

Clark County Extension Service; 1400 Fortune Drive; Winchester, KY 40391
859-744-4682; clark.ext@uky.edu; <http://clark.ca.uky.edu/>

Clark County Extension Service will close
December 24, 2025 and reopen January 5, 2026

A WORD FROM THE AGENT



Happy Holidays! This fall has flown by in the blink of an eye. It does not seem that long ago that it was August and I was talking about fall pasture management.

Now we really need to be thinking about spring pasture and soil management, and that starts with a soil sample. This is still a good time to have your soil tested because the waits at the lab are much shorter than in the spring. Plus now gives time for soil amendments to work into the soil. We are also still doing forage testing. It is amazing how much a forage sample or soil test can help. Those two tests could save you thousands of dollars or increase production by thousands of dollars. As always forage and soil testing is free at the Clark County Extension Office for Clark County residents and soils in Clark County. Don't wait and give us a call if you have any questions.

Happy Holidays and I hope you have time to visit friends and family!

Levi Berg

Clark County Extension Agent
for Agriculture and Natural Resources
levi.berg@uky.edu



UPCOMING SOON! 2026 Winter School

3 February BEEF NIGHT

5 February FARM NIGHT

10 February HORT NIGHT

12 February ALL PROPERTY OWNERS NIGHT

Clark County Extension Service
6:00 pm
~ A meal will be served each night ~

More information to come!



<https://www.facebook.com/ClarkCountyExtension>

KEEPING YOU Informed

FORAGE MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR DECEMBER

- Begin utilizing stockpiled pastures. Graze pastures with orchardgrass and clovers first. Save tall fescue pastures for late winter grazing.
- Using polywire, strip graze stockpiled pastures to improve utilization. Start at the water source and allocate enough forage to for 2-3 days. Back fencing is not necessary.
- Make plans to frost seed red and white clover onto closely grazed tall fescue pastures in February. Secure seed now since supplies of good varieties will be tight.
- Some hay can be fed as stockpiled grass is grazed to stretch grass.
- Minimize hay waste by utilizing ring feeders.

Cooperative Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.



HOW TO KEEP YOUR LIVESTOCK AND FIELDS SAFER FROM MUD

*Source: Steve Higgins, Assistant Adjunct Professor
Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering*

As every livestock owner knows, mud is more than a nuisance. It robs animals of energy, wastes feed and tears up pasture. The good news is that a few wise choices about location and surface design can turn the worst trouble spots into firm, drainable ground that holds up month after month.

Start with Placement

Heavy-use areas — feeders, gates, mineral sites and waterers — are best when set on a slight rise, not in a “bottom” or along a ditch. When you place these hubs on higher ground, you deal only with the rain that falls there, not with water flowing through from the rest of the field. That single decision cuts most of the mud before it is able to form.

Build a Layered Pad

Under any rock or gravel, separate soil from stone with felt-like, non-woven, geotextile fabric. Overlap seams by a foot or two, lay it flat, then cover with compacted dense-grade aggregate. Go easy with the first lift so you don’t tear the fabric, then make sure it is well compacted. This simple fabric-plus-rock system spreads the load from hooves and traffic, sheds water and resists rutting. When the surface loosens with use, add a thin layer of stone and compact again.

Choose the Right Surface for the Spot

Concrete earns its keep around waterers, feed bunks and scraping lanes. Give it a rough finish — rougher than a sidewalk — to protect hips and joints. Where you want gravel but need more stability, plastic paver grids (think shallow egg cartons) lock rock in place and stop sloppy areas before they begin. Budget-friendly reinforcements, like filling old tires or cinder blocks with rock, can stiffen lanes and edges. Soil-cement can work for larger pads built in warm weather; use concrete where routine scraping is expected.

Daily Habits That Pay Off

Keep hay off bare soil; once trampled into mud, it’s lost feed and a future weed patch. Scrape manure before it dissolves into sludge. Avoid driving heavy equipment across wet ground to reduce ruts that channel more water during the next rain. Give animals a firm path to and from water and feed so they don’t churn a single patch into soup. Where animals access a stream, build one armored entry or crossing rather than letting the whole bank break down.

Fixing Cow Paths

Grazing animals form contour trails (“cowtouring”) and single-file cow paths to save energy moving to water, feed and minerals. In wet weather, these routes can trough, erode, expose slick clay and become hard to traverse, especially on steeper slopes (cattle struggle above ~30%).

An all-weather path solves this by building a drainable base: excavate about eight inches, lay nonwoven geotextile, set recycled tire tread cylinders end-to-end in the trench and fill inside and around them with dense-grade aggregate. The tire tops finish at or just above grade. These paths provide firm footing year-round, cut energy costs for animals and protect fields from rutting and erosion.

Fish Habitat

By: Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Like all other animals, fish need suitable habitat for living in, raising their young and foraging for food. Most of the lakes in Kentucky were created more than 50 years ago and are starting to show their age. Natural processes like sedimentation and decay of woody structure can reduce the number of places that fish have for spawning and nursery habitat. KDFWR has active projects across the Commonwealth designed to improve, enhance and replace this habitat that has been lost due to time. This lack of habitat also creates an opportunity for anglers. The old adage "build it and they will come" applies to fish habitat as well. By building habitat structures in frequently fished areas, we can draw in fish from areas with poor habitat and make fishing a little less of a hit and miss process. Deciding where to fish on lakes can be a daunting task for first-time anglers. That is another reason KDFWR creates fish attractors and provides maps to help people find these hotspots of fish activity.

The fish habitat/attractors are made in a variety of shapes and sizes and include material from trees, rocks, logs, wooden pallets, and even commercially made plastic structures. These structures are typically dense in nature with tree limbs and shade producing cover. Rock piles and gravel beds create spawning grounds for many species and brush piles provide much needed shelter for young fishes. All of these structures also provide stable substrates for the attachment of aquatic plants that provide the basis of the food chain in lakes. In general, more habitat just means more fish.

KDFWR also collects trees for habitat with our annual Christmas tree drive. Every year after the holiday season, we collect and recycle thousands of discarded natural trees into brush piles for habitat.

All of the habitat sites that KDFWR creates are published and made available to the public via Google Maps. All of our published habitat sites can be accessed by using the Find a Place to Fish portions of our website or can be accessed with the Lakes with Fish Attractors page.

The Lakes with Fish Attractors page also has downloadable GPX files for importing into the depth finder of your boat. Most brands of depth finder will allow for the download of GPX files, but you may have to consult your owners manual. YouTube is also a good source for instructional videos on how to import and convert these files.

Once you know where the sites are, fishing them can be rewarding. The GPS locations will get you to the general vicinity, but your depth finder will be valuable in finding the exact location and depth. As far as fishing goes, weedless presentations and lures are a good option when fishing these areas to reduce snagging. Lake habitat sites will vary in depth and may include areas in the backs of creeks, large flats, small pockets, and even main lake points. Many of these sites are located away from the bank in deeper water, so fish finders will help in identifying these offshore locations. Before picking a site to fish, consider the time of year, water temperature, and fish behavior to increase your success on the water.



Deploying trees in the lake to improve fish habitat

TO FEED OR NOT TO FEED, SOYBEANS THAT IS

By: Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

The current low grain commodity prices have sparked several questions regarding feeding soybeans to beef cattle. There are several factors to consider when deciding whether to feed or sell beans to the elevator. The following will touch on a few of these items to consider when making that decision.

Let's first review the nutrient content of soybeans on a dry matter basis. In general, soybeans are used as a protein supplement as they contain approximately 40% crude protein. Soybeans also contain a significant amount of oil, near 20%, which makes them an energy supplement as well. Soybeans contain an inverted calcium to phosphorus ration which may require the diet to be supplemented with calcium. Looking at the calcium to phosphorus ratio is particularly important when feeding grain-based feedstuffs such as corn silage, wheatlage, or grain-heavy rations such as finishing diets.

