

FLOYD COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE
3490 KY ROUTE 321
PRESTONSBURG, KY 41653
(606) 886-2668
FAX: (606) 886-1458

WEBSITE: FLOYD.CA.UKY.EDU
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FLOYDEXT

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

NEWSLETTER

December 2024

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- December 10** Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting/
Holiday Dinner @ Extension Office 6:00pm
- December 12 Floyd County Extension Council/District Board
Meetings—Extension Office 5:30PM
- December 6, Floyd Co. Farmers Market
13, 20th @ARH Highlands 9am-2pm
- Dec. 25-Jan. 1 Official Holidays
EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED
- January 7 Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm

Other programs will be announced at a later time.



Chad Allen
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Inside this Issue:

Poinsettias For the Holidays	2
Make Farm Record Keeping a Priority	3
Body Condition Scores Good Indicators of Herd Health	4
Live Christmas Trees for the Holidays	5
Winter Feeding Areas for Livestock	6
Mistletoe: Tree Thief, Holiday Tradition	6-7
Not Too Soon to Think About Calving Season	7
Burning Restrictions vs. Burn Bans	8
The 2024-2025 Winter Outlook	9



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

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

Poinsettias for the Holidays

Before we get started with this article about Poinsettias I encourage you to visit Auxier Greenhouse in Floyd County. I have had the opportunity to visit several times over the last couple months to observe the growth of their Poinsettias and I can say they are absolutely beautiful. Through this process I have assisted with leaf samples and soil tests to help to ensure they are meeting their nutritional needs.



Traditional red and green colors are well represented in the flowers available for the holidays. Poinsettias, the most popular and spectacular holiday flowers, can combine both these colors.

The three to six bloom red poinsettia is the most frequently used, but several other sizes, shapes and colors are available. Colors range from creamy white to yellow through shades of pink to the traditional red. The colorful plant parts often referred to as "flowers" actually are modified leaves called "bracts." The yellow centers are really the "flowers." Some poinsettias have marbled pink and white bracts; others may have pink flecks on red. Poinsettia bracts are very long lasting, providing a nice decorative plant for the holiday season. Consumers can buy miniatures as well as poinsettia trees and hanging baskets.

The poinsettia is not poisonous to people or pets, but is classified as a non-edible plant material. Some people have skin sensitivity to the white milky sap produced when a part of the plant is broken or injured. Ingesting a plant part may cause some discomfort. Active young children, who are apt to put just about anything in their mouths, and curious cats might choke on fibrous poinsettia foliage. Therefore it is a good practice to put poinsettias and all other non-edible plants out of children's and pets' reach.

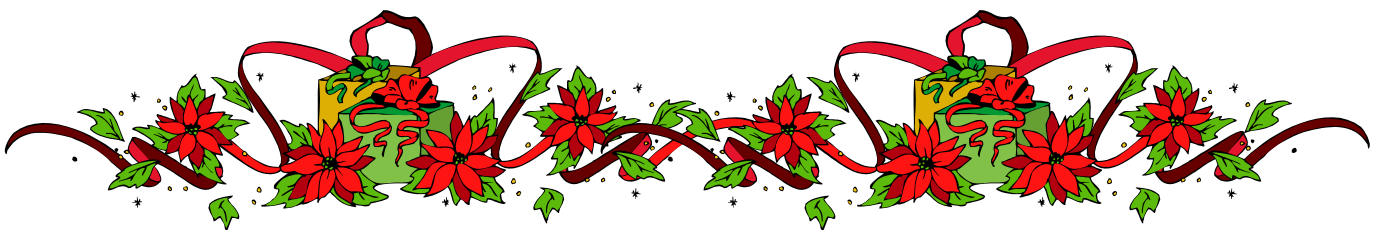
Poinsettias will remain beautiful far beyond the holiday season when cared for properly. Keep these tips in mind.

Choose a plant with small, tightly clustered yellow buds in the center and crisp, bright, undamaged foliage.

