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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Newsletter

April 2024

APRIL 2024



Chad Allen

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County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural
Resources

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- April 1 Grow Appalachia Gardening Series-Session 3
 Extension Office 6:00pm
- April 2 Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting
 Extension Office 6:00pm
- April 11 Floyd County Extension District Board Meeting
 Extension Office 5:30pm
- April 18 Floyd County Farmer’s Market Meeting Extension
 Office 6:00pm
- May 6 Grow Appalachia Gardening Series-Session 4
 Extension Office 6:00pm
- May 7 Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting
 Extension Office 6:00pm

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*Other programs and events will be announced
at a later time.*

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Watch for Poison Hemlock in Hayfields

In about a month, many of you will begin cutting your first hay of the season. While making hay, it is important for you to notice and remove poison hemlock from your hay or pasture fields.

Native to Europe, poison hemlock is an invasive weed that was introduced as an ornamental in the United States during the 1800s. It is potentially poisonous if ingested by livestock or humans in both its vegetative growth stages and when dry. The weed is often found along fencerows, roadways and other areas not used for cropland across most of Kentucky and the United States. However, in the past several years, its presence has increased across Kentucky, and it is now found in some hay and pasture fields.



If consumed, poisoning symptoms appear rather quickly in livestock and include nervousness, trembling, muscle weakness, loss of coordination, pupil dilation, coma and eventually death from respiratory failure. Livestock usually do not eat poison hemlock when in its natural growing state because of its unpalatable taste. However, they will eat it if no other forage is available or when they inadvertently consume it through hay.

Ideally, you should control poison hemlock with herbicide products applied during the plant's early vegetative growth stage during the late winter or early spring or with an herbicide treatment in the fall. By this time of the year, it may now be too late for effective control with 2,4-D applied alone and may require other herbicide options for best control. With herbicide applications to grazed pastures remove livestock from the field until plants have fully died. You can also control poison hemlock by mowing or mechanically removing the plant before it produces new seeds, which occurs soon after flowering. If you find it while cutting hay, either mow around the weed or mow it separate from your stored hay.

The easiest way to identify poison hemlock is by its smooth, purple-spotted stem. Poison hemlock is often confused with the nontoxic weed Queen Anne's Lace (also called Wild Carrot) because both produce clusters of small, white flowers but Queen Anne's Lace will have hairs along its stem and leaf bases. Poison hemlock usually reaches its peak bloom in late May or early June, while Queen Anne's Lace blooms a little later in late June and July.



The source of this article was J.D. Green, Extension Weed Scientist. For more information on controlling weeds in pastures, contact me at the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service –

Floyd County Office.

Do You Know? - Thunderstorm Safety



The most important thunderstorm safety precaution is simply to be aware of an approaching thunderstorm and move to a safe shelter before the storm arrives in your area. If you see lightning, hear thunder, observe dark clouds, or your hair stands on end, immediately go inside a sturdy, completely enclosed building, home, or a hard-top vehicle with closed windows. Avoid picnic shelters, sports dugouts, covered patios, carports, and open garages. Small wooden, vinyl or metal sheds provide little to no protection.

Spring Mowing :Most Important of Yearlong Lawn Duties



If you are like me, you have already seen the light at the end of the tunnel with the cold weather and your lawn has already been mowed. We lived through the 8th warmest winter on record. The first mowing makes the lawn look spring-like and very attractive. Continued regular mowing hardens the grass for drought and heat stresses later on. So, when the first clump of grass grows above the mowing height, mow, even if a lot of the yard doesn't need to be mowed yet.

Not all grasses start growing at the same time. Grass on northern slopes, or in heavy clay soil, will start growing several days later than normal. Grass that wasn't fertilized in the fall or early spring also has a delayed growth.

Following recommendations for mowing height and frequency will make your lawn-care duties easier and result in a more attractive yard.

