

NIKKI'S NEWSLETTER

Marshall County's Agriculture & Natural Resources Update



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As we enter the month of May, many things come to mind. There are too many agricultural activities happening to list, but don't forget about horticulture activities too! Strawberry farmers have hit the streets selling their fresh berry crops, the Master Gardeners are gearing up for their 8th annual plant sale (see page 5) and the MC Farmers Market (see page 4) is preparing for it's opening day!

New Building Update

The remodel continues to move fairly smoothly as contractors keep chipping away at the necessary tasks. Luckily, the timetable for completion hasn't changed. We still plan to move into the new building this summer and have programs in there this fall. Also, the talk of the town is the structure being built next to the new Extension Office. It is an outdoor learning center/ farmers market pavilion. Last year, I was able to acquire grant money to help pay for the structure. I envision using this structure to host outdoor activities that provide new opportunities for learning, promote agriculture, and celebrate our farmers. I will elaborate more on this project when we are closer to a grand opening. Meanwhile, I didn't want to hold you in suspense!

Farmers Market

The Marshall County Farmers Market is ready for opening day but as always, we are still accepting new vendors. Contact my office for details! The market will continue at it's current location at the Extension Office until the new pavilion is finished. Once finished, I look forward to having large family oriented events at the market!

Grain Producers, you may see advertisements stating that UK research found a statistically significant yield response from the product "Proven40". Did Proven40 increase yield of corn in an UK trial? The short answer is yes but UK Agronomist's speculate whether the dynamics of no-tillage and a cereal rye cover crop were factors in the yield effect from the product. So, I wouldn't go run out and buy Proven40 based on the notion that UK found a yield increase in their trial but I would keep my ears open for future University findings. Use the QR code provided to see more information about this research.



Lime Spreader

There has been a desperate need in our county for "small" acreage lime spreading. Small Farms are often too little to be prioritized by custom lime spreaders but too big to economically justify purchasing pelletized lime. Luckily, the Marshall County Conservation District has purchased a powdered lime spreader that can be rented as "shared use equipment." I want to thank them and their board for making this happen. What a great way to meet a dire need for our agriculture community!

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Marshall County ANR Agent



5 Steps for a Bountiful Vegetable Garden

Nikki Rhein, Extension Agriculture Agent

As temperatures warm up, everyone is itching to get in the garden. Before you fire up the tiller, here are some of my favorite tips for a successful vegetable garden this summer.

1. Get this book: "Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky." This book is available for FREE at the Marshall County Extension Office. It is filled with useful information. It has everything you need to know from "a" for asparagus to "w" for watermelons! Apparently, there are no vegetables that starts with the letter "z". Also, its noteworthy that the book includes 25 tables loaded with information. I use these tables regularly. An example could be the sidedress fertilizer chart. It tells you which vegetables like to be fertilized in season and when. Tomatoes, for example, enjoy nitrogen in season. On the other hand, cucurbit crops like squash could lose yield from additional nitrogen fertilizer.
2. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Most failed vegetable gardens fail because we either overestimate our time or underestimate the time a flourishing garden demands. If you are a new gardener, I would recommend starting with a very small patch or a single bed. Pick a maximum of 3 of your favorite vegetables, learn how to grow them and if all goes well, add more types next year. Remember, each vegetable has different needs, the more types of vegetables you grow, the more problems you could have to mitigate. It can become overwhelming fast, so just keep it simple.
3. You MUST soil test before the season. There is no way to know what your soil needs without a proper test. Plants grown in gardens with poor fertility are less healthy, vigorous and are more likely to become stressed or diseased. You can "rent" a probe from our office for free, which will provide a much more accurate test. The results are only going to be as good as the sample that was taken. Ask our staff how to take a proper sample when you pick up the probe.
4. Timing is everything. The aforementioned vegetable gardening book will tell you when to plan, work, fertilize, plant, and harvest your gardens. On page 21, there is a calendar of when to plant your vegetables. With time, gardeners will learn that some vegetables are more time sensitive than others. For instance, corn earworm issues may be avoided with an early sweet corn planting. Other crops like green beans, may do better if planted for a fall crop instead of fighting the heat of summer while filling their pods.
5. Plan for common problems before they happen. Make sure you have access to water near your garden plot, so you are ready for dry periods. If you plan to grow tomatoes, then read the tomato section of our book. This will tell you that the most common issue with tomatoes is early blight, which can be prevented with a fungicide like fixed copper. Remember, fungicides are often preventative not curative, so get ahead of these common issues.

