



All photos courtesy of Wild Roots

Alexis Sheffield takes a ride around the farm at Wild Roots with her farm manager, Remi the Corgi.

Putting down roots

There's been a marked increase over the last several years of farmer-florists in Kentucky, bringing more and more producers into the arena.

A Mercer County flower farmer says as trends come and go, it's important to know that growing pretty things to sell isn't always a pretty job.

As "homegrown flowers" pop up more and more in farmers' markets, CSAs and roadside stands, many say there is still much work to be done to make sure consumers are getting the full picture of what they're buying.

Alexis Sheffield got the farm she wanted back in 2020, and now her

Wild Roots flower business is finally somewhat stable, which allows for continued growth — literally and figuratively.

She's not alone in her desire to own and operate a sustainable flower business. According to UK's College of Agriculture, the number of farmer-florists in the state has been steadily climbing, increasing by 30 percent in just five years.

While this is the second season on her own farm, Sheffield is actually entering her seventh season of being a bona fide flower farmer. She and husband Tyler rented land for the first five years of her business.

"Tyler is the CFO. Remy the

Corgi is the farm manager. And I'm everything else," she says and laughs.

Wild Roots now has its own website, detailing flower packages for events and other services the specialty-cut flower farm provides. The site is stamped with the "Kentucky Proud" logo, as well as those showing her memberships in Floret's Farmer-Florist Collective and the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers.

"There's not a ton of stuff here to be regulated — there are associations you can be members of. There's Kentucky Proud, of

SEE **PUTTING**, PAGE 3

Ky's Berry Center offers cooperative beef marketing program

LEXINGTON -The Berry Center in New Castle has developed a cooperative beef marketing initiative that ensures profit for all partners, but the farmer first.

As a part of the Local Food Summit, sponsored by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and Food Science, Mary Berry, daughter of renowned author Wendell Berry, anchored a panel discussion about the Berry Center's "Our Home Place Meat."

Berry writes about agriculture in defense of the middle-sized farm operation, which she believes has been left behind by the demise of the tobacco industry. Her concern for the middle and small farmers led to the development of the Berry Center because, as she said during the panel discussion, she saw farming in her home of Henry County diminished and degraded with much work to do.

Designed as a center for advocacy of the farm community, the Berry Center has four program areas, an undergraduate farming degree program, a cultural center bookstore, an archive, and the newest addition, Our Home Place Meat.

Berry said that beef cattle is a way for the middle and small farmer to have a profitable farming operation, especially with the abundance of pasture and water and with the markets developed for Our Home Place Meat. She believes the program works with nature, not against it, and farmers who are part of the program agree. Joseph Monroe says raising beef on pasture is regenerative for his soil.

Berry promotes a market with quantity control and parity pricing and pays the farmer first. During the panel discussion, Berry said today's farm markets take the farm product to the city in the cheapest way possible, and the farmer suffers.

In 2017, Our Home Place Meat began sales of Rose Veal, European-style meat. The majority of sales are made in the "Our Home Place Market" located in New Castle, but products are also sold

SEE **BERRY**, PAGE 2

Berry Center offers cooperative beef marketing program

FROM PAGE 1

through Creation Gardens, a Louisville restaurant distribution company, and online.

Rose Veal is harvested from weaned calves weighing 550-700 pounds who have lived on grass at their mother's side. The term "rose" comes from the color of the muscle. The meat is not the bright cherry red of slaughter weight beef or the creamy color of traditional veal but pink, indicating the exercise as well as nutrition of the animal.

Van Campbell, managing partner of Creation Gardens, said their beef supply chain dried up during Covid-19 restrictions, and they were looking for new local producers. This concept became Berry Beef, exclusive to Creation Garden, and an additional marketing option for the 11 local Our Home Place Meat producers. Berry Beef began test sales in the fall of 2021 and steadily increased. Creation Gardens currently purchases four finished

beef per week, but projects increase over the next several months.

Beth Douglas, director of Our Home Place Meat, works with farmers to sign a yearly contract with specific production standards for the nutrition and health of the animal as well as quantity. Berry Beef must grade choice.

Following these standards, guarantees producers a profit. Douglas said the addition of Berry Beef, Our Home Place Meat, is expanding, and she expects to add more farmers to that side of the program. Berry Beef will market at least 200 head and expects 250 before the end of the year. She noted that Creation Gardens is working with a line of grocery stores to sell Berry Beef and this could significantly increase numbers. Currently, Rose Veal markets 75 calves.

When working with producers, Douglas said there are three different types, those who sell just Rose Veal, just Berry Beef, and those who sell both.

A critical component is Trackside



By Steve Patton, UK Ag Communications

Organizers of Our Home Place Meats finished beef program discuss the cooperative venture. (From left), Mary Berry, the Berry Center; Beth Douglas, director of Our Home Place Meats; John Edwards, Trackside Butcher Shop; Joseph Monroe, Valley Spirit Farms; and John Thomas, Creation Gardens.

Butcher Shop, located in Henry County near Campbellsburg. Douglas works with Trackside to have weekly harvest dates for Berry Beef and monthly harvest dates for Rose Veal.

For Joseph Monroe, Rose Veal and Berry Beef are very important to his operation. While he has a thriving

direct sales beef operation through Valley Spirit Farm, Our Home Place Meat offers a security factor.

"Selling to Our Home Place Meat lets me do what I do best – farm," he said.

By Toni Riley
Field Reporter

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Cows: Breaker 75-80%: 3 Head 1565-1675# 85.00-87.00; Boner 80-85%: 105 Head 1000-1705# 75.00-95.00; 64 Head 1265-1700# 90.00-105.00; 4 Head 1245-1677# 70.00-93.00; Lean 85-90%: 44 Head 800-1234# 54.00-81.00; 8 Head 900-1250# 71.00-77.00; 3 Head 887-1110# 37.00.

Bulls: 1-2: 36 Head 1240-2200# 103.00-121.00; 12 Head 1900-2250# 123.00-133.00; 3 Head 1400-2100# 91.00-93.00.

Fresh Milking Cows: Approved 900-1300# 875.00-1250.00; Approved 800# 725.00.

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Baby Bull Calves: 2 Head 40# 55.00; 18 Head 55-85# 70.00-240.00; 6 Head 80-85# 210.00-260.00 Beef Cross; 1 Head 75# 220.00 Crossbred; 1 Head 100# 310.00 Beef Cross.

Putting down roots



Alexis Sheffield, who owns and operates Wild Roots in Mercer County, says being a flower farmer isn't anything like what social media posts portray. "I'm usually in a flannel and hat, with muddy jeans on my tractor."

FROM PAGE 1

course, and some women-in-ag groups. But groups specifically for flower growers as farmers, there's not any."

Sheffield says the Kentucky Horticulture Council has been working on potentially developing a flower farmer association of some kind. She has been working with KHC not only as a small business and farm owner, but through her role as the horticulture agent for Boyle County Cooperative Extension.

"And we're going into the third year of celebrating July, which is American Grown Flowers Month, as also Kentucky Grown Flowers Month," she says, in order to bring more awareness "that local flowers are a thing."

Average consumers probably don't know that about 80 percent of cut flowers in the U.S.A. are imported.

"So they probably don't know that the roses they bought from that cute little market were actually from Ecuador," Sheffield says.

She explains that the USDA defines a flower farmer as someone who grows at least 51 percent of what they sell.

"That can be looked at a lot of ways. If I grow 10 tulips and sell six of them, technically I'm a flower farmer. But there's also a monetary requirement, too, that you have to sell a certain amount ... Then there are people who maybe are doing a lot more business — they're selling \$10,000- or \$20,000-worth of product, but only really growing a small percentage of it themselves."

It's something she wants consumers to be aware of.

"It's the facts, no hard feelings there — I didn't make the rules. But we have to think, are people calling themselves flower farmers but growing only a few plants, and most of what they grow is coming from another local farm."

Sheffield says the companies she works with are "very straight forward — they'll tell you where the flowers are from, if they're not theirs ... If I post

SEE SHEFFIELD, PAGE 7

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The gardening season



ONE VOICE

Sharon
Burton
Publisher

The local farmers' market has been open for a couple of weeks now, and I've read some complaints from people who were disappointed in the limited options available.

The market allows people to sell local crafts and home-made products, and the only produce or plants sold must be Kentucky products.

I think the people who are disappointed in their visit don't understand the true meaning of a "farmers' market." They want to see fresh tomatoes or be able to purchase a few homegrown potatoes in April. It's not possible.

Our commercial food system has spoiled consumers, but it comes at a cost. You can purchase a tomato in Kentucky in April, but it won't be a juicy, tasty tomato that came from a plant grown in Kentucky soil.

There has been some improvement in the quality of off-season produce sold in local grocery stores. In past decades, the industry focused on appearance and being able to transport a product from Point A to Point B. The result was a pretty, red tomato that was tough on the outside, often mushy on the inside, and fairly tasteless.

There are some tomatoes in the stores now that actually have flavor. It's usually the small ones, and I really don't know if they are being grown in a greenhouse, come from some of the "indoor farming" operations we hear so much about, or coming from other countries. I just know they are not coming from a field in Kentucky.

The "indoor farming" method appears to have great potential, and with all the talk about food production using too much land, water and chemicals, this method is being encouraged and improved daily.

I miss the simple days when eating a tomato was not a statement about climate change or political affiliation; it was just a wonderful summer day of enjoying the fruit of your labor. I still, to this day, cannot pick the cherry tomatoes in the garden without eating a handful before I make it to the house.

My husband has the green thumb in our family, but even he can't seem to successfully grow leaf lettuce. We've always relied on the farmers' market for that. In recent years, he has lost his battle with the local deer population,

SEE THE GARDENING, PAGE 6

2022 legislative session includes passage of ag-related bills

What a year it has been for the Kentucky wheat industry! We had an unbelievable production year in 2020-2021 and now are enjoying prices that are quite hard to believe. I, personally and professionally, have had a great year as well.

Last month, I was elected to the executive committee on the National Association of Wheat Growers' to serve as secretary and hopefully work my way through the officer rotation. Thank you to the many Kentucky Small Grain Grower Association board members who advocated for my candidacy.

I look forward to working to continue strong profitability conditions for our important industry. The recent events in Ukraine are spotlighting just how important wheat is to the world, and I will work to enhance opportunity for American wheat farmers while this light is shining on us.

I expect to expand into many new roles and responsibilities with NAWG over the next few years, but one of our immediate objectives will be to focus on the upcoming 2023 farm bill. As Congress prepares for the upcoming farm bill, our policy committees are hosting work sessions to reflect on how the 2018 farm bill has functioned and explore ways we can improve program delivery as lawmakers consider reauthorizing the farm bill next year.

Currently, NAWG is seeking grower feedback through the Farm Bill Survey to better hear from farmers about what policies are most important and to identify practical policy recommendations that would benefit the grower community. NAWG's effectiveness depends on our ability to demonstrate that we are basing our priorities on feedback from the farmers we represent when advocating before Congress and across the administration.

The Farm Bill Survey asks farmers to describe their experiences on a wide variety of programs set to expire or lapse with the 2018 farm bill on Sept. 30, 2023. NAWG encourages growers to complete the NAWG Farm Bill Survey and contribute their voices to planning a successful Farm Bill reauthorization.

The survey closes on May 8. It only takes about 15 minutes to complete and provides opportunities to comment on a broad array of farm programs. The survey can be found on the NAWG website wheatworld.org. Please take a few moments to submit your perspectives. It is critically important.



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Industry tackles outbreak, tornado losses



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**Dan
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The last six months have been challenging for Kentucky and our poultry community. As we started to come out of Covid-19, employment issues remained one of the top concerns and limitations. Closely followed were the availability and increased price of replacement parts and day-to-day supplies to keep our operations going.

We have seen the cost of supplies and equipment increase by as much as 30 percent since 2018. That issue is only compounded as we try to rebuild and improve from the tornadoes in December. Change and challenges seem to be the only consistent thing we have going for Kentucky's agricultural community.

