

**AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**



**GREEN COUNTY  
AGRICULTURE NEWS**

**October 2009**

**Cooperative  
Extension Service**  
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**Farmer's Market**

This year's community market has had limited success and we hope to be able to improve that for next year. The problem hasn't been on the consumer side, but on not having enough producers to sell fresh produce. Any individual interested in selling at a Green County Farmer's Market we will be having a planning meeting on October 15, at 6:30 p.m. central time at the Green County Extension Office. This meeting is to engage producers and exchange ideas on how we can make a local farmer's market work in Green County. Anyone interested in selling at a local market is encouraged to attend.

*If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, please contact me.*

*Brian S. Newman*

Brian S. Newman,  
County Extension Agent  
for Agriculture &  
Natural Resources

**Tobacco End-of-Season Disease Management**

The 2009 tobacco growing season is nearing an end and farmers need to begin preparing now to manage diseases in the 2010 crop. There's no way to tell what disease pressures growers will face in the coming growing season. Much depends on the climate when dealing with diseases like blue mold and target spot. However, some problems will show up again and again once certain pathogens become established in a transplant system or the field.

It is important to think about managing diseases like Pythium root rot, target spot, black shank and Fusarium wilt now and not wait until the upcoming production season. A critical step is to institute good sanitary practices on the farm. Many diseases seen in the float system and field survive between crops on equipment and plant residues.

Greenhouses and outdoor float beds should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized in the fall to reduce overwintering populations of pathogens. Plant debris and trash should be buried or burned. Styrofoam trays should be carefully cleaned, sanitized as recommended (or destroyed), and properly stored before winter sets in.

In the field, especially where black shank was a problem, all crop debris needs to be turned under as quickly as possible after harvest. The black shank pathogen (as well as Rhizoctonia and Pythium) survives very well on crop residues, and stalks left in the field can be a source of inoculum that can lead to outbreaks of disease in 2010.

By plowing crop residues under in the fall, soil microbes will have more time to break down plant matter. This in turn will help reduce pathogen survival over the winter, and the effect will be greater than waiting until next spring to incorporate crop residue.

It's also time to think about crop rotation. One of the best practices that we can recommend for preventing or suppressing diseases like black shank and Fusarium wilt is rotation to a non-host crop. Even though we are many months from planting, growers need to start the planning process and make decisions on field choice and potential rotation crops.

Fall is also a great time to think about variety selection and to begin planning for the production of transplants.

## Planting Trees and Shrubs

Selecting the right varieties for the location and transplanting them in the fall gives trees and shrubs a head start on winter and helps them provide pleasure and beauty for years to come.

Now through November is the best time to transplant trees and shrubs. Ornamentals lose less moisture because fall days are shorter, outdoor temperatures are cooler and rainfall usually is adequate. These conditions also help retain soil moisture so plants can settle into their new location. Also, many of these plants are deciduous and lose their leaves in the fall so their demand for water is less.

Trees and shrubs also undergo internal changes that promote root growth and increase tolerance to winter weather. Leaf growth during the summer produced sugars that were moved into the roots, so ample energy is available to re-establish strong root systems after transplanting.

Woody ornamental root systems continue to grow at soil temperatures above 40 degrees, so planting in October and early November usually will give them six to seven weeks before soils reach this temperature. Evergreen species retain their leaves during the fall and winter, so it is best to plant them in early spring, or perhaps early fall so root systems will have adequate time to become re-established before plant water demand increases.

For best results, choose ornamentals that are hardy to the area. Avoid trees and shrubs that are adapted to zone six or above because they are only marginally hardy in Kentucky. Planting an assortment of shrubs and trees will slow down the spread of disease and insect problems.

It is important to select ornamentals that are adaptable to environmental and soil conditions of the site. Talk to a professional if you are not familiar with the growing requirements for a particular shrub or tree or have questions about how to choose vigorous, healthy plant materials.

Several ornamentals can be successfully planted in early to late fall, he said. They include coffee tree, crabapple, elm (disease-resistant varieties only) ginkgo, honey locust, linden, sugar maple, pagoda tree and serviceberry. It is best to wait until after leaf drop later in the fall to plant birch, flowering dogwood, oak, red maple, sweetgum and tulip poplar.

Inadequate moisture during dry periods is the primary threat to transplant survival. Be sure to thoroughly soak the ground after transplanting. Frequently check newly-planted specimens to be sure the soil has not dried out. It is better to thoroughly soak soil once or twice a week than to water it a little every day. Providing sufficient moisture helps transplants survive adverse environmental conditions during the winter.

Two common mistakes many home gardeners make are choosing ornamentals that grow too large for the location and improperly planting them.

