

FLOYD COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

September 2024

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UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- September 2 Official Holiday—Labor Day
EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED
- September 3 Floyd County Beekeepers Meeting & Program
Extension Office 6:00pm
- September 12 Floyd County Extension Council & District Board
Meetings—Extension Office 5:30pm
- September 21 Floyd County Beekeeping School-Extension Office
9:00am—2:30PM



Chad Allen

Chad Allen
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural
Resources



Other programs will be announced at a later time.



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.



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Lexington, KY 40506

What to Do In September & October

These are a few suggestions that may help you and your plants during this time. I will divide the suggestion into groups, so you can refer to them.

-Herbaceous plants -

- Fall is a good time to invest in crocus, scilla, glory-of-the snow, and other hardy bulbs. Planting bulbs - loosen the soil and make a hole with a trowel or bulb planter. Do not mash the bulb into the soil or you may damage the bottom of the bulb, causing it to rot.
- Start taking cuttings of your annual plants to bring indoors and carry through the winter. Geranium, coleus, Impatiens, and other plants do best when stem cuttings are rooted and kept in pots indoors through the winter. Be sure to place pots where they receive plenty of light.
- Keep materials (heavy paper or cardboard) on hand to cover tender plants on the first nights of frost. If they can be protected, they may bloom for several more weeks.
- You can plant lilies this fall for many years of beautiful flowering. Modern hybrids are available in many colors and grow 2 to 6 feet tall.
- Every three to four years, separate crowded lily-of-the-valley crowns. Mix organic matter and fertilizer into the soil before replanting. Replant 3 inches apart.



- As nights become cool, caladiums will begin to lose leaves. Dig them up, allow them to dry, and store them in a 40 to 50-degree F dry place.
- As the temperature cools in this part of the state, it will be time to dig gladiolus corms as the leaves yellow. The tops should be cut off inch above the top of the corm immediately after digging. After digging, dry the corms (about 10-20 days), separate the large corms from the small ones, and store them in damp peat moss at 40 to 50 degrees F where there is good air circulation.

-Woody Ornamentals-

- Plant rooted cuttings of woody plants in the cold frame if you have one available. Unless frost threatens, ventilate frames freely to harden young plants in preparation for winter.
- Wait until deciduous trees and shrubs begin to drop their leaves before fertilizing them. This signals dormancy when no new growth will be stimulated. Nutrients will be taken up and used by the plants to develop a strong root system.
- To minimize the occurrence of black spot on roses, prune and remove infected areas. Be sure to destroy the clippings, as disease will carry over from year to year.
- If we have a period of dry, hot weather during the next few weeks, it may be important to water shrubs. Water shrubs deeply once a week if that occurs.



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-Lawns-

- Apply fertilizer with rotary spreader. A soil test could be useful.
- Do not retire the lawn mower when the growth of your lawn slows down this fall. If the grass continues to grow it should be mowed.
- You should watch for small areas of dying grass - if dying or dead grass pulls up like a carpet and exposes white grubs, apply a granular insecticide labeled for the pest. You must observe the lawn almost every day for possible damage.
- Do not allow leaves to accumulate on the lawn. If leaves accumulate on your lawn and becomes matted down by rain, they may kill the grass. Rake them up regularly, and store in a pile for use as mulch in your garden next summer.
- Early fall is the best time of the year for sowing grass seed. A thin layer of mulch (clean straw) would be helpful over newly seeded areas.



-Fruits-

- To reduce the number of pests on your fruit trees for the coming year, pick up and destroy all fallen fruit. Worms hide in the fallen fruit, and later pupate in the soil. They will be ready to lay eggs next year.
- Keep the weeds away from small fruits and trees. It helps the plants in many ways.
- Water your fruit plants when needed, especially during the dry periods of September and October.

-Vegetables-



- Plant spinach, lettuce, kale, turnip, and radish as the last crops for your fall garden. Soak seed furrows well before sowing seed and mulch lightly. Water the rows daily to promote germination and growth of young seedlings.
- Cover crops can be planted as early as August 1st but should not be planted later than November 1st. They should make some growth before hard frost kills them.

-Other items-

- Clean and sterilize your tools, pots, and any other items that you use around your plants.
- Additional information on these and other topics can be received from the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

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Recommendations for Taking Soil Samples

Soil testing is an important management practice for gardens, pastures, lawns, landscapes, croplands, and other agricultural lands. It is used to properly inform the producer or landowner of the amounts of nutrients (fertilizer and lime) needed for the best results. Soil testing can save you money and/or increase production.