If your mower has a fixed, all-year height, set it at 2.5 inches. However, if you can easily vary the height, set it at 1.5 to 2 inches for the first several times you mow this spring. The shorter mowing height will help remove a lot of the winter-burned, brown leaves. And by exposing more dark green growth, it will transfigure your lawn into the most uniform, attractive in the neighborhood. Move the height up to 2.5 inches after you mow the grass several times.

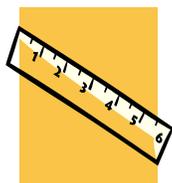
To protect your grass from summer heat and drought injury, raise the mower height to 3 or 3.5 inches. However, remember that high grass, especially tall fescue, tends to fall over and mat down during hot summer weather causing increased summer disease problems. In the fall, lower the mowing height to 2.5 inches.

For the winter, you might want to lower it again to 1.5 to 2 inches. This shorter height improves the turf's winter and early spring color.

Never let grass go through the winter at a height of 4 or more inches, because it will mat down and become diseased.



Generally speaking, mow often enough to remove no more than one-third to one-half of the grass height. If your mower is set for 2 inches, mow again when grass height reaches approximately 3 inches. Be sure not to scalp the lawn by mowing off most of the green leaves. For tall fescue lawns, a rule of thumb is to mow at five-day intervals during the spring, and at seven-day intervals the rest of the year. If you have a Kentucky bluegrass lawn, a seven-day interval usually is sufficient at a 2.5-inch mowing height. You probably can extend that interval during hot, dry weather.



Don't mow by the calendar. We all know in Kentucky that if you don't like the weather just hold on a few days and it is more likely to change. Instead, watch the grass grow, and mow frequently enough to remove no more than one-third to one-half of grass height.

The source of this article was Gregg Munshaw, UK Turf Science Extension Specialist. For more information on lawn care, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

All-Weather Surfaces Can Improve Livestock Mobility

As an attentive livestock producer, you have probably noticed your animals tend to follow the same paths to get food and water. Over time, these well-traveled paths start to lose their vegetation and erode the topsoil, particularly if they endure heavy traffic from large animals. Erosion not only wears away your topsoil, but it makes it difficult for livestock to continue to effortlessly move along these paths. In wet weather, these paths get slick and muddy and can become treacherous for animals.



You can help your animals move along these paths by installing all-weather surfaces, such as mechanical concrete. Mechanical concrete uses tires, geotextile fabric and dense-grade aggregate stone to create a sturdy surface for animals to travel.

Use a backhoe or trackhoe with a 36-inch bucket to create an 8-inch-deep trench down the well-traveled path and cover the trench with nonwoven geotextile fabric. The fabric provides drainage, friction and overall path stability. Next, remove the sidewalls of the tires leaving the tread. Semitruck tires are the best size for this project. Once you install the tires in the path, cover them with dense-grade aggregate rock.

This pathway should last for many years and will allow your animals to use less energy moving around your farm.

10 Things You Should Know About Cockroaches

Cockroaches are one of the most common pests to infest homes and apartments. They get into homes by hitching a ride on items such as grocery bags, food cartons and furniture and by using their flat, brownish bodies to slip in through crevices and cracks in buildings. While large cockroaches may seem the most frightening, it is the smaller ones that pose the biggest concern to human health.

Here are 10 things you should know about cockroaches:

