and harvest of cattle in Texas and the south east will only mean increased dividends for the rest of the cattle producers for the next 3-5 years. He even hinted that he wouldn't be surprised to see \$2000 cows and

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## NOVEMBER 15TH America Recycles Day

Since 1997, individuals across the United States have come together on November 15 to celebrate America Recycles Day. However, America Recycles Day is more than a celebration, it is a day to inform and educate. A day to get our families, friends, and neighbors excited about what we can accomplish in our communities, and across our great nation. On November 15, I encourage you to learn more about what you can recycle in your community. You can visit Earth911 and enter the item you would like to recycle and your zip code. A list of facilities that accept that item and the distance from your zip code area to that location will appear.

<http://www.cleansweepusa.org/default.aspx>



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\$200 cwt calves in the near future!

Even though total head are down to levels of decades ago, beef production remains steady due to increased carcass weights and increased numbers of calves weaned. Even though consumers have less to spend on beef protein, they are able to continue buying since 45% is in the form of ground beef. But the smaller supply will mean increases in price and consumption will continue to decrease as a result.

Randy blamed a lot of the cost of production increases on ethanol production. He stated that the cost of gain has increased four fold due to ethanol subsidies. The resulting tight corn supplies will hold corn production at current levels for several years to come. Many feed lots have now made the switch from corn to wheat.

Dr. Jeffery Hall holds an appointment in the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, as the Head of Diagnostic Toxicology. He is a licensed Veterinarian and Board Certified in Veterinary Toxicology. In his role as the toxicologist at the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, he analyzes forage, diet, tissue, and bodily fluid samples for mineral content in order to delineate deficiencies and poisonings.

Dr. Hall reminded the several hundred attendees how important and vital an adequate mineral program is. UK has long touted the value of supplementation and Dr. Hall drove the point home.

Copper is one of our more common deficiencies and the reason many cows and calves have a compromised immune system. This mineral is also important to the "bugs" in the rumen and affects feed conversion. The calf will not get Cu via the milk so the cow must have a reserve and supply the calf in-vitro with it's needs between birth and when it starts grazing. Selenium is another important and limiting mineral. It is delivered to the calf much

like copper. This deficiency results in weak and poor performing calves He claims that 90% of vaccine failures he's investigated are due to mineral deficiencies, not the fault of vaccines or management.

Vitamin A and E are key to health as well. They are found in green grass and the cow must accumulate these in body fat while grazing. During a drought or winter feeding on hay they will deplete their reserves for maintenance. Vitamin A can be stored in fat reserves for 6-8 months while V-E for only about 2-3 months and is available through the colostrum. These vitamins are essential to a healthy digestive tract and in preventing diarrhea and disease.

Many farmers will cut back when trying to trim input costs only to have train wrecks as a result that cost them many times over the value of a bag of mineral. It only costs about \$25-35 per cow calf pair for a year to supplement. (even less for bulk purchasers through the Cattlemen's Association). He estimates that every dollar spent on mineral supplementation has a return of \$1.50.

I've only hit the highlights as the conference is a wealth of timely information. The event occurs every October, plan on attending next time. It's hosted by UK and sponsored by the Kentucky Beef Network, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, Central Kentucky Ag Credit, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation, Farm Credit Services, Kentucky Bank and Novartis. ☀

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## UK Horse Management Calendar



UK has developed Equine Calendars by the Agent Working group which is part of the Equine Initiative in the College of Agriculture. The calendar was developed to give timely tips to horse owners across the state, with many suggestions coming a month before the horse owners needs to do something. Please call the extension office to reserve your free copy. (502) 695-9035.

**USDA NRCS IN KENTUCKY  
ANNOUNCES 2012 FARM BILL  
PROGRAM PARTICIPATION  
Application and Ranking Schedules for  
2012 First ranking cut-off period for  
Environmental Quality Incentives  
Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat  
Incentive Program (WHIP) applications  
will be November 15, 2011**

*Fiscal Year 2012 is underway and conservation  
Farm Bill programs are in effect.*

Lexington, Kentucky; The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kentucky is encouraging landowners, farmers and producers to visit their local NRCS office now to receive more information and apply for conservation technical assistance and possible financial funding opportunities. The application process for 2008 Farm Bill conservation programs is continuous, but funding selections are made at specific times throughout the year. The Kentucky NRCS application ranking cut-off date for consideration for 2012 funds in this sign up period is November 15, 2011. Financial assistance is available to eligible applicants for the following Farm Bill programs:

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS develops contracts with agricultural producers to voluntarily implement conservation practices. Persons engaged in livestock or agricultural production and owners of non-industrial private forestland are eligible for this program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, private non-industrial forestland, and other farm or ranch lands.
- The Mississippi River Basin Watershed Initiative (MRBI) was developed in 2009 with a goal of reducing, mitigating and controlling nutrient levels in surface waters and reducing the severity of the gulf hypoxia crisis. In conjunction with multiple partners, including state agencies, conservation districts, environmental groups, and farming interests, NRCS Kentucky proposed three focus watersheds with boundaries entirely in Kentucky: Licking Riv-

er, Lower Green River and the Bayou de Chien-Mayfield Creek. Eligible land within specific sub-watersheds of the focus areas can take advantage of financial and technical assistance to develop contracts, which address resource concerns within the focus areas. Please contact your local field office to determine land eligibility.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for developing or improving high quality habitat that supports fish and wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to eligible private and Tribal landowners for the development of upland, wetland, aquatic, and other types of wildlife habitat.