At home, put the poinsettia in a room with bright, natural light. Ideally, plant foliage should be exposed to direct sunlight one or more hours daily. Avoid locations where there are drafts and close heat sources. Do not put the plant on top of a television set or near a radiator.

Water the plant when the soil becomes dry; drooping leaves may indicate it needs watering. Be sure to discard excess water in the drip saucer.

If you want to keep a poinsettia after the holiday season, fertilize it with ordinary houseplant fertilizer a few weeks after buying it. For more information on indoor gardening, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

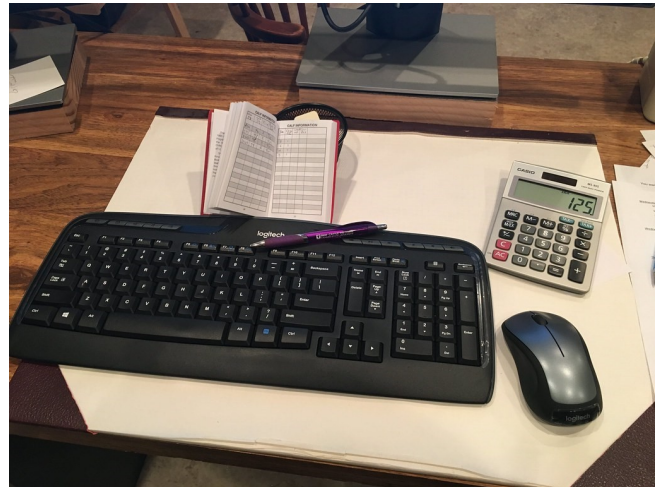


Make Farm Record Keeping a Priority

Record keeping may not be every farmer's favorite activity, and probably not the reason you got into farming as a career. With time, patience, and a commitment to get it done, it can make your financial life a lot less worrisome.

Record keeping does not have to be stressful. It is a way to discover things about your farm that will help you make better long-term decisions. You can use a ledger book or a computer—whatever helps you maintain consistency. Software programs can make your data more meaningful.

Software has become more user-friendly over time, and while it may not make the record keeping process fun, it could help you see the overall picture of your operation. Some programs track purchases of inputs and how you use the input on a particular enterprise or field. You will be able to keep track of repair and maintenance records for specific farm equipment and produce balance sheets, income statements and cash flow budgets.



For many livestock operations, a good time to start keeping records is when the veterinarian comes to check the herd. Vets usually charge per head, so that data can help you develop a list of animals that need attention. You can use the same data to develop health histories of your animals, which will lead to more informed exams and diagnosis in the future.

Make record keeping a team effort for your family. Sit down and work on the records and budget together. Perhaps one person can read the information while another person types it into the software program or writes it in the ledger book. Also, if you do a little bit each day and do not save it all up for the end of the year, you will not become overwhelmed.

If you have done the work throughout the year, year-end procedures can feel more satisfying. You can generate year-end reports with a few simple clicks and not have to sort through stacks of bills lying around the home or office.

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Agricultural Economics has several tools online that could help with budgeting and decision making. Visit <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agecon/index.php?p=29> to see what is available.

The source of this article was Steve Isaacs, UK Extension Agricultural Economist. For more information on agribusiness management, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Body Condition Scores Good Indicators of Herd Health

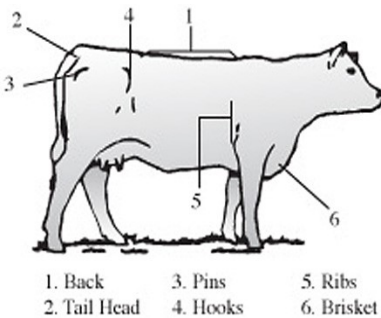
Early winter is an optimum time to prepare your spring-calving herd for reproductive success. Adequate nutrition from about 50 to 80 days prior to calving is critical to maximizing a cow's ability to rebreed and maintain a 365-day calving interval. If a cow gets inadequate nutrition or is thin at calving and breeding, she will take longer to come into heat and will require more services to conceive.