A specimen planted with great expectations can grow into a headache when you have to severely prune to keep it away from the house, or the utility company must drastically cut it back to keep branches out of power lines. Be sure to dig a transplant hole that is wide enough. It should be at least two to three times the diameter of the root ball, even wider is better. A hole that is saucer-shaped is better than a bowl-shaped one.

Ornamentals should not be planted any deeper than they grew in a container or field. Use the soil line on the trunk to gauge how deeply to plant balled-and-burlapped ornamentals. A distinctive color difference on the trunk bark indicates how deeply a specimen was planted in the field. If you are not sure how deeply to plant an ornamental, plant it on the shallow side. It is less damaging to plant a tree too shallow than to plant it too deep.

After transplanting, apply a two- to three-inch layer of mulch. Avoid piling mulch around the base of the trunk because this may encourage rotting. A layer of mulch will help conserve soil moisture and discourage weed growth. Mulching also helps moderate soil temperatures that may cause the root system to heave out of the ground during winter freezing and thawing cycles.

Do not fertilize newly planted trees and shrubs during the first year because it will cause excessive vegetative growth at the expense of root development. Also, amending the soil with sand, compost or peat moss is unnecessary and can keep an extensive root system from developing.

Gardeners can find more information on home horticulture by contacting the Green County Cooperative Extension Service office or visiting the Web site <http://www.gardendata.org>.

## Using Manure May Help Reduce Fertilizer Bill

With the high costs of fertilizer, farmers with access to animal manure either from their own livestock or from a nearby farm may want to consider using it as a means of providing nutrients to their crops while reducing their overall fertilizer bill.

With the growth in the poultry industry in Kentucky in recent years, many areas of the state have access to chicken litter. Use of animal waste not only adds nutrients to the soil but also helps build up organic materials and increases yields.

Correctly applying animal waste to the land requires a farmer to know the manure's nutrient content, best application times and methods, availability of nutrients to crops and how to balance crop nutrient needs using manures, fertilizers and other nutrient sources.

Testing is a key component. The first step is a soil test to know what nutrients the crop field needs. The next step is to have the manure tested for its nutrient content. Nutrient content of manure varies depending on the type of animal, type and amount of bedding used, manure's moisture content and time and method of storage.

It is important to note that some manure nutrients are not as readily available to crops as are commercial fertilizers, especially nitrogen. Its availability depends on the crop being grown, type of manure used and when and how the manure is applied. A general rule of thumb is half of the nitrogen in the poultry litter will be available to the crop.

Growing crops have the greatest ability to take up nitrogen, so manures applied during crop growth will have the least risk of nitrogen loss.

The availability of phosphate from manure in the first year's crop after application is somewhat less than with commercial fertilizers while potash in manure is comparable in availability.

The Cooperative Extension Service can help producers navigate through the ins and outs of using manure as fertilizer. Soil and manure testing are both available through the Green County Cooperative Extension office. Several publications are also available to assist producers. Extension publication, "Using Animal Manures as Nutrient Sources" (AGR-146) and a computer spreadsheet (<http://soils.rs.uky.edu/manureprogram.htm>) are available to help determine application rates and fertilizer credits.

## Center of Kentucky Dairy Futures and Contracting Short Course

Depressed milk prices threaten Kentucky's Dairy Industry. Volatile markets make it challenging for producers to remain profitable from one year to another. One method that would help producers gain control in the price received for their milk would be the adoption of using milk futures to contract milk prices. By using milk futures, producers could protect themselves from the volatility of the milk market and over the long run be more profitable.

The agents and a group of dairy farmers of Adair, Taylor, and Green have designed a program to provide producers with the necessary education needed to contract milk using futures. The program will consist of 3 meetings lead by agents, specialist, and industry persons.

Session 1-October 30- Intro to Futures- Kenny Burdine

Session 2- November 10-Milk futures trends, basis, and price insurance- Kenny Burdine and Sam Finney (KDDC)

Session 3- November 18 -How to open trading accounts and working with a broker- Mark Potter- KDM Trading

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### Upcoming Educational Opportunities

Genetic Improvement- October 13, 6:30 p.m. Green County Extension Office. Featured speaker will be Dr. Darrh Bullock.

Farmer's Market Producer planning meeting- October 15, 6:30 p.m. Green County Extension Office.

Forage Educational Meeting- October 27, 6:00 p.m. Exie Fire Department. Featured speaker will be Dr. Ray Smith.

Farm Structure and Commodity Handling- November 3, 6:30 p.m. Green County Extension Office

Center of Kentucky Dairy Futures and Contracting Short Course- October 30, November 10, and November 18 at 10:00 a.m.

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**Cooperative Extension Service**

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