1. **Roommates.** Cockroaches and humans have lived together for thousands of years, and it is unlikely to change any time soon.
2. **There are more than 4,500 species of cockroaches.** However, only a handful cause problems to humans. The most troublesome is the German cockroach, which is only about 0.5 inches long and is the one most commonly found indoors.
3. **Cockroaches make great pets.** The Madagascar hissing cockroach is a large cockroach that makes a wonderful pet. They are easy to maintain, quiet, do not pose a threat to human health and don't take up much space.
4. **Scavengers.** Cockroaches LOVE any and all food. They will feed on whatever they can find including human food and pet food. They love to hide in warm, moist areas and are attracted to places with poor sanitation practices and food preparation areas. Bathrooms and kitchens are their favorite hiding spots.
5. **Two main groups.** Cockroaches are generally grouped based on if they live inside or outside of the home. The species that live outside are often larger (e.g., American Cockroach), while the indoor species tend to be smaller (e.g., German cockroach). While the larger roaches can be more frightening to people, the smaller species cause most of the human health problems.
6. **Health importance-disease transmission.** Due to their ability to easily move between food/food preparation surfaces and waste bins, cockroaches can easily spread many diseases including leprosy, salmonella, dysentery, E. coli, urinary tract infections, tuberculosis and pneumonia.
7. **Health importance-allergies and asthma.** Cockroaches produce a suite of potent allergens to which many people are sensitive. These allergens can lead to the development of asthma and cause asthma attacks when not properly mitigated. About a quarter of the population is allergic to cockroaches.
8. **Cockroach management is tricky.** Since they are mostly nocturnal, you may not see cockroaches until a significant infestation exists. However, it is possible to eliminate cockroaches with proper identification and use of the correct products. Commercially available cockroach baits are very effective at controlling the pests, but it is often best to call a pest control professional.
9. **Early detection makes management easier.** Knowing the preferred locations of where cockroaches like to hide; warm, dark, moist areas, especially in kitchens and bathrooms, will help in early detection. Often one of the first places you will find them is around and behind the refrigerator.
10. **Sanitation is important.** Since they are scavengers, if there isn't enough food for them to eat then they will be easier to control. You can reduce your risk of getting cockroaches by keeping food in secure containers, cleaning up immediately after meals and picking up pet food.

The source of this article was Zach DeVries, UK Assistant Professor of Urban Entomology. More information about cockroaches is available in the University of Kentucky Department of Entomology's ENTFACT 614. It is available online at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef614> or by contacting me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Time to Prune



Believe it or not, spring really is here. After our 8th warmest winter on record, many homeowners begin to turn their attention to their landscape. The winter months can be damaging to trees and shrubs. To ensure healthy spring plants, homeowners may want to prune the trees and shrubs around their home. But you shouldn't just prune for the sake of pruning; make sure you have a valid reason.

Pruning during the late winter months allows you to remove damage caused by winter winds and precipitation. Pruning also is a way to remove diseased, crowded or hazardous branches. When pruning trees, the size of the tree should not be reduced too much in one season. Limit the pruning amount to one-fourth of the tree's volume. Start by thinning out branches by cutting them off close to the tree's trunk or a large limb.

Leave the base of the branch, known as the collar, intact. Cutting the collar will prevent the plant from growing over the wound caused from pruning. Pruning in this manner allows for a healthy tree that is more open to sunlight and air movement. If the branch is cut back only part way, there will likely be a crowded regrowth of new branches where the cut was made. Do not seal or paint the wounds resulting from pruning, because this will only delay the tree's healing process.

Spring-flowering shrubs may need rejuvenation pruning, and the best time for that is right after they flower. If you prune a shrub before it blooms, you remove buds too soon and don't get an opportunity to enjoy those blooms. When you prune after blooming, you can still enjoy the flowers and the plant can recover, grow, and produce more buds for flowers next spring.

For rejuvenation pruning you remove one-third of the shrub's oldest growth. You need to select the thickest, darkest and unhealthiest stems or branches and cut them back. You should cut back stems to soil level and branches to the point of intersection with the shrub's main trunk. This ensures that only the youngest, most productive wood (that which produces the most and best flowers) remains a part of the shrub. During early spring you can also prune shrubs that will bloom during the summer months.

Pruning is not limited to a certain time of year. You can prune at any time if you notice damaged branches and limbs. The process is invigorating for the plants in a home landscape so you shouldn't necessarily think of pruning just as a means of size control.

If you have a plant that has grown out-of-bounds, pruning may not be the answer – you may need to consider replacing the plant with one that will reach a smaller size at maturity.

Trees and shrubs to prune in late winter/early spring while still dormant: Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*); Butterfly bush (*Buddleia Davidii*); Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*); Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*); Flowering plum (*Prunus blireana*); Glossy abelia (*Abelia x grandiflora*); Golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*); Honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*); Hydrangea, Peegee (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora'); Potentilla (*Potentilla fruticosa*); Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*); Spirea (except bridal wreath) (*Spirea japonica*); Wisteria (*Wisteria* species)

Trees and Shrubs to prune in late spring/summer, after bloom: Azalea (*Rhododendron* species); Beauty bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*); Bridal wreath spirea (*Spirea x vanhouttei*); Flowering crabapple (*Malus* species and cultivars); Forsythia (*forsythia x intermedia*); Hawthorn (*Crataegus* species and cultivars); Hydrangea, Bigleaf (*Hydrangea macrophylla*); Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*); Magnolia (*Magnolia* species and cultivars); Mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*); Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*); Rhododendron (*Rhododendron* species); Serviceberry (*Amelanchier x grandiflora*); Slender deutzia (*deutzia gracilis*); Weigela (*Weigela florida*)



The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service offers publications that can answer many of your pruning and other gardening and landscape questions. Online, https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/pruning_landscapetrees.pdf offers information about pruning trees. For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Rick Durham, UK Horticulture Specialist.

Routine Tractor Maintenance

Don't let the maintenance of your tractor go by the wayside when you get busy. There's a tendency to put maintenance on the back burner as spring and summer field activities get into full swing. Often when we do think about maintenance, it is the implement we think about, and we ignore the tractor.

A simple front-to-back routine every week can help you remember key maintenance points. The manufacturer will have suggested-intervals for most of the maintenance tasks, so you won't have to do everything every week. But the routine will prompt you to ask if it is time to do specific tasks.



Start with the front axles and steering. Is it time to grease those bearings and steering components? Make sure nothing is loose. Next, check the coolant system. Make sure the coolant levels are adequate. Make sure the radiator is not plugged up with debris.

Now, take a look at the belts. Make sure they have the right tension and that they are not cracked. This will prompt you to have a spare on hand. Look at the air cleaner. Make sure it's not plugged up and robbing power from your engine by not allowing air to get through.

Take a look at the engine oil. You should check this daily, but if you haven't, a good time to do it is during your weekly inspection. Also check the fluid itself. Make sure it doesn't have any contaminants or water in it.

If your battery is not a maintenance-free battery, check to make sure the liquid levels are adequate. Check the cables for corrosion and make sure they aren't rubbing against the frame components.

Move on to the clutch and brake linkages. When you use a tractor every day, you may not notice the linkage getting out of adjustment. Make a specific effort to check for free play and other adjustments on that linkage.

Look at your hydraulic reservoir. Make sure the fluid is at the correct level and be sure to change the fluid when needed. Not only does the system provide fluids for remote cylinders, but it is the critical lubricating force in your tractor's transmission.

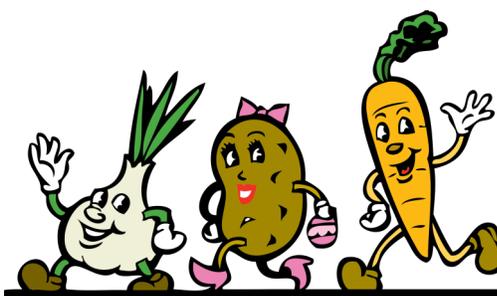
Look at tires to make sure they have the proper inflation. Make sure the back of the tractor is clean, especially where the hydraulic hoses are connected, so you don't get dirt in the system.

These simple procedures can extend the life of your tractors thereby protecting your critical investment. The source of this article was Tim Stombaugh, UK Extension Agricultural Engineer. For more information on equipment maintenance, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



Successfully Transplanting Vegetables

With springtime finally here, we turn our attention to the vegetable garden. Getting your transplants up and growing will give you some delicious homegrown produce in the months to come.



Transplanting gives a plant more space to develop, but it will temporarily stop growth, not stimulate it. Therefore, for successful transplanting, try to interrupt plant growth as little as possible.

Whether you grow your own transplants or purchase them, these eight steps can ensure successful transplanting into the garden.

Transplant on a shady day in late afternoon or in early evening to prevent wilting.

Ensure transplants are well watered and their roots are thoroughly damp an hour or two before setting them in the garden.

Handle the plants carefully. Avoid disturbing the roots. Try removing plants from their containers by knocking them out in an inverted position rather than tugging on the plants. Plants growing in peat pots may be planted with the pot intact.

Dig a hole large enough to hold the roots. Set the plants to the lowest leaf at recommended spacings. Press soil firmly around the roots.

Pour 1 cup of a solution of soluble plant food and water mixed according to the label's directions.

Put more soil around each plant, but leave a slight depression for water to collect. Break off any exposed parts of peat pots so that they will not act as wicks and pull water out of the soil.

Shade the plants for a few days after transplanting on a very hot day by putting newspapers or cardboard on their south sides or cover them with a woven cotton fabric such as cheese cloth.

Water the plants every 2-3 days during the next week.

The source of this article was Rick Durham, UK Extension Horticulture Specialist. For more gardening tips, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Accurately Using Small Quantities of Pesticides

Backpack and handheld sprayers are often used around the farm or home to treat small areas or a few infested trees. However, most pesticide labels focus on mixing and applying pesticide in quantities that far exceed the sizes of common backpack and handheld sprayers. As a result, accurate conversions must be made to avoid a spray mix or application rate that could result in a treatment that is either stronger than recommended or too weak to be effective.

A University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service publication has been developed to help homeowners make accurate treatments.

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Two factors influence the accuracy of conversions: properly measuring pesticides (especially dry pesticides) to be added to the mix, and applying the correct amount of that pesticide for the desired outcome.

The rates for liquid pesticides tend to be easy to convert from large to small quantities because they can be measured in common units such as fluid ounces, tablespoons, teaspoons, or milliliters. However, dry chemicals, such as wettable powders or dry flowables, are difficult to measure without accurate scales, which most growers and homeowners do not have.



In addition, since dry materials have different densities, simple conversions are likely to be inaccurate. High-density pesticides occupy a smaller volume compared to low-density pesticides, and using anything other than actual weights for each product will result in mixtures that are either stronger or weaker than necessary.

Most labels list the application rate either on a “per acre” basis (derived from 400 gallons of diluted spray per acre), or on a “per 100 gal” basis. The 100-gallon rate is easier to use, since it doesn’t require determining the acreage to be sprayed.

When it comes to herbicides, label recommended spray volumes are much smaller, such as 5 to 40 gallons-per-acre. In this UK publication, a 20-gallon per acre rate has been selected in determining the amounts needed for 1-, 3-, or 5-gal spray volumes. This rate is a mid-range value applicable for most herbicides.

Growers and homeowners must make sure that their sprayers are calibrated to deliver a 20-gallon rate. If not calibrated, the error in herbicide delivery will be magnified when using small-volume sprays. For example, a grower spraying the equivalent of 10-gallons per acre will actually apply twice as much pesticide as needed compared to spraying with a 20-gallon rate. Calibration must be tested and practiced often to ensure proper application rate.

Here are some helpful hints

- Make sure the pesticide concentration and formulation you are using exactly matches those found in this publication.
- Some of the pesticides may be out of circulation or may be found in various formulations. If a pesticide is available in more than one dry formulation, do not assume the values presented for one formulation are applicable to all.
- Values are presented in teaspoons for 1- and 3-gallon and in tablespoons for 5-gallon whenever possible. In some instances where the rate is high, resulting in large teaspoon values, the numbers have been converted to cups.