The best method to evaluate the nutritional status of your herd is to do body condition scores. A body condition score is an estimate of the degree of body fatness of an animal, which gives us an estimate of the amount of body energy reserves available to the cow. Scores range from 1 to 9, with 1 meaning a cow is emaciated or extremely thin, while a 9 is an animal that is extremely obese. Beef producers should train themselves to identify cows that are too thin, cows that are marginal and cows that have an optimal body condition score for rebreeding. Body condition scoring is a tool to help plan your supplemental feeding program so you can maintain adequate productivity in your herd.



You can determine body condition score by looking at the degree of sharpness or thinness in several areas of the cow's body. The ribs and backbone are two primary regions you need to examine to help establish body condition score. Other important areas are the tailhead, shoulder and brisket regions of the cow. In general, cows with more fat appear smoother in these areas to the point that individual bones are difficult to see.

Cows that are too thin, scores of 3 or less, have easily identifiable fore and rear ribs, sharpness across the backbone, sharpness over the hook and pin bones near the tailhead and sharpness across the shoulders. These cows need to gain approximately 150-200 pounds before calving if you want them to rebreed in a timely fashion.



Cows that are borderline have a body condition score of 4. These cows have easily identifiable 12th and 13th ribs, but their fore ribs are covered. The backbone and hooks and pins are still prominent but are not sharp in appearance. The shoulders are less defined. These cows need to gain about 75 to 100 pounds before breeding season.

Cows that are in optimal body condition have scores of 5 or 6 and have a good overall appearance. No ribs are visible unless the animal has been shrunk. The backbone, hooks and pins appear rounded and not easily seen and the area around the tailhead is filled in but not mounded. These cows simply need to maintain their weight until calving.

Research has shown that cows with scores less than 5 at calving have lower pregnancy rates and take longer to rebreed than cows with scores of 5 or higher. The optimum body condition score for mature cows is a 5 or 6. Heifers that are calving their first calf need to have a score of at least 6 to maximize rebreeding success.

The best way to use body condition scoring is sort cows according to their score at 90-100 days before calving and feed these groups according to their score and nutrient needs to optimize reproduction. Each body condition score typically represents 75 to 100 pounds of body weight. Analyze your feedstuffs so that you can accurately balance rations to meet the needs of each group of cows. This method not only ensures adequate breeding potential of your cowherd but is also an efficient method of supplying nutrients to your cows.

The source of this article was Les Anderson, UK Extension beef specialist. For more information on scoring body condition in your cowherd, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service –

Floyd County Office.

Live Christmas Trees for the Holidays

Selection and purchase of a Christmas tree is an annual event for many families. More and more people are choosing to use a living tree that can be transplanted to the landscape once the holiday season is over. For many people this is a good option since the money usually spent on a disposable tree can be invested in a specimen that can add value to the landscape. However, care must be taken when bringing a temperate tree indoors for any length of time and then transplanting it outdoors, especially in winter. Here are some pointers to increase the chances of success.



- Living trees are generally marketed as either balled-and-burlapped or potted plants. Expect to pay more for a living tree than a cut tree and realize that nurseries are reluctant to guarantee your purchase since the tree will not be planted during the normal planting season.
- Consider where the tree will be placed in the landscape. Most Christmas tree species will eventually reach a height of 40-60 feet so appropriate planning is essential.
- Pick out the tree early so that a nicely shaped, vigorous plant can be chosen. But plan to keep the tree inside for no longer than 7-10 days. In the interim, go ahead and dig the hole where the tree will be transplanted and store the tree in this location. Be sure to keep the roots moist. Having the hole dug ahead of time will avoid any problems of inclement weather after the holidays.
- When it is time to bring the tree indoors, the main concern is to protect the plant from drying out. Avoid placing the tree near a radiator or other drafty place-keeping the tree on the cool side is also preferable. Place the tree in a large tub or cover the root ball in plastic to avoid spilling water onto the floor. Allow water to evenly soak into the root ball by applying it as a slow stream. It may be easier to water the plant by placing ice around the top of the soil and allow it to slowly melt and soak into the soil. Do not go overboard and keep the root ball extremely wet as this may damage the root system.