For more information contact the Marshall County Extension Office. I hope everyone fills their canning jars with a bountiful vegetable garden crop this summer! Happy planting!

Free UK Agriculture Weather App

Matt Dixon, UK Meteorologist

Sign up for UK Ag weather updates through the QR code on the right. You will receive regular updates and explanations related to severe weather that will impact agriculture.

You can also sign up for the new UK Ag Weather Alert App. The new app in the Ag Weather Center was just released on Google Play, making it available for both iOS and Android devices! If a watch or warning is in effect, you'll get a push alert sent straight to your phone. Use your phone's app store to search for the University of Kentucky's "Weather Alert App." Look for the lightning bolt icon pictured on the right.

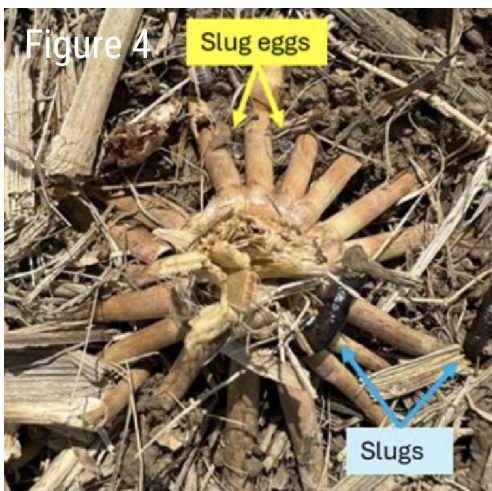


Pre- and Post-emergence Strike of Slugs & Snails on Soybeans

By Raul J. Villanueva, Entomology Extension Specialist, and
Zenaida Vitoria, Entomology Research Analyst

The warmer winter in 2024, along with rains and foggy conditions during several days in March and April, have been conducive to the presence of slugs and snails in commercial and research plots in Western Kentucky. Since the end of March and the first week of April, UK entomologists have been observing slugs in various stages of development, including eggs in soybean and corn fields. The favorable conditions described above might have increased their populations in fields, leading to a reduction of plant stands in several soybean fields; in many cases, entire fields have been consumed.

In soybean fields heavily affected by slugs, plant stands of 2 to 10 plants per 5-ft row are in contrast to normal stands of 20 to 30 plants per 5-ft row (based on average plantings in Kentucky: 5 to 6 seeds per foot-row planted in 20" row width) (Figure 1). Damage observed in fields showed that slugs were feeding on unsprouted seeds and emerging seedlings (Figure 2). Also, observations since the first week of April have shown that eggs were laid in moist soils covered by organic matter from the previous crop (soybeans, corn, or wheat). Figure 3 shows that slugs were well protected under dry brace roots of corn, ovipositing eggs under these structures.



Mollusk Management

There is no rescue treatment for slug damage or thresholds for application of molluscicides. If stands are low, replanting is recommended, and an application of molluscicides may be necessary. On February 27, 2024, we wrote a KPN article (Slugs are Active in February 2024, but Farmers Have Two Registered Molluscicides under Section 24(c) in Kentucky) that discussed the possibility of abundant mollusks during corn and soybean germination periods. This was based on environmental conditions and mentioned two metaldehyde molluscicides that are registered under the Section 24(c) for soybeans and corn in Kentucky: Deadline® M-Ps™ and Slug-Fest®. In addition to these two products, Table 1 shows additional molluscicides that can be used in corn and soybeans for management of slugs or snails.



Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

Marshall County Farmers Market

EVERY SATURDAY
SEASONALLY

Location:

MC Extension Office
1933 Mayfield Hwy.
Benton, KY 42025

7 AM - NOON

Follow us on
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*Opening Day
May 18th!*



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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.



Plant Sale



The Marshall Master Gardener Association invites you to the 8th annual MMGA Plant Sale & the opening day of the Marshall County Farmers Market!

Affordable trees, shrubs, vines, vegetables, fruit, herbs, bulbs, seeds, annuals, perennials, succulents, houseplants, compost, planters & more!

Free:
Kids activities, gardening advise, publications, recipes and more!