Reminder: 1 cup is equal to 16 tablespoons or 48 teaspoons.



For a copy of UK publication HO-83, Dry Pesticide Rates for Hand-held Sprayers, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Joe Masabni, UK Extension Fruit and Vegetable Specialist.

Pest Control Options Abound During Growing Season

The return of gardening season also signals the return of insect pests that prey upon vegetables. U.K. Entomologist Ric Bessin said home gardeners have many options to effectively manage these pests during the growing season.

Many insects become active when the average daily temperature reaches 45 degrees or so. They tend to emerge first in the southwest part of the state and move northeast, reaching the northern most counties seven to 14 days after first emergence.



“I think when many people think of insect control, they think of insecticides first, and I don’t think that should always be the case,” he said. “I think there are many situations where the homeowner has additional options.”

The best pest management options for gardeners vary, depending on the types of vegetables a person grows. One of the simplest, low-cost forms of pest control that small home gardeners can do involves people going out to their gardens in early morning with a bucket containing soapy water. Bessin said this is the time of the day when many of the insects are sluggish and have slow reaction times. Therefore, gardeners have the opportunity to easily knock the insects off the plants and drop them into the bucket. The soapy water kills the insects almost immediately.

Some of the most common pests home gardeners annually face include the Colorado potato beetle and tomato hornworm. Preventive control options for annual pests include looking for pest resistant varieties, selecting a planting date when pests are not as common, tilling the

soil and crop rotation, he said.

“It pays to put money into preventive controls when we’re certain that pests are going to show up,” he said.

Gardeners can reduce their chances of becoming infested with the Colorado potato beetle by applying a 6-inch layer of straw on top of potatoes after they have been planted. The straw layer also makes it easier for gardeners to dig up the potatoes at the end of the season, Bessin said.

While some insects are pests, some can be very beneficial to gardeners; including a type of wasp that kills the tomato hornworm. The wasp inserts its eggs into the insects like the tomato hornworm and eventually takes over the insect’s entire body. The wasps do not harm vegetables. White, egg-like cocoons may appear on the tomato hornworm’s body after it has been killed by the wasps. Bessin said gardeners should leave the tomato hornworm alone if they see this on one of their tomato plants because it is a signal the worm is dead and no longer a threat to the plant.

“We often don’t appreciate the levels of natural control that we have,” Bessin said. “If we didn’t have any beneficial insects, we would see pest problems of epic proportions.”

*For more pest control options, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service –
Floyd County Office.*

Bugs and Other Things That Make You Itch

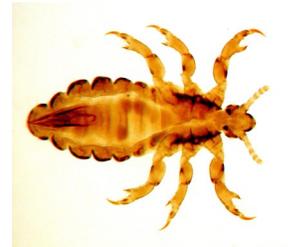
People generally don't like bugs. In fairness, this feeling isn't without cause. Throughout history, we have consistently dealt with insects and their relatives that like to use us as a food source. Phrases like "sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite" are rooted in a time when we had to worry about being bitten by insects even while we slept. As a result, our bodies and minds are wired to be on the lookout for pests that want to bite us. Sometimes, though, the cause of an itch isn't a bug at all. Here is a sampling of pests and other conditions that cause itches.

Bed bugs: As the name implies, these pests will take up residence in your bed or any other areas where you sleep or spend considerable amounts of time. They are relatively quick feeders, only taking 5-10 minutes for a meal before disappearing into nearby cracks and crevices. Everyone reacts differently to a bed bug bite, but the most common reaction is an itchy raised bump that resembles a mosquito bite. You can learn more about bed bugs through the University of Kentucky Entfact 636 which is available online at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef636>. If you suspect you have a bed bug infestation, contact a pest control professional.