- After Christmas, the tree should be planted immediately in the pre-dug hole. Water the plant well after filling the hole with soil. Water periodically throughout the winter, especially during warmer weather.

In spring and summer, water the plant every week as you would any other newly transplanted tree.

For more information on caring for Christmas trees, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



Winter Feeding Areas for Livestock

As we move closer to cold weather, it is a good time to think about strategies for winter feeding of livestock, since it is a necessary part of nearly all operations. Choosing the right place for winter feeding can improve production and reduce threats to nearby water resources. A poorly chosen site for winter feeding can have negative impacts on soil and water quality.

A significant amount of pollution can occur if winter feeding is conducted around streams, water bodies or other environmentally sensitive areas such as flood plains and creek bottoms. Storm-water runoff from these areas can carry mud and manure into nearby water bodies, creating water quality problems. If these contaminants can be traced to a specific operation, the owner could be subject to fines from regulatory agencies.



To reduce water pollution and avoid fines, producers can follow a few simple steps. First, place winter feeding areas in well-drained locations. These areas should not allow runoff containing mud and manure to drain into neighboring properties, streams, or sinkholes. The farther away a feeding area is from surface or ground water resources, the less likely water pollution is to occur.

Next, producers should consider using confined winter feeding that allows cattle to access a structure or paddock for feeding and then return to a larger forage pasture. Smaller “sacrifice” pastures reduce the area damaged from winter feeding and can be used as central hubs for multiple pastures as part of a rotational grazing system.

By placing water and mineral supplements away from the structure, cattle will be enticed to eat in the structure and then move out and away. The volume of manure will be easier to manage because the animals will spread it throughout the fields.

Finally, heavy-use area pads around winter feeding areas can greatly reduce mud and rutting from tractor and hoof traffic. These pads are constructed using geotextile fabric, crushed stone, and dense grade aggregate.

By making these considerations for winter feeding of livestock, producers can greatly reduce the potential to contaminate water resources and can improve production.

The source of this article was Steve Higgins, UK Director of Environmental Compliance. For more information on this topic, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Mistletoe: Tree Thief, Holiday Tradition

Once autumn leaves have fallen, mistletoe becomes highly visible on large trees throughout Kentucky. Phoradendron, the scientific name for this parasitic plant, means tree thief. You can commonly find these small leafy plants on twigs and branches of many hardwood species in the southern two-thirds of the United States. Mistletoes extract water, mineral elements, and food from their host tree by way of a parasite nutrient-uptake organ; hence the name, tree thief.



Mistletoes' use in holiday traditions has roots in pagan times. Its parasitic nature and the fact that it appears to be alive while the host tree appears dead, led some to believe mistletoe mysteriously held the life of the tree during winter. Druids harvested mistletoe in a special rite, never letting the plant touch the ground, then hung it in their homes for good luck.

Continued on page 7...

... Continued from page 6

Our modern-day mistletoe holiday tradition likely originates with a mythological Norse goddess of love and beauty. Frigga, whose son was restored from possible death by mistletoe, was thought to bestow a kiss on anyone walking beneath one. Today, when two people meet under the mistletoe, tradition suggests they must exchange a kiss for good luck.

Phoradendron, the most common mistletoe growing in Kentucky, resembles another species that grows in Europe. It has simple, fleshy green leaves arranged oppositely on the stem. Stems are short and more branched than the host tree, so mistletoe often appears as a spherical bunch of dense vegetation. These bunches may be a foot or two in diameter and are located high in the tree for better sunlight exposure. Mistletoe berries range from white to straw-colored to light red. Birds eat the fruits, reportedly toxic to human and animals, then deposit the seeds onto branches where they germinate and penetrate the host tree. Since birds tend to roost in open-grown trees, mistletoes do not appear as frequently in forest trees. Generally, they do not cause much damage, although they can be harmful to a tree already under stress. If mistletoe appears on landscape trees or other trees in the urban forest, you can control it through pruning.



