

Livestock shows cancel amid COVID-19

Summer is approaching and that signals all 4-H and FFA members across the commonwealth to finalize their plans for their county fair.

The county fair is the first stop for livestock presenters to showcase months of hard work and preparation, but those plans are already being affected by cancelations due to COVID-19.

"When our county fair got cancelled, we were all shocked. I guess I never thought the virus would affect this much," said Paige Dupin, Breckinridge County FFA member.

The decision to cancel or modify a county fair is made on the local level.

"County fair boards across our state are completely volunteer driven and they do it so they can serve their community," said Chris Caudill, director of the shows and fairs division with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. "The shows and fairs division is willing to help accommodate and financially support any county fair, if guidelines and local officials allow the event to happen."

Current guidelines for social distancing set by Gov. Andy Beshear restrict public gatherings and have already impacted fair dates set early in the summer months.

"Our youth are the most important – they are the next generation and the future – but we must keep our main goal during this time to remain true, keeping people

SEE **COUNTY**, PAGE 3



USDA webinar tells producers to be ready

The biggest take-away from a Zoom webinar hosted by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service on May 14 regarding the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program is prepare now before the application window opens.

Sonia Jiminez, a 30-year USDA employee who oversees the Specialty Crops Programs, said CFAP will provide direct support to farmers, ranchers, and producers who have experienced financial disruptions in the market supply chain, either by lost demand or by short-term oversupply. Operations of all sizes are eligible if other criteria are met. These criteria will be announced when the application process begins.

Bill Beam, Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs at the USDA, spoke from his corn, soybean, and wheat farm west of Philadelphia, PA. The first step in applying is to prepare the following forms, which are available at www.farmers.gov/CFAP: CCC-901, CCC-941, CCC-942, AD-1026, AD-2047, and SF-3881.

It is crucial to call your local Farm Service Agency office and make a phone appointment to begin the application.

FSA staff will help with the required forms. Farmers with

FSA accounts may have some of the forms already on file.

Jiminez said producers of the following commodities are eligible: crops, livestock, dairy, and specialty crops.

If a farmer has received assistance from the Small Business Administration through the Payroll Protection Program and/or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, he or she is also eligible for the CFAP, Beam said.

Neither Jiminez or Beam was not able to discuss in detail what the eligibility criterion are nor state the date that the application process starts.

Webinar attendees sent in questions that were answered and posted on www.farmers.com/CFAP. The webinar was recorded and is posted there as well.

Being prepared ahead of the application date by filling out the applications is a sound strategy given that every program of government assistance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic has run out of money before the needs of all eligible applicants have been met.

By Lynn Pruett
Field Reporter

UK entomologist offers information about ‘murder hornet’



LEXINGTON – The first known appearances of the Asian giant hornet, also known as the “murder hornet,” has many Americans concerned. A University of Kentucky entomologist is offering some information to educate Kentuckians about the worrisome insect.

As its name would suggest, the hornet is a native of Asia but was recently found in Washington state and British Columbia, Canada. Due to its size and the power of its venom, it is the most dangerous hornet in the world. Honeybees are their most common prey but their stings can be dangerous and even lethal to humans who are allergic to other types of bee and wasp stings.

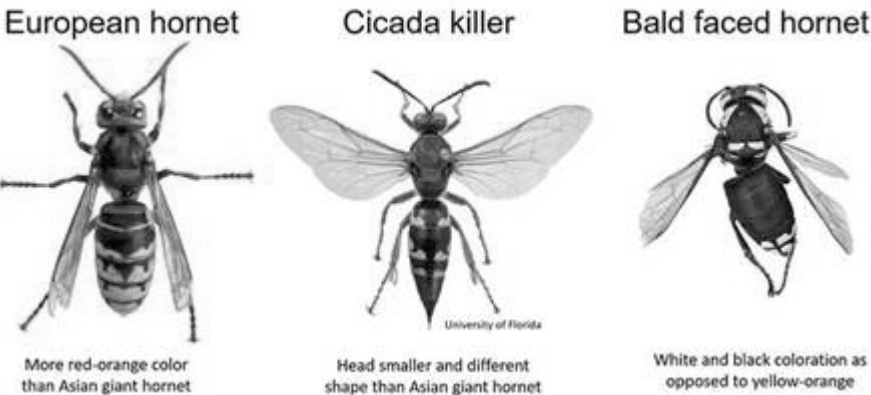
“It is unlikely the insect is in Kentucky,” said Jonathan Larson, UK entomologist in the College of Agriculture,

Food and Environment. “So far, there have been no findings in North America outside of the Pacific Northwest, but we do have some similar looking insects in Kentucky that could cause people to think they have seen one.”

