



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

Lawrence County Part-Time Farmer

March 2022

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Sincerely,

Laura Maggard

Laura Maggard,
CEA for Agriculture
and Natural Resources

Upcoming Events and Meetings

**Lawrence County Beekeepers meet the 1st
Thursday of the month at 6:00PM at the
Extension Office**

**April 11th: Shiitake Mushroom Workshop
12PM & 6PM**

Pre-registration is required

**The Lawrence County Farmers Market will have
a planning meeting for the 2022 Season on April
21st @ 6PM. If you plan on selling please attend
the meeting! New Farmers Welcome!!**

**Thrill, Spill, and Fill Class will be in May! Stay
tuned for more information!**

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

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



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Tips For Beef Sire Selection

The overall goal of a beef cattle operation is to increase net income by balancing what is spent on the operation with how much income it generates. A beef producer can accomplish this goal by increasing income while minimizing additional costs, or reducing costs while trying to maintain income.

One way to do this is to improve herd genetics through individual bull selection.

You should assess four primary characteristics when considering a purchase. These are reproductive soundness, structural soundness, visual evaluation and performance characteristics.

Having a breeding soundness exam done is the best way to determine a bull's reproductive soundness. While passing this exam means he should have the physical soundness to breed and settle cows, it does not measure desire. Observe bulls for their interest in females in heat.

Indications of structural soundness are that the bull moves without pain or discomfort and has appropriate angles at weight-bearing joints.

Visual observation is one way to evaluate important traits. These can include disposition, color,

muscling, horned/polled, body capacity, structure, sheath and testicular development.

Expected calf performance is a primary reason to buy a bull. If replacement females will be retained, the first decision will be the breed's productivity level. When the breed is determined, selection among bull performance should be based on the expected progeny difference whenever possible. There is no such animal as the "best bull," because selection should be based on what you need to get from the bull.



Remember that as you select to improve one trait you often lose ground in another trait. For example, selecting for increased growth usually inadvertently increases cows' mature size and maintenance when retaining replacements. Balancing cows' productivity levels and energy requirements is extremely difficult and if done improperly likely will result in decreased reproduction. Before you buy a bull, consider what you want to produce and what resources (primarily nutrition) you have available.

Bull selection has an important long-term economic impact on your herd. Selecting the right bull for your operation involves setting production goals, analyzing your resources and management and locating the bull that best fits your situation. While this process will take time and effort, it can generate significant financial rewards when properly done.

Spring Mowing Most Important of Yearlong Lawn Duties

The first mowing makes the lawn look spring-like and very attractive. Subsequent 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. Instead, watch the grass grow, and mow frequently enough to remove no more than one-third to one-half of grass height.



Eight Reasons to Test Your Soil

Soil testing can tell you many things about your soil that can help you make informed decisions about fertilizer application, site selection for crops and so much more. It is an essential part of a successful agriculture or horticulture enterprise. Home gardens and lawns can also greatly benefit from soil testing.

With the wet pattern Kentucky has been in over the past year, soil testing is paramount to having a quality hay supply for next winter.



There's really no reason not to test your soil since your local office of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service makes it simple. So, let's get to it. Why should you test your soil?

1. Know the pH level of your soil. Soil experts will make different recommendations depending on the acidity or alkalinity of your soil and your intended use.
2. Save time and money. Having the proper levels of soil nutrients will help maximize economic yields. Soil testing also reduces the chance of overapplying and over purchasing fertilizers.
3. It's good for the environment. Soil testing results in a more accurate application of fertilizers and that ultimately reduces runoff into waterways.
4. They are not expensive. Each county office may charge a nominal fee to cover soil analysis costs.
5. It is easy. Taking samples doesn't take a lot of time or skill, and your county agents can help you along the way.
6. Find out the fertility level of the soil. You gain knowledge about the soil condition and can make informed decisions about how to improve it.
7. Follow soil changes over time. Follow how conditions like drought, prolonged wet periods and other weather scenarios affect the soil.
8. Identify problem areas in your field or garden.

You'll need to take different samples for various land uses such as agricultural, fields, lawns, gardens, fruit trees, shrubs and flowers because they all have distinct fertility and pH requirements.

Composting Basics

Composting is a great way to add valuable organic matter to your soil while reducing the amount of yard and food waste that ends up in landfills. It's also something that nearly everyone can do.

Compost is the result of a natural process where decaying organic substances, such as plants, are broken down by microorganisms. This produces a nutrient-rich, organic material that you can apply to your lawn or garden, much like you would a commercial fertilizer.

You can start a compost bin or pile in your backyard. You can purchase a bin or make one using inexpensive, leftover materials like pallets or chicken wire. The bin can be as big or small as you want, but for most rapid composting, a pile that is at least 1-yard tall and 1-yard wide and 1-yard long is best. Make sure you place your compost in an area that is flat and well-drained.



Once you have defined a compost area, collect yard waste and food scraps. Yard waste includes twigs, shrub trimmings, grass clippings, leftover straw and leaves. Most fruit, vegetable and grain scraps are compostable as are coffee grounds, herbs, nuts and egg shells. Avoid meat scraps, oils and dairy products. Remember, you need to have a mixture of "brown" material (dried leaves, straw, twigs, coffee grounds, even cardboard) and "green" materials (fresh grass clippings, vegetable scraps, other fresh plant materials) for the composting process to work. Mix or turn the pile once a week to help speed the breakdown of organic materials. If the compost pile is extremely damp, turn it more often. If it is dry, add some water or fresh plant material. It can take four to six months to complete the composting process. You will know it's finished when the compost is dark brown, crumbly and smells like soil.

Compost can be used in the vegetable garden or spread around ornamental plants in the landscape, but be careful not to use too much. A 1-inch layer of compost, worked into the top few inches of soil, will feed plants for several months.

Shiitake Mushroom Workshop

April 11, 2022

12:00PM & 6:00 PM

LAWRENCE COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE



Space is limited.
Pre-registration is required
(606) 673-9495

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Spring Harvest Salad

5 cups torn spring leaf lettuce	Dressing: 4 teaspoons lemon juice	2 teaspoons Kentucky honey
2½ cups spinach leaves	2½ tablespoons olive oil	½ teaspoon salt
1½ cups sliced strawberries	1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar	¼ cup feta cheese crumbles
1 cup fresh blueberries	1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard	½ cup unsalted sliced almonds

1. Combine leaf lettuce and spinach leaves with sliced strawberries, blueberries and green onion in a large salad bowl.

2. Prepare dressing by whisking together the lemon juice, olive oil,

balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, honey and salt; **pour** over lettuce mixture and toss to coat.

3. Sprinkle salad with feta cheese and sliced almonds.

4. Serve immediately.

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings.

Nutrition Analysis: 130 calories, 9 g fat, 1.5 g sat fat, 240 mg sodium, 12 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 7 g sugar, 3 g protein.

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



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606-673-9495

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Public Notification of Procedure

For Filing A Complaint

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against in any Cooperative Extension Service sponsored activity or program may file a complaint with the Secretary of Agriculture by writing to: USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Bldg., 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.