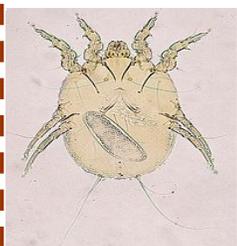
Fleas: These tiny, blood suckers often end up in homes after hitching a ride on pets. The adults are the ones responsible for the itchy bites that can appear on people and pets. Adult fleas are amazing jumpers and live on their host. But they have a hard time sticking to humans because we don't have enough hair. Often, the larvae live in animal bedding and feed on the feces of their parents.

Lice: Humans can encounter head, body, and pubic lice. Head lice are the most common and are the ones that people often think of, especially with school-age children. Lice have modified legs that help them hang on to human hairs, where they live and feed. They do not fly, jump, or do a lot of crawling in the environment.



Mosquitoes: Mosquitoes are not normally an issue in the winter months, but the females will land on humans in the summer to take a blood meal. Their saliva usually induces an itchy red welt on the skin. Larvae live in water and don't feed on humans.

Chiggers: Another classic summer foe, chiggers are immature mites that will partially digest skin cells and slurp them up for nutrition. They do not burrow into the skin but do insert a long tube into our bodies. Their digestive enzymes and tube can induce a maddening itch.



Scabies: Unlike chiggers, scabies mites actually live inside of the body. Scabies can induce pimple-like pustules on the skin and may leave behind noticeable "tunnels" in the skin when a person has an infestation. Scabies tend to be transmitted by long-term skin contact and can be transmitted between family members or sexual partners. Only a dermatologist can help you identify and treat a scabies problem. Most entomologists or county extension agents will not have a powerful enough microscope to identify them.

If your skin itches, it is best to consult your dermatologist or primary care provider. Home remedies such as topical anti-itch creams, oatmeal baths, witch hazel and over-the-counter allergy medications may provide some relief.

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Invisible Itches: Sometimes people may experience sensations that feel like insects crawling on them or that something is biting them, but they find no evidence of pests. These “invisible itches” can be very tricky. Sometimes people may be dealing with transient issues involving insects like thrips that can prod the skin or even problems with fowl mites that have left a recently abandoned bird nest. You might be dealing with sensations that resemble a bug problem but are actually caused by something else. This time of year, one primary cause of invisible itches is dry skin. In addition, some medications can produce side effects that mirror the sensations of insects, as can problems with unmanaged diabetes, lupus, or arthritis, among others. In other cases, homes can become contaminated with irritants like fiberglass or paper shards. Chemicals can also cause irritation similar to a bug bite. It is important to keep an open mind when you experience these kinds of symptoms and to consider other possible sources that don't have six or more legs.

The sources of this article were Jonathan Larson and Zachary DeVries, UK Entomologists. More information on bug identification is available at the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Save your back and reduce stress of your small ruminants!



If you are like me, then our small ruminants (Goats & Sheep) can sometimes go an extended period time than normal between such things as trimming their feet, administering wormer or vaccines due to the fact you must get help to hold and restrain the animals. This leads to unnecessary stress on both the



animal and you. I'm hoping the below picture can help with this. This item is a working stand that will make regular maintenance of your Goats and Sheep a one-person job. The animals can be comfortably restrained and raised to a desired height to get you in a more comfortable position to trim feet, shear, worm and vaccinate. The side rails can be easily removed based on what your needs are. The total weight of this is only 70 pounds.

This is available for Floyd County producers and can be checked out at the extension office



Yellow Hairy Buttercup

The old-time remedy if you see this weed in your pasture was you just bushhog it down. That is what most of us were taught growing up. This yellow weed can be your worst enemy in your pasture. The bushhogging technique will only spread this as it reproduces through vegetative parts. It will usually grow in poor soil in which it is not competing against good stands of grass. To tackle this, you need to spray an herbicide such as 2-4-D, crossbow or what I have used the last few years is a product called Grazon next. By the time you read this it will be too late to spray to prevent it from coming up in the spring 2025 so mark your calendars to prepare for next year. Additional ways to reduce the buttercup is by improving the PH of your soil. Some examples of this would be planting Korean lespedeza and other legumes such as Red Clover.



