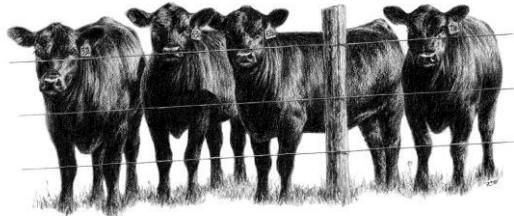


The Back Forty News



FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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From the County Agent's desk...

Happy May Fulton County Producers! Spring is here and hay season is right around the corner. If you haven't already, now would be a good time to do prep work or maintenance on hay equipment prior to getting out into the field.

Gardening season has also arrived which means many home gardeners have been hard at work prepping flower beds and garden areas for a new crop!

On a different note, it wasn't long ago we were dealing with a historical winter weather event here in the state. February brought many challenges, but the worst of all was dealing with record cold and snow. As agriculture producers, it was a tough week and one we will remember for a long time. One focal point from that event though was the numerous amounts of livestock that were lost due to falling through frozen ponds. For some, it was not an issue, but others did suffer a pretty big hit to their herd numbers because of it.

For those that did lose cattle, I know it is on your mind to take action and implement a way to limit access to those ponds for next time. If you did not lose cattle, I still would give you that same advice. The best thing we can do is learn from these situations and correct them, so they won't happen again. I commend each of you for your work and dedication to the agriculture industry. Countless hours were spent feeding and checking livestock while also busting ice that whole week. I promise, your efforts did not go un-noticed so please, keep up the good work.

Online Private Applicator Training (PAT) for Restricted Use Pesticides

Local farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers who wish to renew an existing restricted use pesticide license or those who want to receive a first-time restricted use pesticide license, can now do so by completing the **required** PAT training **online**. For those who are up for recertification, you should have received a letter from the State Plant Board indicating when your license expires. If you have received this letter, then according to the State Plant Board records, your license is about to expire.

The fee for the online course is \$20 and will be collected through our online secure pay services. Producers taking the course must use a credit/debit card only. Keep in mind, the \$20 fee does not relate to the licensing fee that is charged by the State Plant Board. It is only for the training. The fee for licensure is \$10 for a 1-year license or \$45 for a 5-year license. These fees will be paid by you after the training and sent to the State Plant Board for licensure, not the Fulton County Extension Office. If you have any questions about this course, please contact our office at 870-895-3301.

To complete the online course, follow these steps listed below:

1. Go to: courses.uada.edu
2. Click on the Login Button to Create an Account
3. Click on "Course Categories"
4. Click on "Pesticide Application Training"
5. Click On "Private Pesticide Applicator Online Certification"
6. Pay
7. Complete the training
8. Send in Paperwork and license fees to AR Dept. Of Agriculture

Gardening from the Ground Up

Over the last few months, County Agents Brad Runsick, Cody Stroud, and myself have been working on a new video series called "Gardening from the Ground Up". This new video series aims to discuss the basics of starting a garden from scratch and maintaining it throughout the growing season. As of right now, three episodes have been uploaded but more will soon follow! To check them out, head over to our website at www.uaex.uada.edu or click here → <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/vegetables/gardening-videos.aspx> If you have any questions about gardening be sure to give our office a call at 870-895-3301.

The Back Forty News – Going Paperless

For the last fifteen plus years, "The Back Forty Newsletter" has been sent by USPS every quarter. But, with the advancement of technology and more people having ways of reaching us, I have decided to forego mailing my newsletters. Starting in the fall, I will begin emailing The Back Forty News. While this may be inconvenient to some, we ask that you swing by our office anytime you are in Salem and pick up a hard copy to take with you. You can also easily access it on our website or our Facebook page at the following links: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/counties/fulton/newsletter.aspx> or <https://www.facebook.com/UADA.Fulton> If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please contact our office at 870-895-3301 or email me at ctyler@uada.edu.

Hay Season “FAQ’s”

Q: Does smell alone determine the quality of my forage?

A: For years, producers have relied on the “sight” and “smell” test out in the field to determine the quality of their hay. All hay is likely going to smell the same when its freshly cut so this method is HIGHLY unreliable. The only true answer is to have it tested in our lab for a fee of \$18.

Q: Does putting out fertilizer help improve forage quality?

A: Some producers have a misconception that if they fertilize OR add more fertilizer to their hay fields, that it will produce higher quality hay. While fertilizer does play a role in getting your forage to its peak quality level, its main goal is improving soil health and aiding in plant growth. Adding more fertilizer than you need is not necessary and is not cost efficient, especially with higher fertilizer cost. Always make sure to fertilize per soil test recommendations.

Q: When is the best time to cut my hay?

A: Knowing the different growth stages of forages can help determine when it’s at its peak value. Forage maturity at harvest has greater influence on hay quality than any other single factor. Forages that become too mature before cutting have high concentrations of fiber that result in poor digestibility. Mature, high-fiber forages have lower CP and TDN levels than forages cut at less mature stages of growth. Some indicators of desirable forage maturity include:

- 1) Absence of seed heads and seed stems (mature blooms for legume hay)
- 2) Small or fine stems
- 3) High percentage of leaf that is green compared to dead
- 4) High leaf-to-stem ratio

Q: Why should I get my hay tested?

A: The first step in developing a hay feeding program is to test all hay (custom or purchased) for nutrient value. If producers try to estimate the nutritive value of their hay by look and smell, it will likely lead to errors in feeding. In the end, this results in reduced animal performance, costly errors in under- or overfeeding, and loss of potential profit.

Q: How do I get my hay tested and what will it tell me?

A: County agents will come to your hay field or barn and conduct the hay test with a hay probe. Hay probes are used because they provide more accurate results versus a grab sample of hay. The test results will provide information on (1) moisture or dry matter (DM) content, (2) crude protein (CP) and (3) analysis of structural plant fiber that may be reported as crude fiber, acid detergent fiber (ADF) or neutral detergent fiber (NDF). Your county agent can then assist you to determine if any supplemental feed sources will be necessary during the winter feeding period.

Spring Tips for Beef Cattle Herds

UADA – Animal Science Monthly Beef Cattle Tips

Fall born calves are often weaned during this time of year and its a good practice to give initial vaccinations 2-4 weeks before weaning. Booster vaccinations should also occur at weaning time.

- Fence line weaning is an option that can result in less weaning feed cost. Studies have demonstrated improved weight gain and health with fence line weaning; however, growth performance over traditional weaning methods were not observed in some studies suggesting weaning environment may be critical to weaning performance.

- Implant feeder cattle that will be retained for at least 45 days. (Fact Sheet 3019) Also provide a medicated feed additive such as Bovatec, Gainpro, or Rumensin to improve weight gains. (Fact Sheet 3012)

- Fly populations often increase this time of year. Options for fly control include tags, sprays, and feed supplements fortified with insect growth regulators. Pour-on dewormers often help with fly control early. The insect growth regulators in feed work best with isolated herds. The economic threshold to treat cattle for flies is 150 to 200 flies per animal.

- For spring calving cows monitor body condition. The condition of cows during the breeding season affects their reproductive performance in terms of services per conception, calving interval and the percentage of open cows. General speaking as spring forage arrives, forage quality and quantity improve and so will the cow's body condition. Throughout the spring breeding season provide free-choice mineral.

- Throughout the breeding season monitor the bulls. Make sure the bulls are maintaining their body condition, are free of injury (feet and legs, eyes, etc.), or other conditions that would prevent them from seeking and breeding cows.

- Process spring born calves. Practices such as castration, dehorning, vaccination (blackleg, etc.), and implanting are cost effective.

Summer Forage Management Tips

UADA – Animal Science Monthly Beef Cattle Tips

Fertilizing Bermudagrass

- Fertilize specific pastures when night-time temperatures reach 60°F for a week.
- Fertilize after each hay or grazing harvest as needed depending on seasonal production goals.
- Fertilize according to soil test recommendation.

Hay Management

- Get equipment ready
- Check on gear boxes and replace oil if necessary
- Grease where necessary based on owner's manual
- Replace knives and check on rollers in mower/conditioner equipment
- Replace broken fingers on rakes and tedders
- Check on belts in balers

Grazing Perennial Warm Season Grasses

- Start rotationally grazing pastures at green-up as rotational grazing improves forage utilization over continuous grazing
- Begin grazing at 6" - 8", terminate grazing at 3" - 4"

Establish Bermudagrass

- Plant between May 1 and June 15
- Seeding rate is 5 pounds of pure live seed per acre if drilled and 10 pounds per acre if broadcast.
- Seed can be drilled or broadcast on a conventional tilled firm seedbed or planted with a no-till drill on killed grass sod with a planting depth of 1/4 inch or less.
- For step-by-step instructions on calibrating drills or broadcast planters, refer to Fact Sheet 3111, Calibrating Drills and Broadcast Planters for Small-Seeded Forages.

Implement a summer annual/perennial weed control program

- For identification and control recommendations, refer to MP 522, Pasture Weed Control

Gardening Tips for May

- Apply at least 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch to keep soils moist and cool. Do not pile the mulch directly around the base of perennials or against the bark of trees or shrubs.
- Fertilize summer flowering shrubs/plants like crape myrtle and rose-of-Sharon.
- Do not forget to side-dress or fertilize your vegetables six to eight weeks after germination.
- Remove spring bulb foliage as it turns yellow to brown. Dig and divide over crowded bulb plantings; plant immediately or store them until this fall.
- Try "deer-resistant" annuals such as ageratum, snapdragon, wax begonia, cleome, dahlia, foxglove, blanket flower, and lobelia. Resistant perennials include yarrow, anemone, columbine, goat's beard, astilbe, Shasta daisy, coreopsis, bleeding heart, and coneflower.
- Begin pinching the old tall chrysanthemum varieties and continue through early July.
- Stake tall-growing perennials such as foxglove and true lilies to prevent them from falling.
- If peonies fail to flower, it could be they are planted too deep. Plant no more than 2 inches deep and they should receive at least 6 hours of sunlight daily.
- As the days get hotter and pansies show stress, remove and replace with summer annuals.

COVID-19

The FDA has given emergency use authorization to a third #COVID19 #vaccine. How does this single-dose vaccine compare with the two-dose vaccines already in use? Find information here: <https://bit.ly/3btuoPr>





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