The result of a soil analysis is no better than the sample you collect. Since a pound of soil can represent several acres, take samples that depict the area on which you want fertility data. Take random core samples at a uniform depth throughout the area. Mix cores together well in a clean, dry plastic bucket; then fill the sample box and take it to the Extension office.

Collect cores at the same time each year so you can compare results from year to year. Although you can take samples through much of the year, fall and spring are the best times to take them. Do not take cores when soil is too wet because it is difficult to mix them well and they are hard to handle. The soil should be dry enough to till when you take samples.

The Floyd County Conservation District offers a service of soil sampling and covers the cost of testing to the residents of the county, if their technician takes the samples. You can contact them to schedule this service at 606-889-9800. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

The other option is taking the sample yourself and paying the testing fee. If you chose to do this, bring samples containing at least a quart of soil to the Extension Office. *For more information on collecting samples or related questions, contact me at the Floyd County Extension Office.*



Beneficial Snakes

Many people fear snakes, but despite the fright they can cause, most snakes are beneficial. Of the 33 varieties of snakes in Kentucky, only four are venomous (Northern copperhead, Western cottonmouth [water moccasin], timber rattlesnake, and pygmy rattlesnake).

Most snakes you encounter around your home are harmless. If you fear them, try to remember that they are useful—they keep the rodent population in check by eating mice, rats, chipmunks and even toads, insects, and other pests.

Summer months increase the possibility for an encounter with a snake, as snakes leave dormancy in the spring to mate. And because people go outside more often in the warm months to enjoy leisure and sporting activities, surprise encounters can happen. When threatened, a snake may coil up and hiss, but generally, its reaction will be to get away from you.

Snakes like damp, dark, cool places where food (usually mice) is accessible. They also will be drawn to areas that provide shelter and shade from the summer sun. The best way to get rid of snakes is to modify the habitat that is attracting them. Some recommendations include:

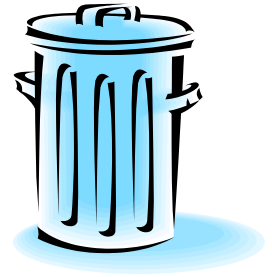
- Stack firewood 12 inches above the ground on a pallet
- Remove lumber or junk piles where snakes could hide
- Trim bushes and shrubs that grow against a foundation
- Keep all lots, fields, and lawns mowed and well kept



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- Remove debris and trash from pond and stream banks
- De-clutter basements and attics, especially where rodents can be found
- Keep feed for livestock in covered metal containers to discourage rodents
- Remove pet food after feeding
- Use covered metal cans for trash



You can use glueboards to remove snakes. For longer snakes, you may need to nail several glueboards in succession to a piece of plywood. But remember that the best option for snake removal is to modify the environment so the snakes are not attracted to the area.

For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Fall - Good Time to Plant Many Trees and Shrubs

Want to give your new ornamental trees and shrubs a good head-start on winter? Plant them in the fall so root systems will develop before severe winter weather arrives.

Fall weather conditions and internal changes in ornamentals help root systems grow and decrease transplant stress. Ornamentals also lose less moisture because days are shorter, outdoor temperatures are lower, and rainfall is adequate. These weather conditions also help ensure enough soil moisture for plants to settle into a new location.

During the fall, trees and shrubs undergo internal changes to increase their tolerance to adverse winter conditions. Although shoot growth declines, leaves continue to produce sugar and translocate it into the root system so plenty of energy is available to establish root systems.

Woody ornamental root systems continue to grow so long as soil temperatures are above 40 degrees. So, it is best to plant them six to seven weeks before soil temperatures drop below 40 degrees to let root systems become established. Here in Kentucky, now through November typically is the best planting time.

To increase transplanting success, choose new ornamentals carefully. Pick ornamentals that are hardy in your area and are adapted to growing conditions where you will plant them. Avoid those that are marginally hardy in Kentucky (adapted to zone 6 or above). Also stay away from ornamentals that are hard to transplant, especially if the planting site has extreme exposure or soil problems.

Ornamentals that you can transplant successfully in early to late fall include arborvitae, ash, coffee tree, cork tree, crabapple, elm, ginkgo, honey locust, juniper, katsura, linden, sugar maples, pagoda tree, pine, serviceberry, and spruce. Wait until after leaf drop later in the fall to plant birch, flowering dogwood, oak, red maple, sweetgum, and tulip poplar.

Some ornamentals you should not plant in the fall are beech, black gum, Carolina silverbell, goldenrain tree, hickory, hop hornbeam, Japanese snowbell, redbud, yellowwood and zelvoka.

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The main threat to ornamental survival is insufficient moisture during dry periods. Water plants thoroughly by using a soaker hose for several hours if it has not rained for two to three weeks. Plants that go into the winter with adequate water are more likely to survive the extreme environmental conditions of this season.

Alternate freezing-thawing cycles can heave plants out of the ground during the winter. To help prevent heaving, set trees at the same depth they grew previously. A distinctive color difference on the trunk bark indicates how deeply trees were set. Another way to prevent heaving is to mulch new transplants after planting and before the soil begins to freeze.

Whether you are adding new trees and shrubs to a yard or moving existing specimens, planting them after the heat stress of summer but before they shut down for the winter will increase your chances for transplanting success. *For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.*

Late Summer is the Best Time to Establish Cool-Season Forages

The period from late summer into early fall is the best time to establish common cool-season grasses such as orchardgrass, tall fescue, timothy and bluegrass for pasture or hay in Kentucky. These four grasses make up 95 percent of our pasture acreage.

Many years of research have shown this period provides the best chance for successful establishment. Mother Nature has a hand in this because seed produced in late spring remains dormant until late summer, and early fall rainfall provides the moisture necessary for the seed to germinate.

To increase your success rate, remember these four points:

First, address soil fertility needs by applying lime and fertilizer based on a current soil test. Inadequate levels of phosphorous, potassium or limestone will limit the success of late summer seedings. For pure grass stands, apply nitrogen at the rate of 40 to 60 pounds per acre.

Second, control competition. Late-summer seedings most often fail from competition and lack of water. When you control existing vegetation with herbicides or tillage, the emerging seedlings will have access to whatever water and nutrients are present without having to compete with weeds.

To maximize the success of seedings, use a burn-down herbicide ahead of planting to kill annual weeds. Translocated herbicides can be used where labeled to kill or suppress perennials such as johnsongrass.

Remember to wait two to three weeks after spraying translocated herbicides before you plant in no-till situations. This will allow time for killed weeds to dry out and for residual effects of the herbicide to decay.

Third, select high quality seed of an adapted variety. Planting high quality seed is an essential step toward establishment and longevity of a pasture. These seeds have high percentages of germination, low percentages of weed seed and freedom from noxious weed seed.

Use varieties that have a proven track record of performance in Kentucky. The University of Kentucky conducts extensive research on varietal performance, which can be found on the UK Forages website, https://forages.ca.uky.edu/variety_trials. Here you will find all the current results for the major forage crops in Kentucky, including cool-season grasses.

Look for varieties that have performed well across several test years and locations. These varieties will have improved yield, quality, persistence, disease resistance or other positive traits.

If you are uncertain about a variety's adaptation and performance, you can obtain information on the leading performers in the UK forage variety tests by contacting me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

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Fourth, seed at the proper time and depth. Seed legumes and grasses before mid-September. Grasses are less sensitive to later seeding than legumes. The major cool-season grasses will not do well if you simply broadcast them onto existing overgrazed or mowed pastures. Forages should be seeded no deeper than one-fourth to one-half inch.

Late-summer alfalfa seedings are susceptible to sclerotinia stem and crown rot. If sclerotinia has been active in your area or farm, strongly consider waiting until next spring to seed.

The source of this article was Jimmy Henning, UK Extension Forage Specialist. For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

How Much Hay Will Your Horses Need This Winter?

As horse owners go through the summer, they should start thinking about their hay supply for the upcoming winter-feeding season. It appears in some areas that the supply of hay this year is much better than the past couple years, but now is the time for those who need to buy hay to make plans to do so.

The common question is how much hay will farmers need? The answer starts with and depends on several things. Firstly, how long will you need to feed? If conditions are such that you need to start feeding hay in mid-November and continue until the first of April, you will feed for about 150 days. The actual number will certainly vary with available fall pasture and when you can use pasture again in the spring.

Secondly, how big are your horses? Let us assume the average size of the horses in your care is 1,100 pounds. To get a reasonable estimate of how much your horses weigh, you can use a heart girth tape.

Thirdly, how much will each of your horses eat? Again, you need to assume, and most farmers commonly believe that the average adult horse will need to eat an amount equal to about two percent of its body weight per day.

Making these assumptions, you can now calculate that each adult horse would need to eat approximately 22 pounds each day, which is about 1.65 tons for 150 days. To adjust for waste or increased needs, it is reasonable for you to have a hay inventory of about 1.75 to 2 tons of hay per horse for the winter.

Source your hay now because it may be harder to find it later in the season and getting enough hay for your horses could become a real challenge.

For more information on this and related topics, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Robert Coleman, UK Animal and Food Sciences Professor.