New Data Shows When You Should Vaccinate Cattle

With the increase in cattle prices, it is even more important to vaccinate and get live calves on the ground. We expect to see the market in a continued incline over the next couple years. My advice is to retain any heifer you can this year. If you have a cow that gives you a live calf this is not the year to cull. Your wallet will thank you later. When it comes to vaccinating our animals, we always do what our past generation has done. We get tunnel vision and don't want to mess with change. I'm encouraging you to embrace this new research so your calving windows will be tight and not spread out. Always remember we take a hit at the yard if you sell the 1,2,3 calves in a group as example. Recommendation from Dr. Arnold with UK is to use a separate shot for your Lepto vs combining this with your IBR and BVD. Remember 60 days. You can give your Lepto shot at any time and I do recommend twice a year as we are seeing more and more wildlife (deer, skunks, possums etc. transferring diseases). This Lepto shot is a small price to pay vs seeing that brood cow abort her calf at 8 months. As an example, if that deer urinates in an Olympic size swimming pool and they are a carrier of BVD and then your brood cows drinks from that Olympic size pool, if that cow has not been vaccinated properly she can now catch Lepto, IBR or BVD. Seems kind of scary but it is the reality we face as farmers when it comes to wildlife. Now back to the 60 days. You have noticed I've mentioned that before and that is due to the importance of it.



When giving your killed vaccine with IBR and BVD stay away from breeding 60 days from your administering of this vaccine. New research shows by staying 60 days from breeding after this shot you will improve your pregnancy take rate during the first heat cycle. Again, we can pay some bills the next few years with our cattle and we need those calves on the ground and in a timely manner.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMS

GET YOUR BULL CHECKED BEFORE BREEDING SEASON



WEST LIBERTY
Dr. Smith



JACKSON (RCARS)
Dr. LW Beckley

April 5, 2024
9:00AM - 4:00PM

FREE

April 25, 2024
1:00PM - 6:00PM



CALL TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENT
606-666-8812



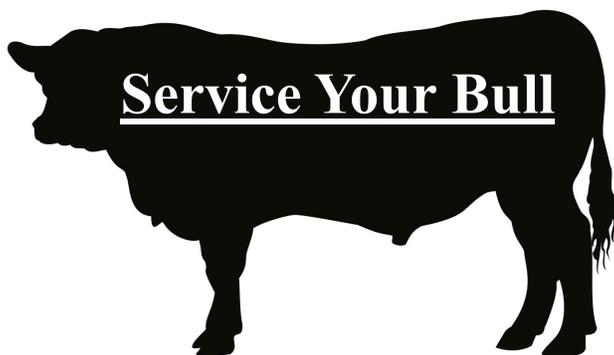
PROTECT YOUR CALF CROP
\$125/Bull Savings

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification



Yes, we need to service our Bull!!

Why not? The bull should be the best and most expensive animal on your farm. Fifty percent of the genetic potential of every calf is from the bull. We have too much money to lose if our breeding bull cannot produce calves. Have him tested each year before breeding season. Typically, this has been at a cost of \$125-\$150. This year you can schedule this

for free. Enclosed is a flyer for this to call and schedule an appointment for April 5th @ West Liberty or on April 25th in Jackson. I have seen too many times the producer is left scratching his head wondering why his cattle is not bred. You remember I mentioned Lepto earlier in this publication. So what happens if the Bull has Lepto? Now all your cows have potential to have it. Maybe he just stopped producing enough quality semen to get bred. We all too often look over this essential detail each year. We can't wait till we have a trainwreck before we address this. Get in the mindset to play offense instead of defense and know 100% if your Bull is viable.