The source of this article was John Hartman, Plant Pathology Professor. For more information about tree parasites and diseases, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Not Too Soon to Think About Calving Season

Calving season will be here before we know it. Providing sound management during that time can mean more live calves, which translates to more profit for you.

It is important to have a short calving period to allow frequent observation and assistance if needed. Some specific things a producer can do to limit calf loss include:

- Separate first-calf heifers from mature cows. Calving difficulty can run as high as 30 to 40 percent for 2-year-old heifers compared to just 3 percent for mature cows. Place them in a small, accessible pasture near a corral where assistance can be given if needed.
- Provide a clean area for calving. The calving area should be a well-sodded pasture or clean, dry maternity pen, not a wet, muddy lot. It should also be large enough for adequate exercise and offer protection from prevailing winds.
- Be familiar with the signs of calving. Within a few hours of calving, cows generally become nervous and uneasy. As contractions increase, a cow will likely wander away from the rest of the herd.
- Check cows frequently. Observing cows three or four times a day and providing assistance, when necessary, results in more live calves. However, cows should be disturbed as little as possible during labor.
- Know when a cow needs assistance. Intervention is justified when two or three hours have passed without progress or if delivery has not occurred within 90 minutes after the water sac appears. In a normal delivery, the calf's front legs and head will appear first.



There are also a few steps to take after the calf is born to help it get off to a good start. These include making sure the calf is breathing normally after it is delivered and that it consumes colostrum. Ideally, a calf should consume its first milk within 15 to 30 minutes after birth.

Immediately after calving, increase the cow's energy intake to about 16 pounds of total digestible nutrients per day. The extra energy will help the cow produce enough milk for her calf and allow her to rebreed on schedule.

For more information on beef cattle production and management, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Les Anderson, UK Extension Beef Specialist.



BURNING RESTRICTIONS VS. BURN BANS



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

BURNING RESTRICTIONS

KENTUCKY WILDFIRE HAZARD SEASONS

February 15 - April 30 & October 1 - December 15

Burning restrictions limit how, when and where outdoor burning can take place. During Kentucky's spring and fall wildfire hazard seasons, it is illegal to burn between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. in or within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland, except when the ground is covered with snow.

[KRS 149.400](#)

BURN BANS

In addition to or outside of wildfire hazard season restrictions, burn bans may be instituted.

Burn bans prohibit most or all outdoor burning, and are put in place to address immediate wildfire danger. They are issued at the local level through county judge/executives or as part of local ordinances. A state-wide burn ban may also be issued by the governor as conditions warrant. Burn bans are enforced with assistance from local law enforcement.

[KRS 149.401](#)

REMEMBER, ALL FIRES SHOULD BE ATTENDED UNTIL EXTINGUISHED

Check with your local fire department, county judge/executive's office, Divisions of Air Quality and Waste Management, and your local Kentucky Division of Forestry office before conducting outdoor burning.

[KENTUCKY DIVISION OF FORESTRY FIELD OFFICES](#)