Asian giant hornets are 1.5 to 2 inches long. They have black and yellow-orange stripes and a large orange or yellow head with prominent eyes. They form large colonies on the ground. Common insects in Kentucky that are similar in size to the hornet include the European hornet, cicada killer and bald-faced hornet. However, Larson said these insects have distinct features that can help Kentuckians differentiate them from the Asian giant hornet.

“The European hornet is more of a red-orange color, and the cicada killer will have a smaller head and different shape than the Asian giant hornet,” he said. “Bald-faced hornets are black and white instead of yellow-orange.”

While it is unlikely the hornet is in Kentucky, UK entomologists encourage anyone who has a specimen that they



think might be the Asian giant hornet to submit pictures through a direct message on the Kentucky Bugs Facebook page or email pictures to jonathan.larson@uky.edu. Pictures should include top and side views of the insect and a size comparison to help the entomolo-

gists positively identify the insect. Officials in the Pacific Northwest are working to eradicate the Asian giant hornet from the area.

By Katie Pratt
University of Kentucky

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Slaughter Bulls: Y.G. 1-2 1360-2680# 92.00-97.00, H.Dr. 1695-2155# 98.00-108.00, L.Dr. 1210-1370# 75.00-87.00.

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County fairs cancel, postpone due to COVID-19

FROM PAGE 1

healthy and alive," said Caudill.

KDA officials are taking their decision-making week by week to see what guidelines are being set each week to decide on upcoming events. KDA recognizes that many exhibitors are missing some of their favorite shows but Caudill shares a piece of advice, “Do not be discouraged, be happy and proud that you have come this far, that in itself is the most important factor. In this type of situation, pray about this and know that the opportunity will happen and you will have the chance to show. Patience is a big key factor.”

ANIMALS PREPARED FOR SUMMER SHOWS

While it may be a scheduling asset, moving the county fair to the fall is not necessarily the best solution for livestock participants.

Exhibitors are concerned about the delay because their livestock are nutritionally conditioned for the summer, not the fall.

Dupin said she believes the Breckinridge County shows will be held in the fall.

“This will affect our set of animals we plan to show tremendously because we chose our animals for summer shows, rather than a fall show,” said Dupin.

County fairs for youth involved with agriculture means more than escorting an animal in the show ring. Livestock participants work from dawn until dusk to make sure their stock is healthy and properly conditioned; it is an event they prepare for physically and mentally.

“My county fair has always reminded me to not forget where I came from and allows me to be surrounded by the people I love and that support me continuously,” said Sayde Lowe of Calloway County 4-H. “I will never forget that first feeling of walking into the show ring at my county fair when I felt like I owned the place and knew I was going to have a peace in my mind that my hard work was going to be rewarded.”

Kasey Johnson, a senior Mason County FFA member who is missing out on many events, said, "It honestly is kind of disappointing to be looking forward to our schedule for the show season and there's not a single one before mid June. We might be living from the road if they all hold true because we just want to be able to show."

As many agricultural families do the same, Johnson says livestock shows are his family's vacation.

“If they cancelled our local fair, it would be pretty disheartening for me as that’s the first place I ever walked into a show ring when I was four years old and this year would be my last year,” he said. “I have never missed a Germantown Fair. My parents both showed in the same ring when they showed livestock; this is a family tradition to go to the fair.”

During such a negative time, Johnson remains positive.

"The world will still keep on spinning whether we're happy or not, so it's best to just roll with the punches. I feel for the families who don't have the capacity to raise their own and potentially in a financial burden. I can't imagine what that feels like."

Kentucky Fairs and Horse Shows Association has created a website to list all cancellations or dates that

have been postpone. Visit kafs.net/p/fairs-and-shows/2020-cancelled—fair—horse-shows.

By Abigal Smoot
Field Reporter



File photo

Although 4-H and FFA members are preparing their livestock for county shows, many won't be able to compete due to cancellations because of the corona virus pandemic.

The logo for Safety Zone Calf Catchers is enclosed in a rectangular frame with a black and white diagonal striped border. At the top, the words "SAFETY ZONE" are written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below this, the words "CALF CATCHERS" are written in a smaller, black sans-serif font, with wide letter spacing. Underneath the text, there is a stylized illustration of a person in a cowboy hat and boots, riding a horse and holding a lasso. The bottom portion of the logo features the text "The Cattlemen's Friend" in a large, elegant script font, followed by "Harry Rogers" in a bold, italicized serif font. At the very bottom, the contact information "3460 Old Franklin Rd. • Scottsville, KY 42164" and "270-622-9337 • amosuh60a@nctc.com" is displayed in a black serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a small Facebook logo with the text "FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK" and the URL "facebook.com/amosuh60a".

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In search of encouraging words



ONE VOICE

Sharon Burton

I think our hardest conversations lately, however, have been with our farmer friends.

I have suggested to my general manager that someone else may need to write columns in my place for awhile. Right now, people need someone upbeat who offers words of encouragement and hope.

I don't seem to be that person. While I am doing okay, my heart is breaking for people around me. A nursing home in our small community has been a hotbed for COVID-19 and 14 people have died as a result. As a local newspaper publisher, I have spoken with family members who have lost loved ones, and I have heard first-hand about their suffering and loss.

Our Kentucky business owners have been helped a lot by the Payroll Protection Program and the ability for self-employed people to draw unemployment, but these are scary times for everyone. As we work with those business owners to help them get their message out, we also hear about their fears and concerns about the future.

I think our hardest conversations lately, however, have been with our farmer friends.

Our farmers are already reeling from some bad years, and now markets are being affected by the novel coronavirus in ways we hadn't imagined. While the food supply chain may be considered essential, that doesn't mean there is a guarantee everything will work as it should and farmers will continue to be able to market their products at a profitable level.

In fact, just the opposite has happened.

So what can I write to help our readers make it to the next market season or even the next day?

Our pastor reminded us recently (via online church service) the scripture that "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

God doesn't promise that bad things won't happen. But he does promise to be with us, and he promises to make good from the bad things, if we trust him.

I think, now more than ever, we need to be reminded that there is a power greater than our own, and He is for us. There will be brighter days. Those are the words of hope I rely on, and I hope they help you, too.

Everyone is family

As we make our way through the COVID-19 pandemic and all the change it has created, it is hard to ignore the discomfoting news we are hearing as it relates to the agriculture industry, and our economy in general.

Worries about the economy are valid, but the first thing any of us needs to do is take all the necessary steps to stay safe. Our health and safety, and the well-being of our families, friends and neighbors trumps all.

I have been reminded daily, through this pandemic, of the words left to us from former Kentucky State Trooper Eric Chrisman, "Everyone is family."

Keeping that thought as we move forward is paramount as we begin the task of getting back to some form of normalcy and doing so in the wake of the terrible economic storm damage COVID-19 has left us with.

I don't have to make a list of all the challenges we face on the farm and in our rural communities. It seems to be all we hear or read about from various news sources. But farm families have faced tough times before. Facing the tough market situations we have been presented with, however, is unnerving to say the least.

But, most of what is driving those markets has to do with speculation. There is so much we don't know, yet the fear of that is helping to fuel an already volatile market and the buying habits of the public.

To say it's going to be a tough road in front of us would be an understatement, but it is still a road worth taking. Farms are essential and always have been. We will prevail. I have no doubts about that.

In doing so, we must work together as a collective agricultural family. We have resources in this state that others don't. We have strong partnerships between commodity groups and other ag organizations that most states can only dream about. We have government leaders who understand the importance of agriculture and are supportive of our efforts.

We need to pull together, help each other, share our ideas, utilize our resources, and kick this thing. It won't be easy, but nothing worth doing or having is. If farming was easy, there would be a lot more of us.

To our consumers, despite what you hear or read, we will not run out of food. We could see some disruptions due to processing plant closures, and you may not find exactly what you're looking for in the meat case on every trip to the grocery store.

But we need to practice patience and understand that the U.S. food chain is healthy and resilient. In looking at the big picture, these disruptions won't last forever.

To our farmers, we have a job to do, so let's do it. Kentucky Farm Bureau is still advocating on your behalf to get us through this.

In continuing with our commitment to the people of this state, KFB Insurance just made a monumental donation to the Hunger Initiative to help those in need of food get through this.

This organization is like no other and I am so proud to be a part of it. We will never stop fighting for those we call family and, "Everyone is family."



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU PRESIDENT

Mark Haney

To our consumers, despite what you hear or read, we will not run out of food.

MARK HANEY is president of Kentucky Farm Bureau.

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An uphill struggle



MARKET WATCH

Dewey Strickler

Right now, the big unknown for soybeans is how many acres will be switched out of corn because of ethanol plant closings.

Unless weather intercedes this growing season, corn faces an uphill struggle because of ending stocks of 3.3 billion bushels, the largest since 1987, and demand destruction created by the coronavirus. Although segments of the economy are beginning to reopen, it will be a long time before it recovers, probably longer than we can fathom.

Meanwhile, there are some bright spots. Crude oil appears to have bottomed, and while the USDA projects corn usage declining 3.2 percent this season, a rebound of 7 percent is forecast for 2020-21.

In other developments, planting is progressing quickly at 67 percent complete versus the average of 56 percent. Export inspections last week were a marketing year high of 52.4 million bushels. While corn is currently faced with a gloom and doom outlook, one thing is for certain, the impact of the coronavirus has instilled the fact that during a crisis, governments must maintain an adequate food supply, or face civil unrest.

Optimism for soybeans is slowly emerging because of purchases by China the past few weeks and shrinking stockpiles. Global stockpiles are forecast to decline 1.9 percent from a year ago setting a five-year low. While the USDA has lowered exports this season and raised ending stocks to 580 million bushels, usage for 2020-21 is projected to rise 10.6 percent with ending stocks falling to 405 million bushels.

Right now, the big unknown for soybeans is how many acres will be switched out of corn because of ethanol plant closings. In other developments, planting is proceeding at a fast clip and is 38 percent complete compared to the average of 23 percent. Looking at exports, inspections last week were 18.2 million bushels.

Wheat faces a headwind from USDA's forecast of world stocks for 2020-21 rising 5.1 percent to 310.1 million tons, a record high. In addition, global competition will remain intense as exports are expected to fall to 950 million bushels. Inspections last week were nominal at 12.5 million bushels.

In other developments, the rating for winter wheat fell 2 points to 53 percent of the crop in good-to-excellent condition. This compares to last year's rating of 64 percent. Meanwhile, conditions in Europe and the Black Sea Region are improving.

DEWEY STRICKLER is president of Ag Watch Market Advisors, LLC. Email Strickler at agwatchdls@comcast.net or go online at www.agwatch.biz.

Don't make old friends into new enemies

As if 20 percent unemployment, wretchedly weak commodity markets, shuttered ethanol and meatpacking plants, and a coronavirus pandemic aren't bad enough, the White House chose mid-May to, literally, go viral with China, one of American agriculture's best cash-and-carry customers.

This fight, however, isn't over steel, aluminum or soybeans. It's about spilled milk: How much responsibility China bears for COVID-19's beginnings and, according to the White House, the country's failure to control and contain it.

Five months ago that would have been a worthwhile fight had both leaders coordinated their responses to what experts were saying about the new, deadly virus. Today, though, it's useless because political belly bumping now can't change what each failed to do last winter.

Moreover, it won't do anything but worsen today's already worsening trade picture between the two nations. On May 8, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a bipartisan, non-profit policy research institute in Washington, D.C., forecast total 2020 U.S. exports – everything from pigs' feet to kitchen sinks – to China at \$60 billion, or about one-third of the \$187 billion total both sides had agreed upon in "phase one" of a new, joint trade deal signed in January.

Scott Kennedy, CSIS senior advisor of Chinese business and economics, told CNBC that the forecast was "admittedly a worst case scenario" but that any increases above the \$60 billion mark still "will not change the overall picture, just the details."

The reason, Kennedy added, is that "The targets were never realistic; they were just gaudy numbers meant to impress. The pandemic made the unrealistic the impossible."

U.S. pork exports did ramp up. Through 2020's first quarter, one in three pounds of U.S. pork was exported to China. At the same time, though, U.S. soy exports to China were down a price-cracking 39 percent.

In fact, China has purchased just \$3.1 billion of U.S. farm goods in 2020's first quarter, well off pace for it to reach the U.S. Department of Agriculture's pro-

jected \$14 billion in ag purchases this year.

(Even worse, that unachievable \$14 billion is but two-thirds of total U.S. ag exports to China before the White House and Beijing began the tariff fight two years ago.)

If U.S. farmers and ranchers are tired of the two countries trading more threats than groceries, China appears to have reached its tipping point, too. On May 12, FERN's AG Insider reported that a "state-controlled Chinese newspaper on Monday (May 11)" urged China's leaders to "invalidate the 'phase one' trade agreement" in retaliation "for a U.S. coronavirus blame campaign."

For those of us who can't remember January, let alone what phase one of the deal called for – in fact, a wildly "gaudy" \$40 billion in 2020 U.S. ag exports – any move by China now would drain U.S. prices even lower.

The week before, when President Donald J. Trump mused that he was "torn" over whether to impose new tariffs on China as retaliation for the pandemic, market analysts quickly pointed out that new tariffs would clip commodity prices well into the 2021 marketing year.

Which, by sheer coincidence, begins in the run-up to the November general election and in the middle of the Trump Administration sending another \$33 billion in direct government payments to U.S. farmers and ranchers to help mitigate COVID-19's effects on the ag economy.

That means 2020 will be the third year in a row (for a total of about \$65 billion) the White House will have sent what was supposed to be "one-time" aid to American farm and food producers.

Regardless of what that means to the White House, to U.S. farmers and ranchers it means we should be working to keep our old friends and stop going out of our way to make new enemies.

ALAN GUEBERT publishes a weekly column Farm and Food File through the U.S. and Canada. Past columns, events and contact information are posted at farmandfoodfile.com. Contact Alan Guebert by email at agcomm@farmandfoodfile.com.



FOOD & FARM FILE

Alan Guebert

If U.S. farmers and ranchers are tired of the two countries trading more threats than groceries, China appears to have reached its tipping point, too.

What kind of shape is your boat in, friend?



COMMON GROUND

Rae Wagoner

Wow. This is my first column since the COVID-19 pandemic took over our newsfeeds and everything else, and what a ride it has been for agriculture thus far. I've seen the videos of farmers dumping milk and plowing produce under because of the sudden shutdown of the foodservice industry, and it's heartbreaking.

What's closer to home and more personal to me, though, is the livestock situation. With large-scale processors being shuttered due to the novel coronavirus, there is a big gap in the protein supply chain. Like many of you reading this publication, this girl won't go hungry. I am fortunate to live in the country, and my people are farmers.

I will admit that I did a quick inventory of my cattle-farming friends, my chicken-growing friends, and my pig-raising friends when the protein shortage started to become a reality. Thankfully, my family would not have to rely on wild game, because I don't like it. If we did, though, my husband and I are both pretty good shots.

So, the people that I worry about are more our urban friends. Hank Williams, Jr. had it right when he said a country boy can survive, but what about city folks? It's not like they have cattle in the pasture next door or deer in the back yard. They don't have a pasture next door, and some don't even have a backyard.

Many of my city friends were scared, and I don't blame them. People who have a grocery store within walking distance probably don't have a deep freeze, either, much less one crammed with protein and veggies. The food storage habits and needs of rural and urban dwellers are vastly different.

I feel for the farmers and ranchers, most of whom were already losing money. In a time that they need someone to throw them a life preserver, I'm sure they feel more like someone has thrown them an anvil.

I was so glad to see some processors open back up, and it is certainly my hope that they get back to full capacity soon – not just for the sake of the consumers, but for the sake of the farmers and ranchers who are doing their best to hold on in these uncertain and unfavorable times.

There has been a sentiment circulating on social media that says “we are all in the same boat” during this crisis, and on the surface that sounds right. After all, COVID-19 has affected just about everyone in some way or in many ways. But the boat analogy is all wrong. We are not all in the same boat – but we are all in the same storm. My boat may be smaller than your boat, and your big boat may be harder to steer to safety than mine. Your boat may end up shipwrecked, while mine just takes on water and needs a patch job. Your boat may be paid for, and mine might

get repossessed.

The point to all the boat talk is this – be kind. There is no way to know what someone else is experiencing during this unprecedented global event. And, regardless of what someone may be experiencing, we all respond in different ways. We handle stress different ways, and everyone reacts to stress and change differently. Your friend may look fine, may say he's fine and not be fine. Check on your people, folks.

And on the subject of social media, I know it's hard. There is a massive quantity of information floating around, but the same cannot be said of the quality of information. Before you hit the share button, read the post and then decide if pushing it out to your friends and followers will have any positive impact.

If not, maybe this is the time to exercise your right to keep scrolling! If you are tempted to pop off and call someone a “citiot” from the safety zone of your keyboard, please don't. Town people are just as freaked out as country folks. If you are absolutely overwhelmed with the volume and quality of the content on social media, please take a break. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will be there when you get back. Maybe we will get lucky and TikTok won't.

RAE WAGONER is the Director of Communication for Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board.

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Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation approves loans

FRANKFORT – The Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corp. approved more than \$260,000 for two agricultural loans that will bring needed investment and infrastructure as the commonwealth looks to restart the economy safely while fighting the novel coronavirus 2019.

“In addition to the loans approved today, I am very proud of the KAFC board for implementing a new policy, which allows staff to approve loan payment deferments requested by the participating lenders to speed up extensions as a result of this pandemic,” said Gov.

Andy Beshear. “The board and GOAP staff are dedicated to easing some of the burdens brought on our agriculture community by COVID-19.”

Agricultural Infrastructure Loan Program

One Agricultural Infrastructure loan was approved for \$14,250 for recipients in Graves County to purchase and install a field drain tile. KAFC participates with lenders to provide financing to producers making capital expenditures for agricultural projects through the AILP.

Eligible projects include permanent farm structures with attached equipment that improves the profitability of farming operations. Producers may be eligible for up to \$150,000, not to exceed 50 percent of the project.

Beginning Farmer Loan Program

One Beginning Farmer loan was approved for \$250,000 for recipients in Fulton County to purchase 18 acres with six Tyson broiler barns. BFLP is designed to assist individuals with some farming

experience who desire to develop, expand or buy into a farming operation. Beginning farmers may qualify for financing to purchase livestock, equipment or agriculture facilities; to secure permanent working capital; for the purchase of farm real estate; or to invest in a partnership or LLC.

For more information on the programs offered by the KAFC, contact Ali Hulett, Loan Programs Manager, at 502-782-1760 or visit the KAFC webpage at kafc.ky.gov.

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Quarles, AG ask for price fixing investigations in cattle industry

FRANKFORT – Attorney General Daniel Cameron and Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles sent a joint letter last week to U.S. Attorney General William Barr asking for the Department of Justice to investigate possible anti-competitive practices in the beef packing sector.

The letter notes that, despite steady consumer demand for beef, the prices paid to Kentucky's cattle producers have declined, suggesting the presence of

possible market manipulation and other anticompetitive practices. As a result, Kentucky consumers are paying more for beef while hardworking Kentucky farmers are making less.

“We’re urging DOJ to use the resources at its disposal to fully investigate allegations of anticompetitive practices in the beef processing sector, and we stand ready to assist with such an investigation in any way possible,” said Attorney General Cameron. “Kentucky’s

cattle producers and consumers already face incredible economic challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we must ensure that they are treated fairly in the marketplace and do not face additional hardship because of price fixing or other anticompetitive actions. I appreciate Commissioner Quarles partnering with us in this endeavor.”

“As Kentucky and the nation move towards reopening the economy in a quick and responsible manner, consumers and

farmers deserve to know if there is a scheme to threaten market competition in the beef industry,” said Commissioner Quarles. “Our beef cattle producers have seen 30 and 40 percent price drops since the start of the pandemic, even while the price of beef products at the grocery store has increased. I would like to thank Attorney General Cameron for joining me in this effort to make sure


SEE **COMMISSIONER**, PAGE 10

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Commissioner sends letter to U.S. Attorney General

FROM PAGE 9

the beef industry isn't rigged against Kentucky's 38,000 hardworking cattle producers."

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to disruptions at meat processing plants and created shortages nationwide. With only four beef processors controlling 80 percent of the American market, such disruptions further exacerbate pre-existing disparities between the price of live cattle and the wholesale price of beef.

"On behalf of Kentucky's beef cattle producers in the commonwealth of Kentucky, let me be the first to express my gratitude for the leadership of Agriculture

Commissioner Quarles and Attorney General Daniel Cameron," said Dave Maples, executive director of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association. "Kentucky is the largest beef cattle state east of the Mississippi River, and both of these men understand the negative effects of any possible anticompetitive business practices on both consumers and our producers."

In the letter, Attorney General Cameron and Commissioner Quarles ask DOJ to use the department's investigatory resources to conduct an in-depth study of the current economic realities within the cattle industry to determine if anticompetitive practices are being used. Both Cameron and Quarles offer DOJ the re-

sources of their respective offices to assist with such an investigation on behalf of Kentucky consumers.

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Insights from a conversation about hay

The Forage Doctor

By Jimmy Henning



Sometimes I think Extension work boils down to how well you ask questions. Many recommendations are made from a conversation, often on the phone, without seeing the field in question. A specialist is trying to create a mental picture consistent with the farmer situation. A recent conversation will help illustrate that, and at the same time give you a small insight into what type of summer annual to plant if you want some extra hay and pasture.

First, the call. The farmer, we will call him Nick (not his real name) called to ask what to plant if he wanted some extra hay, and it may be used for pasture also. Nick explained that it was in soybeans last year, had some weeds in it now, and was planning on harrowing (disking) it.

Two main things entered my mind: which species and what seeding method? We have quite a few choices for temporary summer hay crops, but I went with sudangrass.

It has good yields, will provide more than one cutting, and can be hayed or grazed. Sudangrass is the best choice for hay because it has the finest stems and has less difficulty drying to hay moisture (15 to 20 percent) than sorghum-sudangrass hybrids or pearl millet.

Nick was okay with that choice, but did raise a question about prussic acid problems in the sorghums (such as sudangrass). We spent a few minutes going over how to avoid prussic acid problems.

I thought I was done with the species question, but as it turns out, I was not.

Now to establishment. I had many questions about what “harrowing” meant to Nick. Turns out it was disking. Nick wanted to disk because of the volunteer weeds. I was fine with disking. However, I knew that disking leaves the soil rough and often too fluffy to get good seed soil contact. So I pursued it further.

“Do you have a roller?” I asked. Nick said no. (I am thinking “not good.”) “Okay,” I said. “How are you going to seed it?” Nick said he thought he would just broadcast it and then disk it lightly.