Saturday, May 18th
8:00am-Noon

Please use the address below and look for directional signs when close!
1933 Mayfield Hwy., Benton KY, 42025



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Paying Attention Now Can Reduce Feeding Costs Later

Kentucky Forage News

Last fall UK Forage Specialists and county agents analyzed almost 454 hay samples as part of the Eastern Kentucky Hay Contest. Here is what we found:

Crude protein (6.1 to 21.9%) and total digestible nutrients (45.7 to 66.3%) varied widely

2% of the hay samples contained less than 50% TDN

1% of the hay samples contained less than 8% crude protein

184 samples or 41% contained enough energy to meet the requirements of a beef cow at peak lactation

300 samples or 66% would meet the protein requirements of a beef cow at peak lactation

450 samples or 98% contained enough protein to meet the needs of a dry pregnant cow

450 samples or 98% contained enough energy to meet the requirements of a dry pregnant cow

Samples 2023 were better than 2022, but this was probably mostly due to better hay making weather. The biggest take home from the 2023 samples is that we still have a way to go in terms of improving hay quality! More than 60% of the samples still needed energy supplementation when feeding hay to lactating brood cows and first calf heifers.



So, what don't these results tell us? Since there is still wide variation in both crude protein and energy for the hay samples, average quality results CANNOT be used to make recommendations on what or how much to supplement. To make this type of recommendation, you will need to sample individual hay lots (one cutting from one field) that you will be feeding (see AGR-257 Hay Sampling Strategies for Getting a Good Sample). Once you have the results in hand, then a supplementation strategy can be designed by either working your local extension agent, nutritionist or veterinarian or by using the UK Beef Cow Forage Supplementation Tool (use QR code provided to access tool.) Steps for utilizing UK Beef Cow Forage Supplement Tool found at: forage-supplement-tool.ca.uky.edu





Basics of Backyard Chickens

Make sure to check local city and county ordinances to ensure you're ability to have a backyard flock.

Chickens require daily care. You must feed them, provide clean water and collect eggs every single day.

Birds get sick and it may be difficult to find a veterinarian to provide care for them.

Cleanliness and sanitation are critical elements in caring for a small flock. Everyone must wash their hands before and after handling the birds.

Chickens stop producing eggs at some point and may live a long time beyond their egg laying years.

know how to get chicks. You will most likely want to raise your hens from chicks.



Source: Jacquie Jacob, Extension Poultry Project Manager

Marshall County Conservation District's Highlight of the Month: *Ag Day, Tree Giveaway, Contests and a new lime spreader!*



The Marshall County Conservation District has had a very busy month! In April, 4th grade students from around the county joined presenters at the Terry Anderson Farm in Draffenville for the annual Ag Day. Presentations educated students on a variety of agricultural topics including poultry production, maple syrup production, soil types, grains, cattle farming, erosion, unusual farm animals, and Master Gardeners explained to students how all the different parts of a hamburger actually come from farming! Also in April, the Conservation District gave away 1400 trees! All second grade students receive a tree delivered to them at their elementary school while community members visit the office and choose their trees. Varieties available this year were baldcypress, wild plum, white pine, willow oak, white oak, and persimmon. The Marshall County Health Department, the Hardin Library, and Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park received free trees from the conservation district to be given away at their Earth Day events. Art & Writing contest awards were presented in the month of April. This year's winner was Austyn Medley from South Marshall. The Conservation District has purchased a lime spreader that is available to rent for use within the county. The charge is \$75 per day with a required \$125 delivery fee. To rent, visit the office and sign the rental agreement and we will get you on the schedule!

Recipe of the Month

Oven Fried Fish Fillets

Ingredients

- 1 pound fish fillets
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ¼ cup shredded parmesan cheese
- ¼ teaspoon dill weed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups cornflake-type cereal, crushed

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a 13x9 baking dish. Cut fillets into serving pieces, if necessary. In a small bowl, combine lemon juice and vegetable oil. In a separate small bowl, mix Parmesan cheese, dill weed, salt, and pepper. Dip each fillet into lemon juice mixture. Lay in baking dish, sprinkle with cheese mixture, and coat with crushed cereal. Bake uncovered for 20 to 30 minutes or until fish makes easily.

Servings: 4 Serving Size: 4 ounces

Nutrition facts per serving: 200 calories; 6g total fat; 1g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 80mg cholesterol; 330mg sodium; 12g carbohydrate; 0g fiber; 1g sugars; 24g protein; 6% DV of Vitamin D; 8% DV of calcium; 35% DV of iron; 10% DV of potassium. Adapted from "Fish & Game Cookbook" (2013) by Bonnie Scott.



Source: Cook Wild Kentucky Project

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