Think About Safety During Fall Harvest

Fall harvest season is a busy time for Kentucky farmers and their families. It also is a peak season for agricultural injuries and an especially important time for farm families to pay attention to safety. Take time to talk to workers about safety. You need to be sure all workers are trained and physically capable of operating equipment and that they understand the safety procedures.

Long working hours can lead to fatigue and stress, making you less alert to potential safety hazards. Take breaks when operating equipment for an extended period of time. If possible, trade off with other workers for a change of pace.

Dress appropriately for the job. Avoid loose clothing, jackets with dangling strings and sweatshirts that could get entangled in moving equipment. Entanglement in moving parts, especially power take-offs or other chain and belt drivers, is a major fall harvest hazard. Inspect machinery and equipment to be sure shields and guards on moving parts are in place and in good repair. Replace ineffective or missing safety equipment. Before getting off equipment, disengage the power and wait for moving parts to completely stop. When possible, shut off the engine. It is always a good idea to take the ignition key with you, so another person does not unexpectedly start equipment while you are performing maintenance or repair. If you are working under any piece of equipment, such as a header unit, always use the jack stand or hydraulic cylinder locks to prevent it from suddenly falling and pinning you. Be sure all safety locks are operational.

A pinhole-size hydraulic leak can cause severe tissue damage. If you are injected with oil from a hydraulic leak, immediately seek medical assistance. The oil must be surgically removed, and delays can result in serious infections and possible amputations. Always use paper or cardboard to check for hydraulic leaks. Tractor overturns are the leading cause of farm deaths. To prevent these tragedies, equip older model tractors with a roll-over protective structure. Most tractors manufactured after the late 1960s or early 1970s can be equipped with a ROPS for a reasonable price.

Make it a habit to use the seat belt to ensure you remain inside the zone of protection provided by the ROPS or safety cab. The seat belt also will keep you from being thrown off the tractor if you hit an obstacle. Being thrown off the tractor and run over is the second leading cause of tractor deaths in Kentucky. Never allow any extra riders on tractors or equipment. Keep bystanders away from operating equipment. Also, be aware of people who may have come into the area. Always check around equipment before starting or moving it.

Carry a fire extinguisher on all tractors and self-propelled equipment. Periodically check extinguishers to be sure they are pressurized and in good condition. To prevent fires, be sure equipment is clean and hoses and fuel systems are in good shape and not leaking. Remove trash and debris around engine components.

Farm vehicles on public roads are annually involved in thousands of injury accidents in the United States, and more than 200 collisions involving farm machinery on public roads occur in Kentucky every year. Thus, people driving farm machinery and those driving vehicles should be especially careful and watchful.

Keep slow-moving-vehicle emblems and extremity markings clean and bright to help motorists notice equipment. Replace faded SMV emblems and check headlights, taillights, and flashing lights for satisfactory operation.

To alert on-coming drivers, use reflectors or reflective tape when the edges of towed equipment extend beyond the left side of a tractor. If a tractor has mirrors, keep them clean and adjusted for the driver to watch for approaching motorists. When possible, pull completely off the road to let a line of traffic pass.

Since it may be difficult to anticipate the operational intentions of farm machinery on the roadway, other drivers need to watch for unmarked field entrances or other places the driver might be planning to enter. A tractor may need to move to the right to complete a left turn so do not assume the driver wants you to pass when moving to the right side. Pass only in a designated passing zone or when the other driver signals and completely pulls off the road.

The source of this article was Mark Purschwitz, UK Extension Professor and Agricultural Safety and Health Specialist. For more information on farm safety, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County office.



Fall Landscape Care

So often we hear that fall or winter is a particularly good time to do certain things in the landscape. This is usually because plants have entered winter dormancy.

You can compare dormancy to an extended period of "rest" for plants, when they are relatively inactive in terms of metabolic processes (photosynthesis, respiration, and transpiration, for example). I say relatively inactive, because although these processes slow during dormancy, they do not cease altogether. Most temperate perennial plants will enter dormancy in autumn as daylight shortens, temperatures (including soil temperatures) become cooler, terminal buds are set, and perhaps because of drier conditions during late summer and fall.



Going dormant is the way these plants survive the cold of winter. It is important that landscape maintenance activities not interfere with the plant's natural process of becoming dormant. Let us use pruning and fertilization practices as examples.

Fall is considered a poor time to prune most woody perennials. Pruning will remove terminal buds that help to maintain dormancy in many species. The presence of the terminal bud, even in a seemingly inactive state, suppresses the growth of lower buds through a process called apical dominance, a type of dormancy imposed on the lateral buds. If you remove the apical bud, it may encourage lateral buds to initiate growth in a plant that has not yet fully entered a dormant state. Once lateral bud growth is initiated, dormancy will be hard to achieve, even with the advent of shortening day length and cooler temperatures. So, pruning in the fall may trigger new growth that delays dormancy and predisposes the plant to winter injury.

