

# Spencer County Agriculture & Horticulture Newsletter



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

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March 2023

Welcome to March! I certainly don't know where January and February went, but March is here.

Spring is just around the corner as it officially begins March 20. Also, our days will get a little longer once we "spring ahead" on Sunday morning, March 12, but go ahead and set your clocks ahead one hour on the evening of March 11. Remember to go ahead and change your batteries in your fire and smoke detectors as well.

I'm hosting several "spring" meetings as well and hope you'll take a look at them.

As always, feel free to call or email me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bryce Roberts,  
Spencer County Extension Agent for  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

## More Information

As always, if you need more information, feel free to **call me** at 477-2217.

You can also **email me** at broberts@uky.edu or you can **visit my website** to view archived newsletters and news articles. The web address is: [www.spencerextension.com](http://www.spencerextension.com)



## Soil Sample Now

As we have now moved into spring, it is still a great time to sample your fields, gardens, or lawns to see what type and how much fertilizer you need to make the soil as productive as possible. For each sample you want to submit, we need at least one pint (sandwich bag) of dry soil 4-8 inches below the soil surface. Please put your name and sample ID (north lawn, hayfield 2, etc.) on each bag.

This is a free service provided by the Spencer Co. Conservation District. Thanks to them for sponsoring the soil sampling program.

Our office is open normal business hours, but you have the option to drop off your samples anytime you like.

As you pull into our parking lot, please go to the right to the back of our building. You will then see our pavilion and on the pavilion, you will see a blue tub to the right of the double doors. Inside the tub, you will find some paperwork that you will need to fill out so that we can properly test your soil. Place the paperwork and samples back into the tub.

I'll review the results and mail them back to you in 2-3 weeks. Due to the recent tornado and total loss of the soil testing lab in Princeton, all samples for Kentucky are being sent to Lexington so your wait time may be a little bit longer.

Cooperative Extension Service  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
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4-H Youth Development  
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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

## Upcoming Meetings

I'll be hosting some horticulture related programs over the next few weeks and hope you will be able to join me for them.

**\*\*Spring Lawn Maintenance**—March 30, 6 p.m. Learn about what to do and what not to do during the spring for a healthy lawn all year long.

**\*\*Vegetable Gardening Basics**—March 30, 7 p.m. Learn about some of the “basics” of a successful home garden.



**\*\*Pollinator Gardening**—April 12, 6 p.m. Come and learn about some of the best types of plants to help our pollinator friends thrive in your backyard.



### **PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.**

Please call our office at 477-2217 to register or you can email me at [bryce.roberts@uky.edu](mailto:bryce.roberts@uky.edu) with your name and phone number and how many will be attending so that enough materials will be provided.

### **Beginning Producer Session**

We are continuing our Beginning Producer Series with a session on “Building your Business Plan” with Spencer Guinn with KCARD. The session will be on March 28 beginning at 6 p.m.

To register, please call our office at 477-2217 or you can register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beginning-farmer-gardener-landowner-class-march-tickets-483426560857>

Please register by March 27 as a light meal will be provided.

## **KY Beef Cow Numbers Decline**

This article is being provided by Aimee Nielson, UK Ag Communications.

Kentucky beef cow numbers dipped lower than they've been since 1967. This follows a national trend as the U.S. Department of Agriculture released cattle inventory estimates in January revealing a 3.5% reduction in beef cows—the lowest since 1962.

“We knew the cowherd had gotten smaller; it was really just a question of how much smaller,” said Kenny Burdine, agricultural economist for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. “A combination of dry weather, high input costs and strong cull-cow prices caused numbers in Kentucky to shrink.”

A large portion of the United States experienced drought during 2022, which impacted hay production. Kentucky producers were also dealing with extreme weather events such as tornadoes in late 2021 and extreme flooding in summer 2022. Drought was yet another weather hurdle.