Campbellsville * Frankfort * Hazard * Madisonville * Morehead * Pineville

<https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Forestry>





The 2024-2025 Winter Outlook

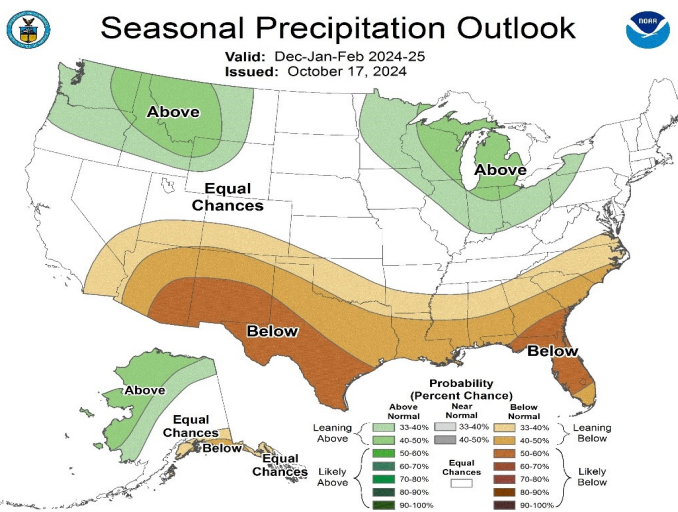
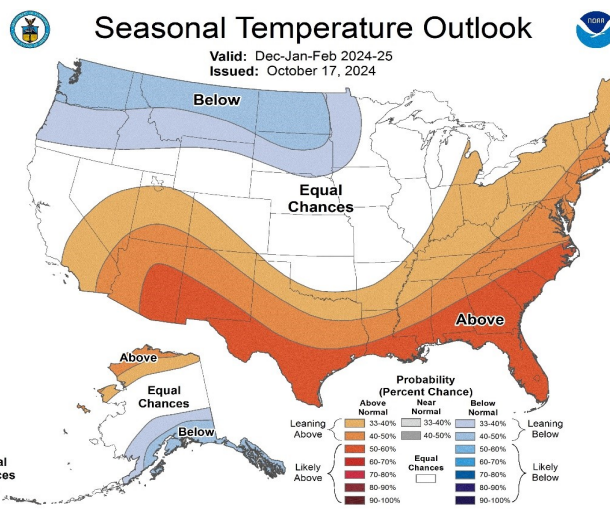
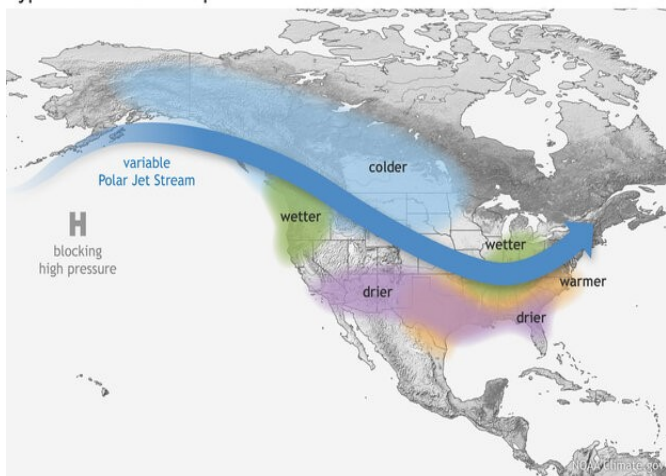
Derrick Snyder – National Weather Service, Paducah, KY



La Niña conditions are favored to emerge and persist during the winter months, with a 75% chance of La Niña by November to January. La Niña, which is defined by much cooler ocean temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, will likely affect temperature and precipitation through the winter season. A typical La Niña pattern will bring disturbances through the Ohio Valley more frequently than usual, but whether this means Kentucky will see more snow than usual remains unclear. During the last few winters, the most impactful winter storms have occurred when a sudden, sharp transition from above normal to below normal temperatures is forecast, so that will be one item to pay close attention to during the day-to-day forecast.

The long-range winter outlook slightly favors increased chances for warmer than normal conditions across the Commonwealth. The outlook favors equal chances for above, below, or near normal seasonal precipitation (including all rain, snow, and ice) across much of Kentucky, with the exception of far northern Kentucky, where above normal precipitation is slightly favored. Much of the fall months have been marked by persist drier and warmer than normal conditions across the state, with persistent areas of widespread drought. The winter precipitation outlook suggests some drought improvement is possible through the winter.

Typical winter La Niña pattern





University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

FLOYD COUNTY

3490 KY Route 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PRESTONSBURG KY
PERMIT 521

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED