

# "HAVE YOU HERD"

KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



## December issue of the Owen County Agriculture & Natural Resource Newsletter

How is December already here? 2023 has flown by! I hope each of you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! This fall has been busy, a few weeks ago Eastern Kentucky University's Beef Production Class and Farm Credit Mid-America Grow customers toured several farms here in Owen County.



The Agriculture Commissioner, Dr. Ryan Quarles, appointed me and several others to serve on the Kentucky Department of Agriculture first advisory council for its Raising Hope mental health program. This program helps give farmers and other rural Kentuckians easier access to resources. "We've always known that there had been a mental health crisis across rural Kentucky," "But after COVID-19, we realized that this was a nationwide problem that not just affected the farming community, but really our society as a whole." Commissioner Dr. Quarles. This advisory council will help determine the direction for the Raising Hope Initiative as it continues its mission of identifying and addressing the unique mental and physical health challenges affecting the state's rural communities. I look forward to representing you all in this capacity.

Looking back at this past year, we have hosted over 30 educational programs reaching over 368 producers spanning over 5 states. A family drove 8hrs from Georgia to attend our Cattle AI program! We've promoted over 130 education opportunities across our region and state. I'm so thankful for our partnership with United Producers Inc. Owenton livestock market, together, Owenton has become a regional education and market hub for many producers. Comparing several years, I think we are starting to see producers getting a premium for the investments they've made to better themselves and improve their operations.

If you received CAIP funds this year, don't forget Friday, December 8th is the deadline to turn your receipts in!

Kendal Bowman

An equal opportunity organization

## OWEN COUNTY

How can we serve you?

Take a ten-minute survey to help us develop programs addressing needs in our community.

[go.uky.edu/serveKY](http://go.uky.edu/serveKY)

KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Merry CHRISTMAS

We will be closed Dec 23-Jan 1st





The Berry Center Farm & Forest Institute  
 111 South Main Street | PO Box 582  
 New Castle, KY 40050  
 502.845.9200

## Chainsaw Skills Training Course: Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Directional Felling

This intensive two-day training is appropriate for any woodland owner or farm worker operating a power chainsaw. The course introduces basic chainsaw maintenance, saw chain sharpening, personal protective equipment, professional tree felling techniques, limbing, and bucking trees to length. *\*Limit 4 participants per workshop.*

Cost: \$75

Format: Each day, this training begins and ends in the shop and practice area where key discussion topics are covered; the practical portion of the course takes place in the woods.

JAN 13-14

FEB 3-4

MAR 2-3  
 Women's  
 Only

MAR 23-24



## Chainsaw Skills Training Course: Advanced Tree Felling

This intensive two-day training is appropriate for farm woodland owners and farm workers interested in advancing their power chainsaw use to include felling difficult trees, bucking stems to maximize value, extraction of logs with a farm tractor and forestry winch, and removal of storm damaged-and-downed trees. *\*Limit 4 participants per workshop.*

Prerequisite: completion of the Introductory workshop or permission of the instructor.

Cost: \$75

Format: Each day, this training begins and ends in the shop and practice area where key discussion topics are covered; the practical portion of the course takes place in the woods.



FEB 17-18



The Berry Center Farm & Forest Institute  
 111 South Main Street | PO Box 582  
 New Castle, KY 40050  
 502.845.9200

Organic Association of Kentucky

# ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE

Advancing Organics In Kentucky:  
 Adopting Practices, Increasing Resilience and Strengthening Systems

**JANUARY 25-27, 2024 | Frankfort, KY**



**Friday Farmer Fundamentals**  
Every 3rd Friday Night  
Except July & January

# Bale Grazing as A Winter Feeding Alternative

**Dec. 15th**

**5:30-6:25pm (Before Special Cow sale)**

United



**Producers, Inc.**  
86 Bramblett Ln  
Owenton, KY 40359  
502-484-5703



**Brunch & Learn**  
Every 3rd Wednesday Morning  
Except July & January

# Basic Equipment For A Cow-calf Operation

**Dec. 20th**

**8:30-9:25 (before the weekly sale)**

United

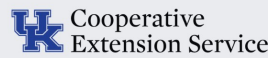
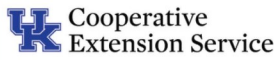


**Producers, Inc.**  
86 Bramblett Ln  
Owenton, KY 40359  
502-484-5703





# BEGINNING FARMER SERIES



*I bought a farm now what . . .*

Financial Planning, Agriculture Funding Sources,  
What Extension Offers  
December 4, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m. Trimble County Extension Service

Production Options, Land Uses, Layout  
December 11, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m. Henry County Extension Service

Business Plans  
December 18, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m. Trimble County Extension Service

The Beginning Farmer Series is a set of educational sessions designed for individuals interested in farming but with limited experience or knowledge in the field.

Please rsvp to (502) 255-7188



# Caring for Senior Horses

Presented by Dr Bob Coleman  
UK Extension Equine Specialist

**December 14, 2023**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Trimble County Extension Service



Please call  
(502) 255-7188  
to RSVP by  
12/12

# RATION BUILDING CRASH COURSE

PRESENTED BY JEFF LEHMKUHLER, UK BEEF NUTRITIONIST



**January 25th, 6:00pm**  
**Henry County Extension Office**

## Program Overview

- **FREE feed testing is provided through January 11th** as a class participant
- **Ration building basics**
- **Build your own custom ration**

**Meal provided. Must RSVP to (502) 845-2811 or scan the QR code.**



# FIELD TO FREEZER

In December and January The Carroll County Extension Service is hosting a program with Dr. VanValin who will be focusing on feeding and finishing your steers, as well as Dr. Rentfrow who will be discussing the slaughtering process.

**DEC. 16**  
**MANAGEMENT OF FINISHING CATTLE**  
CARROLL CO. EXTENSION OFFICE  
6:00 PM

**JAN. 8**  
**FEEDING CATTLE TO FINISH**  
CARROLL CO. EXTENSION OFFICE  
6:00 PM

**JAN. 13**  
**TRACKSIDE BUTCHER SHOPPE**  
123 COMMERCE PKWY,  
CAMPBELLSBURG, KY 40011  
9:00 AM

RSVP to the Carroll County Extension Office by December 15  
**502-732-7030**



THE MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ORGANIZATION WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE RESEARCH, EDUCATION INFORMATION AND OTHER SERVICES ONLY TO INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT FUNCTION WITHOUT REGARD TO ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL STATUS AND WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, ETHNIC ORIGIN, NATIONAL ORIGIN, CREED, RELIGION, POLITICAL BELIEF, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER EXPRESSION, PREGNANCY, MARITAL STATUS, GENETIC INFORMATION, AGE, VETERAN STATUS, PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY OR REPRISAL OR RETALIATION FOR PRIOR CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITY.



**State Convention & Trade Show**  
**January 11-12th**  
**Central Bank Center - Lexington, KY**

**January 25th 6:30pm**  
**Owen Co Extension Office**





**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 15**  
**REGISTRATION FEE: \$80**

**Mondays-weekly, 5:30-9 p.m. at  
 local Extension Offices**



# Louisville Area Master Cattleman Program

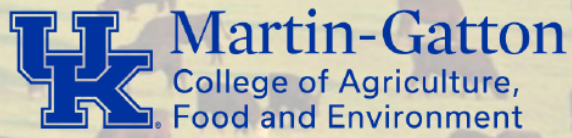
January 29	Marketing	Shelby County Extension
February 5	Facilities	Trimble County Extension
February 12	Nutrition	Henry County Extension
February 18	Reproduction/ Record Keeping	Henry County Extension
February 26	Health	Shelby County Extension
March 4	Genetics	Trimble County Extension

\*Participants will also be required to complete BQCA training and to complete one additional session related to forages. The forage requirement can be met by attending a forages class we will offer or one of the yearly grazing schools offered by UK. More info will be shared with those who register.

- ◆ Registration fee of \$80 includes ten meals and supplemental course materials
- ◆ Registration is due in advance or at the first session. Make checks payable to *Trimble County Extension*
- ◆ Meals begin at 5:30 pm and programs promptly at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Space is limited. Contact your local extension agent to register before January 15th.