Table 1. Nutrient content of whole soybeans from Dairy One Feed Composition Library (accessed 11/3/2025).

Nutrient	Value	# Samples
Crude Protein, %	39.0	2900
Crude Fat, %	21.2	1317
Starch, %	1.5	134
Calcium, %	0.26	942
Phosphorus, %	0.64	944
Nem, mcal/lb	1.25	1413
Neg, mcal/lb	0.90	1413

The oil content is the diet inclusion limiter. Excessive unsaturated oil can result in reduced forage digestibility. Research suggests that total diets containing near or greater than 6% total fat/oil can lead to reduced microbial fermentation of dietary fiber. Additionally, higher levels of dietary fat/oil reduce passage rates of feed through the gastrointestinal tract. Our forages may contain 2% which would mean soybeans would be limited to contribute an additional 3% to the total diet. For mature cows with an expected dry matter intake, the amount of soybeans fed would need to be limited to not more than 4 pounds as-fed.

To feed or not to feed is really going to be dependent upon the price one may receive at the elevator and the cost of an alternative feed. These prices can be used to calculate the cost per unit of protein from the feedstuffs. As an example, fall soybean prices are running in the \$9.80 to \$10.30 per bushel price range. If one backs out the grain hauling costs of say \$0.35 per bushel, the soybean price used for comparison may be \$9.75 per bushel accounting for the haul expense. Let's say that we can get dried distillers grains delivered to the farm at \$235 per ton with a protein content of 28% DM basis. The price per pound of protein from both feedstuffs are the same at \$0.47. Thus, if protein was the only consideration, feeding soybeans would be just as cost effective as dried distillers grains.

Soybeans contain more oil and subsequently more energy than dried distillers. To make a better comparison, we need to account for the protein and energy from feedstuffs. One way to do this is to use reference feedstuffs and valuing the protein and unit of energy based on these reference feeds. Corn is often used as the energy reference feed and either soybean meal or dried distillers grains may be used for protein. Using corn with a price of \$5.05 per bushel if bought as feed (\$180/ton) and a price of \$235 per ton for dried distillers grains, soybeans would need to be less than \$7.26 per bushel to consider feeding. Under this scenario, selling beans at the elevator and feeding corn/dried distillers grains may be more cost effective when considering a backgrounding ration.

In summary, often feeding soybean requires the beans to receive a significant discount at the elevator to be priced into diets. The oil content of the whole bean limits the amount that can be offered in the forage-based diets. If you are interested in learning more about feeding whole soybeans to beef cattle read the fact sheet ASC-245 Feeding Soybeans to Beef Cattle which can be downloaded at :

<https://publications.mgcafe.uky.edu/sites/publications.ca.uky.edu/files/ASC245.pdf>

**** Other Ways to Connect ****

- Reach out to the Clark County Extension Office (859) 744-4682 or consult with your nutritionist for more information.
- Kentucky Beef Extension specialist Jeff Lehmkuhler and his guests share general information on beef cattle production, research and other related information. <https://afs.mgcafe.uky.edu/extension/beef/beef-bits-podcast>
- University of Kentucky Beef Extension: <https://www.facebook.com/KyBeefIRM>

KCA CONVENTION 2026 & AG INDUSTRY TRADE SHOW

JANUARY 15-16 • OWENSBORO

Early Bird Registration (October 15 - November 30) \$60
Registration (After November 30) = \$85

REGISTER BEFORE DECEMBER 1 and be entered
to win one of two **\$50 CABELA'S GIFT CARDS**

For registration Information and agenda:

<https://keca.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2511COWC%2021%20%282%29.pdf>

Mail to: KCA Convention Registration
176 Pasadena Drive; Suite 4; Lexington, Kentucky 40503
Or Fax (859) 260-2060



START THE YEAR RIGHT WITH GOOD RECORD-KEEPING PRACTICES



Record-keeping is not everyone's favorite activity, but with a little time, patience and a commitment to get it done, your financial life will be more peaceful.