It is better to prune plants in late winter, around mid-February to mid-March. This also allows you to evaluate and remove winter-damaged limbs. Pruning in late winter will occur just before one of the most active times of plant growth, bud break, when the plant is redirecting stored nutrients from the root system out to the branches. This would be the most rapid time for the plant to heal wounds (in our case the pruned surface), while fall would be the slowest time for wound healing. An exception is if you are removing dead or severely damaged limbs due to breakage, insects, or diseases. In that case, it is best for you to remove them as soon as possible at any time of the year. If the plant you are pruning is spring blooming (generally flowering before early June), it would be better from a flowering display perspective to wait until after flowering to prune since the pruning process will remove preexisting flower buds.

What about fertilization of woody plants? Fall and winter are considered the best times to apply fertilizer, but you should only do this once woody plants are fully dormant. Otherwise, applying fertilizer might trigger new growth and predispose the plant to winter injury.

How can you tell if a plant is dormant? If leaves are falling, the plant has probably entered dormancy sufficiently to allow fertilization. To be doubly safe, wait until temperatures are unlikely to climb into the 70-degree range. In Kentucky this could occur anytime from mid-October to mid-November, so to be safe this probably means mid-November or later. It is best to get the fertilizer down before the soil has frozen, so it will not remain on the soil surface and will not be subject to runoff with any additional precipitation.

If you do not fertilize between Thanksgiving and Christmas, wait until the ground thaws in late February or early March to apply fertilizer. However, you must realize that February and March are not the best times for applying fertilizer to lawns composed of cool-season grasses (fescues, bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass). If you are regularly applying fertilizer to your lawn, woody plants growing nearby are likely getting sufficient nutrients from these applications and probably do not need additional fertilizer.

The source of this article was Rick Durham, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist. For more information on fall landscape care or other gardening topics, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Wildfire Preparedness

When the word *wildfire* comes to mind, images of burning forests in the western United States usually enter the thoughts of most. But did you know that Kentucky is also prone to wildfires? In fact, the state averages 1,447 wildfires a year! The following article will discuss what weather conditions are favorable for wildfire development, the weather alerts that are issued during periods of favorable fire weather, and what you can do to prepare for and prevent wildfires.



The first question on your mind is probably “What is Fire Weather”? Essentially, fire weather is any sort of weather that can ignite or lead to rapid spread of fires. This includes thunderstorms (which contain strong gusty winds and lightning that can lead to rapid spread or ignition of a fire), days when the relative humidity is low (often in the early spring and fall seasons), and windy days (which acts to not only spread wildfires but also leads to the drying of vegetation, making it more susceptible to burning).

Wildfire Prevention

Most wildfires in the state of Kentucky are caused by arson or by uncontrolled debris burning. In fact, 90% of all wildfires in Kentucky are caused by humans. Unlike many fires in the western United States, most of the fires in Kentucky are fought by firefighters *on the ground* (Source: Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet). They are putting their lives in danger to control the spread of these fires. It is therefore important to always be fire aware and heed any Fire Weather Watches or Red Flag Warnings issued by the NWS.

Here are some general guidelines to follow when the following products are issued:

Fire Weather Watch = BE PREPARED! Dangerous fire weather conditions are possible in the next few days but are not occurring yet.

Red Flag Warning = TAKE ACTION! Dangerous fire weather conditions are ongoing or expected to occur shortly. During a Red Flag Warning, you should avoid or use extreme caution when dealing with anything that could pose a fire hazard.

What are Kentucky’s Fire Laws?

Lastly, it’s important to know and heed the fire laws and seasons for the state of Kentucky. During the following periods, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Spring Forest Fire Hazard Season: February 15 - April 30

Fall Forest Fire Hazard Season: October 1 - December 15

Also, burn bans can be issued at any time of the year if conditions warrant, particularly during periods of drought, and should always be followed. The source of this article was Simone Lewis, National Weather Service, Charleston, WV.

Congratulations

to Floyd County's own

Dwight Slone!!

Winning 1st place in the
Kentucky State fair for his
Giant Pumpkin!!



Floyd County Beekeeping School

At the Extension Office

September 21st

9:00AM to 2:30PM

(Sign-in Begins at 8:00AM)

Call to Register: 606-886-2668

**Registration Fee is \$10.00
if paid by September 15th**

(\$15.00 after September 15th)

No fee for Kids under 12 years old

3490 KY Route 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

Seating Is Limited

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED



Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506





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