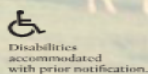
For more information or to register, contact one of the hosting agents:

Henry County	Megan McCoun	845-2811
Shelby County	Corinne Belton	633-4593
Trimble County	Regina Utz	255-7188



**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**  
 Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.  
 University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating Institutions. KY 40106





# Kentucky agriculture navigating 2024 economic headwinds and opportunities

After achieving remarkable success the previous two years, Kentucky's agricultural economy will likely experience a modest decline in 2023 and some sectors will face continued challenges into 2024.

The global response to price incentives, stemming from tight global stocks and trade opportunities, has significantly impacted the state's agricultural sector.

According to University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment economists, researchers and extension specialists, this anticipated downturn is primarily attributed to price declines for several key farm commodities.

"Several challenges confront Kentucky agriculture," said UK Department of Agricultural Economics professor Will Snell.

"Increased global production is leading to significant price drops for several important Kentucky commodities like corn, soybeans, wheat and dairy. Moreover, the global economic slowdown is diminishing the demand for agricultural products. Political tensions and ongoing conflicts abroad are also disrupting key trade routes.

"Higher interest rates and labor costs are more than offsetting lower feed and fertilizer expenses. Land values are continuing to be relatively strong, despite shrinking farm profit margins and climbing interest rates. However, signs indicate that land price growth is slowing down, but overall, the balance sheet for agriculture remains favorable heading into 2024."



## **Kentucky outlook**

Kentucky's agricultural cash receipts are expected to decrease from a record high \$8.3 billion in 2022 to \$8.1 billion in 2023. This drop stems mainly from lower earnings in corn, soybeans, dairy and tobacco, despite notable gains in cattle and wheat receipts. Poultry remains the top commodity for cash receipts, with cattle prices seeing a significant rise.

Kentucky's agricultural exports, traditionally a strong economic contributor, are likely to decline in 2023. Factors such as the strengthening United States dollar and a weaker global economy contribute to this downturn. This reduction in exports, combined with increased agricultural imports, might result in an unusual trade deficit for U.S agriculture, diverging from its history of significant trade surpluses.

Notably, the state's cattle markets have shown resilience. Even though the markets have cooled off this fall, Kentucky's calves and feeders are fetching much higher prices compared to 2022. This is a positive sign for local producers, reflecting a healthy demand for quality livestock.

However, this optimism is tempered by looming challenges. Hay supply and costs are becoming increasingly concerning for cow-calf operations as winter approaches. The rising costs and dwindling hay availability could strain resources, impacting overall productivity and profitability.

## **National and International Impact**

In a broader context, the national cattle industry does not appear to be expanding. The projection is for a smaller cow herd size in 2024 and likely 2025, a trend that could continue to support higher prices due to reduced supply.

"From a longer-term perspective, the supply fundamentals in the cattle market are very encouraging," said extension specialist Kenny Burdine. "There is no indication that cowherd expansion has begun, so calf crops will continue to get smaller until that happens. This will continue to support calf prices in 2024, and likely beyond."

*Continued on next page*



The poultry sector faces its own set of challenges. The recent closure of Tyson's plant in Corydon, Indiana, has significantly impacted Kentucky growers, disrupting the supply chain and possibly affecting income streams. Additionally, the national rise in Avian Influenza cases is a concern, requiring vigilance to protect poultry stock's health and industry stability.

Equine sales have slightly declined from 2022 but have largely retained gains achieved post-COVID. This equine market stability is encouraging, particularly as Kentucky observes a slight increase in mares bred, countering the national trend.

An excess supply of corn has led to a planting strategy shift, with some producers considering more soybean cultivation due to corn's excess supply and price decline. In contrast, soybeans have maintained steadier prices, bolstered by market bullishness and expansion in U.S. crush capacities. The wheat market is experiencing notable impulsiveness, significantly impacted by Russia and Ukraine, causing price fluctuations and introducing market uncertainties.

"I believe we are going to see some volatility," said Grant Gardner, grains economics assistant extension professor. "A lot of this will be caused by international production and conflicts as well as other countries increasing production."

Brazil's recent rise as a major agricultural player is surpassing the U.S. in corn exports, reshaping global trade dynamics. This particularly affects U.S. market shares and relationships with key importers like China. Additionally, Ukraine's conflict has also introduced risks in transporting goods from the Black Sea region, affecting global supply chains.

### **Assessing Kentucky's current and future financial performance**

Kentucky's farm cash receipts have been relatively high in recent years. The key to financial survival is net farm income (NFI) which, in addition to cash receipts, considers expenses as well as government payments. NFI data is pulled from operations participating in the Kentucky Farm Business Management Program (KFBM), which assists member farms with their financial performance. This income directly influences the financial well-being of the farm and family involved.

"The year 2021 marked a peak in NFI for KFBM farms, the highest ever recorded, driven by robust gross income," said Jerry Pierce, KFBM program coordinator. "However, in 2022, NFI from KFBM farms dropped to levels comparable to 2020. The decline was primarily due to a 21% increase in total expenses, which significantly eroded the net income per acre by approximately \$185. This increase in expenses was attributed to high costs of inputs like fertilizer, chemicals and seeds and inflated prepaid expenses from the previous year."

Government payments, which played a crucial role in farm recovery since 2017, dropped substantially in 2022. This change, coupled with projected lower gross income and higher total costs for the current year, anticipates a further decline in NFI.

"Despite the 2022 NFI drop, the working capital ratio did not decline proportionally, indicating prudent financial management by farmers, who maintained sufficient current assets within their businesses," Pierce said.

### **What does the future hold for farmers and investors?**

Looking ahead, challenges loom with expected decreases in profitability. Farms will likely face a tight balance between loan repayments, operational expenses, family living costs and maintaining a healthy balance sheet. This is especially true for farms below the average income. Covering these obligations in the short term could be strenuous, although improved working capital ratios indicate better preparedness than previous years.

A key component in Kentucky's specialty-crop sales is direct markets like on-farm retail, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farmers' markets.



“While these outlets have maintained strong sales despite higher prices and inflation, the sector faces significant challenges,” said Tim Woods, Center for Crop Diversification extension professor. “High input costs, particularly for fertilizers and fuel, have only marginally receded from their peaks in 2022. Labor costs constitute 30% to 40% of total costs in vegetable production and have sharply increased, significantly impacting profitability and contributing to higher consumer prices.”

CSAs have seen growth in recent years and rising costs have led to a 15-20% increase in seasonal share prices, causing concern about customer retention and affordability. Despite these challenges, certain segments like garden centers and landscaping materials have unexpectedly flourished, indicating a diverse and adaptive agricultural economy.

The controlled environment greenhouse and vertical farming industry is a specialty crop sector that could roll with the punches.

“Despite generating \$22 million in sales, the high-tech indoor greenhouse company AppHarvest faced financial struggles, leading to bankruptcy and a subsequent sale,” Woods said. “This case exemplifies the high-risk, high-reward nature of innovative agricultural ventures like vertical farming and controlled environment systems. However, these ventures will still attract significant investment despite the challenges in achieving profitability as technology continues to introduce intensive agriculture opportunities.”

In 2023, the forestry sector's economic contribution remained around \$13 billion, despite noticeable disparities in its sub-sectors' performance. The lumber market, a key driver for timber and log prices, saw a slump in 2022, with white and red oak prices plummeting by 45% and 53%, respectively. Although 2023 brought some recovery, these oaks regained only 17% and 22% of their value. Other species showed modest gains but did not fully recover from the previous year's losses, except for hard and soft maples which declined by over 20%.

“The overall timber market has been weak, particularly for average-quality timber, with low values for lumber, ties and pulpwood,” said Jeffrey Stringer, Forestry and Natural Resources professor and chair. “An exception is white oak stave log prices, which have stayed high due to strong demand, supporting a seller’s market throughout 2023.”

The forestry sector also faces challenges like labor shortages and the closure of three smaller mills. Many mills are maintaining low log inventories, indicating concerns over ongoing market softness and leading to reduced demand and prices for many species. This caution is partly due to decreased housing starts.

However, there's optimism for a supply-demand balance in 2024, which is essential for a rebound in overall timber pricing. The notable exception is white oak stave logs, where demand is expected to sustain high prices into 2024.

The tobacco sector, a historical key component of Kentucky's agriculture, had another tough year in 2023. Poor growing and curing conditions have affected the crop's quantity and quality. Nonetheless, global market conditions are offering increased production opportunities for burley tobacco, while shifting consumer demand patterns are leading to significant contract cuts for dark tobacco.

Despite continued and emerging economic, political and weather challenges, current Kentucky farm financial health remains generally strong.

“While Kentucky farmers have enjoyed lower costs for fertilizer and feed, increased interest and labor expenses have raised overall input costs,” summarized UK Plant and Soil Science professor and Grain and Forage Center for Excellence director Chad Lee. “Despite these challenges, the state's net farm income is expected to stay relatively high compared to the previous five years, though it will likely drop from record highs.”

For regular industry updates and news from the UK Department of Agricultural Economics, visit <https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/econ-policy-updates>.

*Writer: Jordan Strickler*





# 2024 KENTUCKY FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONFERENCE

Jan. 3rd-4th, 2024

Pre-conference events Jan. 2nd

Sloan Convention Center  
Bowling Green, Kentucky



## On-Farm Composting Workshop

### Climate Smart Strategies For Soil Health, Sustainability, and Savings on Inputs

Join us to learn best practices for composting and composting certifications. Farmers, ranchers, and others interested will learn about marketing, compost quality, and more!



**WHEN:** December 6th - 8th

**WHERE:** Kentucky State University Research Farm and  
Cooperative Extension Building - Main Campus



Registration is \$10



<https://tinyurl.com/compost-workshop>



# North American Honey Bee Expo

Jan 4-6th KY Expo Center Louisville KY

*Trade Show and many different  
speakers visit [www.nahbexpo.com](http://www.nahbexpo.com) for  
tickets and more information*





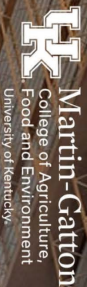
# MANAGING CATTLE IN CONFINEMENT CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 14, 2023  
HARDIN COUNTY  
EXTENSION OFFICE

2:30 ET - 8:30ET



For any questions email  
maggie.ginn@uky.edu



## TOPICS

- Moving to Confinement: Challenges & Opportunities
  - Managing Nutrient Resources
  - Confinement Facility Options and Considerations
  - Economic Considerations for Confinement Facilities
  - Producer Panel
- REGISTER NOW:**
- Register via the QR code
  - Early registration until December 6. \$15
  - Late registration \$20
  - Registration includes Dinner



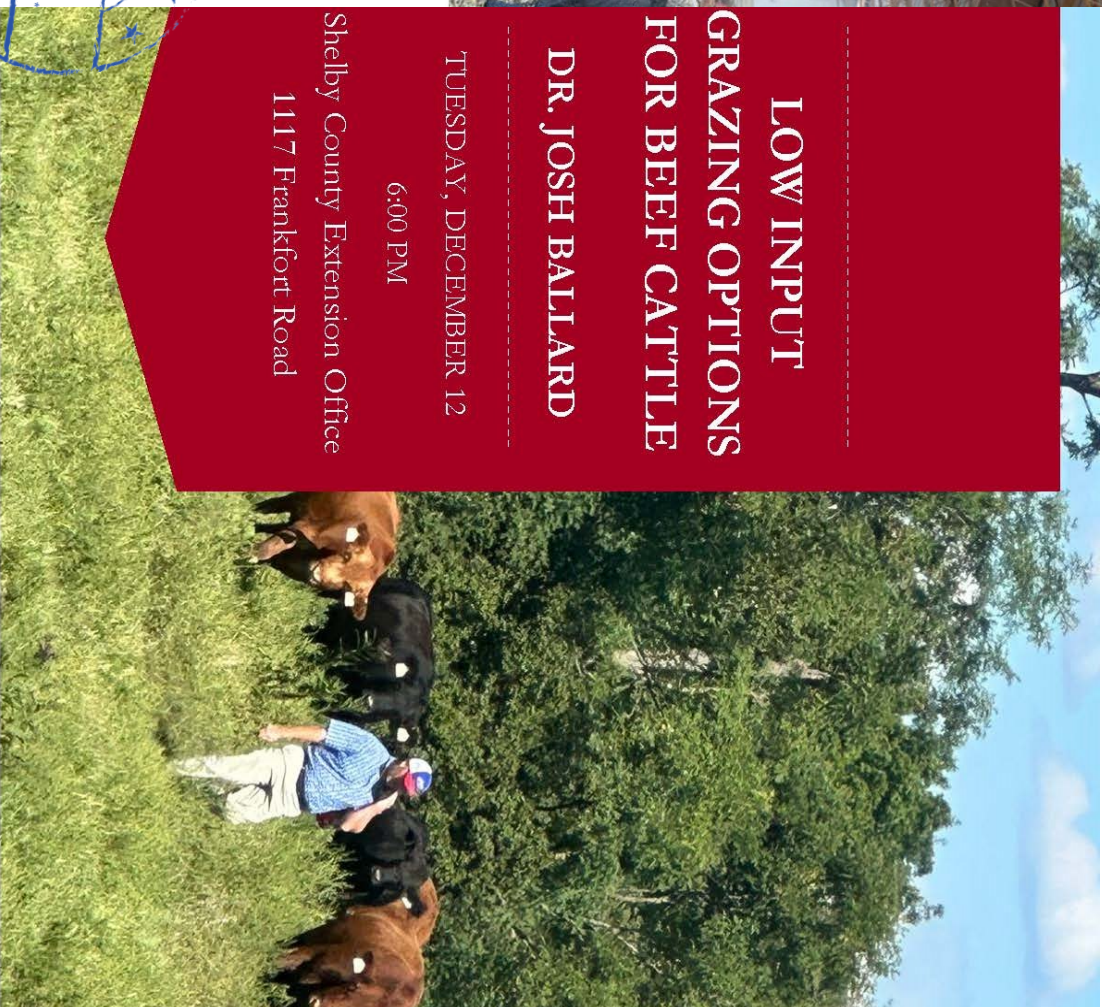
## LOW INPUT GRAZING OPTIONS FOR BEEF CATTLE

DR. JOSH BALLARD

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

6:00 PM

Shelby County Extension Office  
1117 Frankfort Road



Join us on Tuesday, December 12 at the Extension Office to learn the benefits and methodology of rotational grazing. Dr. Ballard will discuss how rotational grazing works in their cow/calf and grass-finished beef cattle operation, including results of an on-going bale grazing study being conducted on one of their farms.

Call 633-4593 to reserve your space.





Topics include:  
Low Input Management  
Rotational Grazing  
Strip Grazing  
Bale Grazing  
Grazing Plans for Finishing  
Beef Cattle

Speaker:  
Dr. Josh Ballard  
Co-Owner Bluegrass Beef and  
Veterinarian



# DECEMBER 2023

Old Farmer's Almanac Best Days of December 2023  
 Purchase animals: 26-28  
 Breed animals: 9, 10  
 Wean animals: 6, 11  
 Castrate animals: 16, 17  
 Slaughter livestock: 9, 10

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 heart	2 heart
3 heart	4 belly	5 belly	6 reins On-Farm Composting Workshop KSU Research Farm & Cooperative Extension Building-Main Campus	7 reins	8 reins	9 secrets
10 secrets	11 Production Options, Land Uses, Layout Henry County Extension Office 6 PM *MUST RSVP 502-255-7188	12 Low Input Grazing Options for Beef Cattle Shelby County Extension Office 6 PM	13 knees	14 Managing Cattle in Confinement Conference Hardin County Extension Office 2:30 ET-8:30 ET Caring for Senior Horses Trimble County Extension 6:30 PM	15 FFF: Bale Grazing as A Winter Feeding Alternative UPI 5:30 PM	16 legs
17 legs	18 Management of Finishing Cattle Carroll County Extension 6PM Business Plans Trimble County Extension 6 PM *MUST RSVP 502-255-7188	19 thighs	20 head Brunch & Learn: Basic Equipment for a Cow-Calf Operation UPI 8:30 AM	21 head	22 knees	23 legs
24 arms	25 arms WIPASS CHRISTMAS 	26 breast <b>CLOSED</b>	27 breast <b>CLOSED</b>	28 breast <b>CLOSED</b>	29 heart <b>CLOSED</b>	30 neck <b>CLOSED</b>
31 belly	1 belly <b>CLOSED</b> 	2 belly	3 reins 2024 KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference Sloan Convention Center Bowling Green, KY	4 reins	5 secrets North American Honey Bee Expo Expo Center Louisville, KY	6 secrets