Record-keeping tasks don't have to be difficult. Think of it as a way to keep track of your operation that will help you make better long-term decisions. You can use a ledger book or a computer—whatever helps you maintain consistency. Software programs can help you make sense of your data.

Software has become more user-friendly over time, and while it may not make the record-keeping process fun, it could help you see the overall picture of your operation. Some programs track purchases and how you use each item on a particular enterprise or field. You'll be able to keep track of repair and maintenance records for

specific farm equipment and produce balance sheets, income statements and cash flow budgets.

For many livestock operations, a good time to start keeping records is when your veterinarian comes to check your animals. Vets usually charge per head, so that data can help you develop a list of animals that need attention. You can use the same data to develop health histories of your animals, which will lead to more informed exams and diagnoses in the future.

Make record-keeping a team effort for your family. Sit down and work on the records and budget together. Perhaps one person can read the information while another person types it into the software program or writes it in the ledger book. You won't become overwhelmed if you do a little bit each day and don't save it all up for the end of the year. Year-end procedures also can feel more satisfying if you've done the work throughout the year. You can generate year-end reports with a few simple clicks and not have to sort through stacks of bills lying around the home or office.

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Agricultural Economics has several tools online that could help with budgeting and decision-making. Visit: <https://agecon.mgcafe.uky.edu/extension/publications-budgets-decision-aids> to see what is available.

For more information about record-keeping and a variety of other farm management topics, contact the Clark County Cooperative Extension Service at 859-744-4682.

Sources: Steve Isaacs, Extension Agricultural Economist

UK Beef Management Webinar Series

Registration is necessary, however, if you received this email directly from Darrh Bullock then you are already registered. If you received this from another source, or have not registered previously, then please send an email to dbullock@uky.edu with Beef Webinar in the subject line and your name and county in the message. You will receive the direct link with a password the morning of each meeting. This invitation will directly link you to the site and you will be asked for the password which can be found just below the link. Each session will be recorded and posted for later viewing. All meeting times are 8:00pm ET/7:00pm CT. **Note: Meeting days have changed to the second THURSDAY of each month!!!**



DECEMBER 11, 2025

Shooting the Bull: Answering all your Beef Related Questions!
Updates and Roundtable discussion with UK Specialists



JANUARY 8, 2026

Making the Most of the Good Years: Profits, Reinvestment, and Tax Management in Beef Cattle Operations
Jonathan Shepherd, Agricultural Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky



FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Impact of Bull Nutrition During Development on Semen Quality
Pedro Fontes, Associate Professor, University of Georgia



MARCH 12, 2026

Bull Selection Practices in Kentucky: What are we Doing Right and What Could we Improve!
Darrh Bullock, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

For additional information please contact:

Levi Berg, Clark Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension.

RECIPE

Venison Steak

Servings: 8 Serving Size: 4 ounces

Source: Adapted from Venison Recipe Collection

Compiled by Becky Nash

Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences

Ingredients:

2 pounds round venison steak	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup flour	4 ounces fresh mushrooms, if desired
¾ teaspoon salt	3 carrots, diced
1 teaspoon pepper	1 small onion, sliced
½ teaspoon garlic powder	1 cup low-sodium beef broth

Directions:

Cut steak into eight 4-ounce servings. Mix flour, salt, pepper, and garlic powder and coat steak with flour mixture. Brown in oil on each side. Layer steak in slow cooker. Add mushrooms, carrots, and onion. Pour beef broth over steak. Cover and cook on low 8 to 10 hours.

Tip:

Rabbit or squirrel can be substituted for venison.



Nutrition facts per serving: 220 calories; 7g total fat; 1.5g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 95mg cholesterol; 310mg sodium; 11g carbohydrate; 2g fiber; 3g sugars; 28g protein; 20% Daily Value of Vitamin D; 2% Daily Value of Calcium; 20% Daily Value of Iron; 10% Daily value of Potassium