“We’re urging producers to get their applications in as soon as possible to be considered for this year’s funding” said Karen Woodrich Kentucky NRCS State Conservationist.

All recipients of assistance are required to develop a Conservation Plan. Conservation planning is an integral part of the conservation process. Landowners should work with a conservation planner to develop the plan based on the landowner’s operational goals to improve the productivity, sustainability and profitability of their operation. The Conservation Plan will serve as a roadmap to a variety of technical assistance and financial assistance through EQIP and WHIP, as well as other options available to the landowner. “We’re getting back to our roots with conservation planning,” says Woodrich. “Conservation planning is the vital first step in understanding natural resources on your land, and also understanding how technical and financial conservation assistance can be incorporated into your operation to help you help the land.” She said “Now is the time to contact your local NRCS Field Office to develop a conservation plan”

If you are interested in participating Farm Bill conservation programs, you should sign-up as soon as possible and request a conservation plan. For more information, contact Peggy Jackson, NRCS district conservationist at 502-695-5203, extension 3. ☀

# BE ALERT TO HEALTH RISKS WHEN GRAZING TURNIPS


Grazing turnips during late fall and winter can be an option to extend grazing; however, like everything else, they can cause problems.



Turnip leaves can cause a blood mineral disease called hemolytic anemia, a brain disorder called polioencephalomalacia that is characterized by twitching and incoordination, pulmonary emphysema, which is a breathing disorder, and even bloat. These problems generally occur during the first couple weeks of grazing. Turnips also affect function of the thyroid gland and, thus, are goiter-genic.

Now this may all sound scary, but most problems are rare and are reduced or eliminated with careful management. To begin, don't shift cattle onto turnips suddenly. Adjust them by feeding high quality hay or pasture for a couple weeks before grazing turnips to prepare their rumen for the high energy and protein in turnips. Giving them just a few hours access to turnips at the start also helps. Make sure they have access to a dry roughage like corn stalks or a palatable hay. This also helps reduce diarrhea, which is common with turnips. Strip grazing that forces cattle to eat both roots and tops reduces problems and increases carrying capacity. And finally, always provide an iodized salt-trace mineral mix.

Many folks worry about choking. It's not very common but it does happen. Growers who have experienced this problem tell me that they usually can remove the plug using a stick or forcing their hand down the animal's throat. Not pleasant, but it works.

Don't be afraid to graze turnips; they're a wonderful resource. Just manage carefully and be alert so problems don't affect you. (SOURCE: Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska) 

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## FCCES Hosts Upcoming Webinars: Shitake Mushrooms and Wildlife Damage and Control

Franklin County Extension will host two webinar sessions in November. These sessions will take place in the evening from 6:15pm- until 8pm and are FREE! Call the office to register.

On Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will learn about Shiitake mushroom production using logs that might be available in a local woodland. This webinar will walk you through the process of "drilling and filling" hardwood logs to produce these mushrooms. Supplies to take home and grow your own mushrooms will be available for those attending the session. Be sure to call the Extension Office today and reserve your place for this webinar.

The next webinar will be about wildlife damage control and management, on Tuesday, November 29. This session will focus on what homeowners and landowners can do to alleviate wildlife damage issues around the home and farm. This will be a very informative session and give you sound, tried and true advice on how to control many of our wildlife species that cause damage to our home acres and woodlands.

Two other webinars specifically related to timber production and sales are available upon request. For those interested, contact the Extension office.

For more information on woodland trees and forests, log on to: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension/> 



# HAY PRODUCTION CHANGES IN KENTUCKY



Kentucky typically harvests hay on around 2.5 million acres. The majority of Kentucky hay is grass hay produced and fed to cattle operations. Grass hay prices are usually pretty low and most is harvested into large roll bales and fed by the same operation. However, Kentucky also has a smaller, upper end hay market that primarily serves the equine and dairy sectors. As we move towards winter, it's probably worth taking quick look at Kentucky hay production estimates and trends for 2011, as some changes are worth noting.

In their August crop production report, USDA reported that Kentucky hay producers expect to harvest 2.1 million acres of non-alfalfa hay in 2011. This is down from 2.3 million acres in 2010, representing a decrease of more than 8%. Yield estimates at the time were placed at 2.3 tons per acre, up slightly from 2010. The decrease in acreage is most likely due to decreasing cattle numbers and competition for ground for corn and soybean production. Kentucky cattle numbers have decreased by more than 180,000 cows since January of 2007 and clearly much hay ground is being converted to row crops. It is also worth noting that, given the recent rains, yield estimates may increase as we look ahead to the October crop report.

In the same report, alfalfa and alfalfa mix acreage showed a much different pattern. Rather than decreasing, alfalfa acreage increased by 20,000 to 250,000 acres. This is the largest acreage estimate since 2007. The general downtrend is largely due to acreage trends and weather patterns. Also visible in the chart is the production low of 2007, which was primarily the result of the spring freeze and subsequent summer drought.

There are several possible explanations for the increase in alfalfa and alfalfa mix acreage this year. First and foremost, alfalfa has always been a crop that is somewhat under the radar screen. As feed prices have increased, so has the value of quality hay. With cooperative weather, alfalfa has considerable profitability potential despite recent increases in production costs. This is especially true for producers with well established markets for high-quality square bales.

Secondly, establishment of new stands has been difficult over the last few years. While weather wasn't perfect in 2011, it certainly offered a decent opportunity to re-establish stands that had largely begun to play out. Finally, the availability of Roundup Ready Alfalfa may have also played a role in the increase. This is a trend that I would expect to continue into 2012. (*SOURCE: Kenny Burdine, UK Extension Agricultural Economist IN Economic and Policy Update, Vol. 11, No. 9, September 29, 2011*) ☀



## KSU Small Farm Conference

November 15-17

Capital Plaza Hotel & Mills  
Lane Research Farm

For details and more information contact Edwin Chavous at 695-9035 or Louie Rivers at 597-5905, his email is [louie.rivers@kysu.edu](mailto:louie.rivers@kysu.edu).



LEFT: Scotty & Lona Brewer, Kerry & Mona Redding, Wilbert Perkins, Sherman Peyton, Patsy Perkins, Gail Peyton and Kathy & Martin Henson in warm, sunny southern Georgia for the Cattlemen's Educational Tour to the Sun Belt Ag Expo.

BOTTOM LEFT: Wilbert Perkins contemplates how much gain he can put on the talking steer at the Georgia Cattlemen's Association. The FCCA Educational Tour visited with the GCA on the way back home from Florida in October.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The FCCA Educational Tour visited the Sun Belt Ag Expo which is like the National Farm Machinery Show only bigger and outdoors. Dealers demonstrate their equipment on the 1,200 acre grounds. Attendees got to see a rake design that allows the baler to be attached, allowing the operator to rake and bale in one pass.



## FCCA Beef IRM Red Book

Many cattlemen rely on the "red book" to record their cattle operation information. It has a calendar as well as areas to record herd inventory, birth records, feed and herd health etc. Everyone that renews their FCCA membership by January 1 will receive a Red Book for 2012.

Dues are: \$25 for individual members  
 \$40 for couples  
 \$10 for junior members



## Comparison of Properties Affecting Firewood

Species	Heat Content Per Cord	Moisture Content Living Tree	Splitting	Weight Lbs / Cord
Osage-orange	30.5	--	Fair	3688
Hickory	29.3	70	Good	3560
Black locust	28.3	55	Good	3440
White oak	27.9	64	Good	3392
Bur oak	26.3	65	Good	3192
Beech	26.3	55	Good	3144
Sugar maple	25.9	65	Good	3144
Pin oak	25.9	83	Fair	3144
Red oak	25.9	80	Fair	3144
White ash	24.6	45	Excellent	2992
Honey locust	24.6	--	Fair	2992
Blue ash	23.8	45	Excellent	2896
Black walnut	22.6	90	Excellent	2744
Hackberry	21.7	61	Good	2640
Slippery elm	21.7	66	Poor	2640
Sweetgum	21.3	79	Fair	2592
Virginia pine	20.7	32	Good	2400
Black cherry	20.5	58	Good	2496
American elm	20.5	95	Poor	2496
Sycamore	20.2	114	Poor	2448
Red-cedar	20.2	33	Fair	2344
Silver maple	19.3	58	Good	2344
Sassafras	18.9	--	Good	2296
Yellow-poplar	17.3	83	Good	2096
Hemlock	17.3	97	Excellent	2000
Willow	16.0	98	Fair	1944
Basswood	15.2	81	Excellent	1848
White pine	15.0	62	Good	1744

This table shows those variables that should be evaluated when purchasing firewood. All firewood should be obtained, stacked and air dried at least six months prior to burning. Those species shown at the top of the list are the better woods to obtain – more wood content per unit volume. Firewood will have to be split for best results. Please notice those species with POOR splitting ability. These should be avoided. Those species toward the bottom of the list, when properly dried, will burn very fast. Many people will obtain a small supply of these woods to help in initially igniting a fire.



Remember not to move firewood and to buy local wood. We don't want to spread the Emerald Ash Borer from state to state. For more information go to:  
<http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/>



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**Cooperative Extension Service**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## FCCES Holiday Schedule

The FCCES Office will be close  
November 24 & 25 in  
observance of the Thanksgiving  
Holiday.



**Keenan Bishop**  
County Extension Agent for Agriculture and  
Natural Resources

Contact the Franklin County Extension Office at  
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