At this point, I am thinking this is not going to work at all because there is no way to get the seed at the right depth and the seedbed is guaranteed to be too fluffy. Even if Nick was superb with the disk, the seedbed would need to have a rain on it to firm the soil around the seed. Germination and emergence were going to be questionable at best.

On to the next question: “Do you have a drill?” Nick said yes. At this point I was thinking grain drill, not no-till drill. Nick said he had a Great Plains no-till drill. Now I am thinking Jackpot! I was still worried about depth of seeding if he used the no-till drill to put seed into the disked seedbed.

After a little more back and forth, we decided on an application of a translocated non-selective herbicide to kill the weeds followed by no-tilling the seed. I am thinking, “All good – mission accomplished.” I told Nick to call his dealer



Summer annuals can provide high yields of quality forage for hay and pasture. Some are better than others for hay than others. The challenge with making hay from the tall growing summer grasses like pearl millet (above) is in getting the stems to cure to baling moisture.

and lock in the seed since sudangrass can be in short supply and may need to be ordered.

I get another call from Nick in about two hours. “What about pearl millet?” he said. In my mind I am thinking, “What happened?”

Don’t get me wrong – pearl millet is a great forage – for grazing. As a hay crop it is tough, and maybe even near impossible to cure down to hay moisture. The stems of pearl millet are very waxy and dry very slowly. “Why the switch?” I asked.

The reason for the switch was prussic acid. For sure, pearl millet has no prussic acid potential – none whatsoever. Okay, I thought, if he has a conditioning mower, plants it thick and cuts before the stems get too thick, it might be okay. But turns out Nick does not have a conditioning mower.

I began to strenuously object to using pearl millet for hay – very strenuously. I

argued that sudangrass has the lowest prussic acid potential of all the sorghums and problems are easy to avoid.

But to no avail. Turns out Nick has to run his cows past this field to get them up in the winter and he was afraid they would get into young frosted material if that field was planted to sudangrass. At this point, I know I have to concede the point. Ultimately, we decided to split the difference – pearl millet in the field where cows might graze in winter and sudangrass in another field.

In the end, we enjoyed a laugh as Nick said he would find out if I knew what I was talking about with pearl millet being hard to cure. Time will tell, but I doubt pearl millet will let me down.

For the full story on summer annual options for temporary forage, see AGR-229 – Warm Season Grasses in Kentucky.

Happy foraging.

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State FFA convention to be held online June 30-July 2

This year's Kentucky State FFA Convention will be held completely online, from June 30 through July 2. This will be a historic first for Kentucky FFA, which has hosted an in-person state convention every year since 1930. Last year approximately 2,800 students, teachers and supporters attended.

When state leaders realized an in-person convention was not going to be possible because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they immediately started looking for alternative ways to give Kentucky FFA members opportunities to gather virtually, compete, and receive recognition.

"We have a convention to recognize our members," said Brandon Davis, state agricultural education specialist and the Kentucky state FFA advisor. "We have thousands of young people who have dedicated this year and numerous years to their goals – whether that's been competing on an ag sales team, working on their SAE, or running for state office. We want to do everything we can to provide them a platform to reach those goals."

This year's state convention will be a pre-recorded, produced event that will kick off at 7:30 p.m. EDT on Tuesday,

June 30, and will continue each evening through July 2. According to Davis, there will be student recognition for winners of career development events, agriculture fair, speaking events, and middle school events. Other highlights include recognition of regional stars in agriculture, naming of the 2020 state stars, and presentation of state FFA officers for the upcoming year.

There will even be an online concert via social media on the Wednesday of convention, with rising country music star Tyler Booth, a former Wolfe County FFA member. Booth will perform songs requested by FFA members and host a Q&A event.

Organizers are also planning a virtual career expo that will allow convention participants to interact with companies and universities who may be interested in recruiting FFA members.

"We want these sessions to be engaging," said Davis. "We'll have online activities and events leading up to the convention – opportunities for people to submit pictures and videos that will be used during the event, and ways to win prizes. This can't have exactly the same look and feel as every convention before it, but we definitely want it to be mean-

ingful."

The fact that FFA has decided to host a virtual state convention means that as most students are wrapping up their NTI assignments and putting away their Chromebooks for the summer, FFA members are still engaged in projects and are hard at work preparing to participate in state-level speech contests, career development events, and more via a variety of online platforms.

"It takes a whole different level of commitment and work to be willing to do this," said Davis. "There's not a single FFA member who paid their FFA dues in August who thought this was what the end of the school year would look like. We see our members saying that, 'Just because things are different, my commitment to the goals I've set hasn't changed. Maybe this isn't the easiest way to be involved, but I'm going to make it work.' That's going to be one of our biggest bright spots when this whole thing is over."