“I guess you could say it was a perfect storm. Farmers had to start feeding hay a lot earlier than usual, leading to tighter hay supplies and higher winter-feeding costs for cow-calf producers,” Burdine explained. “Winter feed is the largest expense for most cow-calf operations. Most years, producers can buy hay for \$60-\$80 per ton. But based on recent hay auctions in Kentucky, the same quality hay is selling for \$100 per ton, or more.”

Burdine said those higher costs result in a significant increase in daily feeding costs. With expenses that high, some producers chose to reduce their numbers. Cattle markets have been mixed but have trended stronger over the last few weeks.

“Going into spring, I think this stronger market trend will continue for calf and feeder markets,” Burdine said. “Also, with feedlots preferring to place heavier feeder cattle, that increases the value of pounds added to Kentucky cattle and creates opportunities for cow-calf and backgrounding/stocker operations to profit by taking cattle to higher sale weights.”

With Kentucky's typically strong forage base, Burdine said producers can use grazing to add pounds to cattle at an even lower cost.

“We are fortunate to have the ability to use multiple feeds stuffs in Kentucky and are typically blessed with excellent forage” he said. “That creates opportunities for feed-based and grazing-based programs. While weather will certainly play a factor going forward, both cow numbers and heifer retention estimates suggest that calf crops are going to keep getting smaller in the near term, which should provide some much-needed support for prices.”

## Getting Ready for Spring

This article is provided by By Derrick Snyder, National Weather Service Paducah, KY.

March is when the traditional springtime thunderstorm season begins to ramp up in the Commonwealth. As we all know, some of these storms can be real doozies, and it's important we're prepared to weather them. Here's a few tips to help keep you and your loved ones safe:

**Stay informed:** Make sure you've got a weather radio or follow a trusted news station to stay on top of what's brewing. Your local National Weather Service offices offer free storm spotter training classes during this time of year, and these courses are excellent ways to learn about how severe thunderstorms form and how to stay safe around them. Call your local office to find out more information about a spotter training near you.

**Have a plan:** Make sure you and your family have a designated place to take shelter and a plan for how to stay in touch with one another during a storm. Write it down and keep it handy, just in case. Don't forget to practice your plan too!

**Stock up:** Keep a well-stocked pantry with enough non-perishable food and water

to last a few days, in case of power outages or other emergencies. Other items to keep on hand in case of an emergency include extra clothes, medications, cash, and a first aid kit. See the list below for additional supplies.

**Secure your property:** Make sure any loose items around your property are secured to prevent them from becoming dangerous projectiles during high winds. Consider moving livestock to a safe place and securing any loose roof shingles to prevent damage to your home, farm buildings, or workshops.

Don't forget that there's plenty of resources out there to help you get prepared for severe weather. The National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and your local emergency management office can all provide you with valuable information on what to do before, during, and after a thunderstorm. Learn more about making an emergency plan at [www.ready.gov/plan](http://www.ready.gov/plan).

So, don't wait until it's too late! Take a little time now to get ready for springtime thunderstorms in the Bluegrass State, and you'll be ready to weather whatever comes your way.







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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Honey Raisin Muffins

**½ cup + 2 tablespoons**  
all purpose flour

**½ cup + 2 tablespoons**  
whole wheat flour

**¾ teaspoon** baking  
powder

**¼ teaspoon** baking soda

**1 teaspoon** ground  
cinnamon

**¼ teaspoon** salt

**2 cups** bran flake cereal  
with raisins

**1 cup** skim milk

**½ cup** honey

**2** egg whites

**3 tablespoons**  
unsweetened applesauce

**2 tablespoons** canola o

- 1. Combine** flours, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in a bowl and set aside.
- 2. In a large mixing bowl, combine** cereal, milk and honey; let stand for 2 minutes to soften. **Stir** in egg whites, applesauce

and oil; **mix** well.

**3. Add** dry ingredients and stir until moistened.

**4. Fill** a greased or paper-lined muffin pan  $\frac{2}{3}$  full.

**5. Bake** at 400°F for 15-18 minutes.

**6. Cool** 10 minutes before removing from pan.

**Yield:** 12 muffins.

**Nutrition Analysis:**

150 calories, 3 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 15 g sugar, 4 g protei

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