Volunteers and Sponsors Needed for Convention

Kentucky FFA is currently seeking

volunteers to serve as judges for the upcoming state competitions associated with the convention. Volunteers might judge speeches via an online platform like ZOOM or Microsoft Teams, or they may help score career development events in which students are virtually participating. Events will take place between June 19 and June 26. If you are interested in serving as a judge for this year's convention, fill out an interest form at forms.gle/B91Cru2MX2oPQJMt6.

Additionally, because FFA members will still be receiving recognition and awards for their efforts, sponsors are still needed for the state FFA convention.

McKinney said that sponsors will be recognized during convention through video spotlights and social media shoutouts.

"Students will be in their homes, watching with their families," said McKinney. "I believe we're going to have thousands of more eyes on convention than we typically do. We're working really hard to make it an excellent, top notch event."

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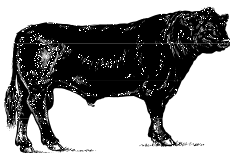
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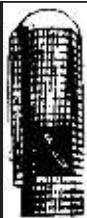
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kycornCONNECTION

News from the Kentucky Corn Growers Association and Kentucky Corn Promotion Council

Export Partners Report Business as Usual; Red Meat Exports Stronger in First Quarter

KyCorn utilizes the expertise of several trade promotion groups to help move corn and corn products. Through agency reports, exports of grain and meat remain strong despite many other economic disruptions.

The **U.S. Grains Council (USGC)** remains committed to the mission of developing markets, enabling trade and improving lives. USGC staff keep communications open with customers and governments in the United States and around the world.

In a letter to customers, USGC shared important updates on the status of the U.S. grain export infrastructure. Ryan LeGrand, USGC president and chief executive officer, said operations are continuing largely as normal, at

this time, with the exception of some concerns indirectly related to the coronavirus from a lack of containers.

"The efficiency of the U.S. grain supply chain aids in this process," LeGrand said. "Much of U.S. agriculture and export infrastructure – from farms to ports – is relatively isolated. Most export facilities operate with limited employees, sometimes as few as two or three, and increasingly benefit from automation, which creates efficiencies, reduces costs and keeps operations in line with social distancing guidelines."

At the national level, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have declared U.S. agriculture and food infrastructure and the employees who work within it as "essential,"

meaning they will continue to operate as normally as possible throughout this crisis.

The **US Meat Export Federation**, which promotes red meat exports on behalf of KyCorn, has reported demand for high-quality U.S. red meat remained strong in the first quarter of 2020. Through March, U.S. exports of both pork and beef were on a record pace and accounted for a growing share of U.S. production, even with record production levels. However, supply chain disruptions in the U.S. are expected to slow exports in April and May. Fueled by trade agreements with Japan and China, USMEF forecasts record levels of exports for U.S. beef and pork in 2020, based on global supply and demand fundamentals.

Learn more at www.kycorn.org.

KyCorn Awards Scholarships for Ninth Year \$46,000 Donated and Gifted by Farmer Leaders

The Kentucky Corn Growers Association is proud to announce the recipients of the 2020/2021 scholarship program. Scholarships are available to member families, and students must pursue degrees or certificates in agriculture or a related field from a Kentucky school. Applications are open each winter and are due in March.



Abbey Dickerson, of Woodburn, has received a KyCorn scholarship for three consecutive years. She studies Agriculture Education at the University of Kentucky and has plans of becoming an extension agent.



Chloe Holloway is the recipient of the James Barton Memorial Scholarship. She is studying Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Kentucky. Chloe is from Gracey, and is the daughter of Tony and Sherry Holloway.



Ashley Hinton graduated from Breckinridge County High School and has been accepted to the University of Kentucky to study Agriculture Education. She is the daughter of Carol and Steve Hinton.



Addison Allen, of Bowling Green, graduated from South Warren County High School and will be attending Murray State to study Agriculture Science. Her parents are Tom and Jennifer Tucker.

#TradeMatters



\$2.2 Billion

Total Annual Value of All Kentucky Agricultural Exports



\$751 Million

Total Value of Grain Trade to Kentucky's Economy



\$191 Million

Value of Whole Corn Exported



\$4.3 Million

Value of Ethanol Exported

2018 was a record year for ethanol exports, and it is continuing to grow.



\$5 Million

Value of KY DDGS and CGF Exported



\$44.2 Million

Value of Corn Equivalent to Meat & Eggs Exported



18,000

Number of Kentucky Jobs Supported by Agricultural Exports

3,428

Number of Jobs Added to Kentucky Workforce through Grain Trade

Source: USDA-ERS State Export Data & US Grains Council