Avian influenza has been at the top of our radar since 2022 started. Unfortunately, Avian influenza was detected in early February on two farms in Kentucky. Dr. Katie Flynn, Kentucky state veterinarian, led the efforts to minimize and mitigate the effects and spread of avian influenza to other flocks in Kentucky. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture did a fantastic job with all the challenges they faced during this outbreak.

As we started the recovery process, we're glad to report that the making of feed and the setting of eggs at the facilities damaged or destroyed by the tornado are now underway. This is the first step to getting back to full production for Kentucky's poultry farmers. We're also expecting to release all zones and farms affected by the HPAI outbreak in Kentucky by the end of the month. Additionally, we want to publicly thank the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Dr. Flynn, and her staff.

What's next? Of course it is growth and opportunity. Growth and expansion of poultry farms and processing have slowed more than we've seen in the last 20 years. I am hopeful that in 2023 we will turn a corner, and we'll see sustainable growth for our poultry farmers and processors. As I mentioned before, KDA is a pivotal part of the Kentucky agricultural community. Without the leadership of our KDA commissioner, Dr. Ryan Quraes, and the hard work of the KDA's staff, we would be hard-pressed to maintain what we've got, let alone move our state forward.

With growth and opportunity also comes change. We all know that we have to accept change to maintain relevance in our personal

SEE **POULTRY**, PAGE 6

THE FARMER'S PRIDE

Cattle never judged me so I never judged cattle

Despite spending every day of my southern Illinois youth on what at the time was a very large dairy farm, I never really had a clue of what made one Holstein cow or calf better or worse than the next Holstein cow or calf.

Most of that inability lay in my complete disinterest to show any calf, heifer, or cow at the county 4-H fair. The reason was selfishly simple: Since the fair seemed to always be scheduled on the hottest, steamiest day of the summer, nothing—be it animal, vegetable or mineral—wanted to be there, so why should I ever want to be there?

That disinterest, however, didn't keep me from trying to join the county 4-H dairy judging team. In fact, it spurred me because the spring Saturday of the multi-county judging event to winnow the talent (and my oldest brother, Richard, was a true talent) from posers like me, it also promised lunch at the only McDonalds in southern Illinois.

What 11-year-old farm boy wouldn't have suffered three hours of manure spattered cow-gazing to take advantage of that once-in-a-boyhood opportunity? And, yes, the first bite of my first-ever McDonald's French fry that day remains a knee-shaking memory.

But it also left me blissfully ignorant of what "confirmation" means in reference to any animal, where exactly I should set my gaze to examine a cow's "topline," or that "hock" was a noun referring to an animal's foot, not a verb suggesting a visit to a pawn shop.

My father, a lifelong dairy farmer, never offered one insight on evaluating cow flesh despite his annual purchase of six to 10 promising, pregnant heifers. One day he'd just be gone "to look for heifers" and the next day a straight bed truck would arrive to unload his purchases. All were black and white, all had four legs and four udders, and all were added to the herd without one word of explanation. (Richard would carefully eye all.)

My lack of judging interest, talent, or training, however, never kept me from picking favorites in the herd. One, which my brother, David, and I adored was, simply, "22," the number stamped on the brass tag hanging by a chain around her neck. We loved her not for her beauty or butterfat but because she was a barrel-bellied pet that we could climb over, under, and on anytime we wished. We could even lay on her broad back while she stood slowly chewing alfalfa hay in utter contentment. She was a perfect, silent friend.

Another animal, tagged 52, did have a name: Dyna. The name wasn't for anyone; it was the shortened version of her complete name, Dynamite, the insight you needed to milk her without losing your right arm. Dyna was the kickingest, most-cussed cow we ever had on the farm but she earned more than her keep so she remained—as did our bruised forearms and deflated egos.

Even the farm's longtime herdsman, Howard, the gentlest soul who ever walked into a milking parlor, disliked Dyna. And who could blame him; Dyna had two chances a day, six days every week to clip him. On the seventh, Howard healed.

My father wasn't sentimental about any cow, heifer, or dog on the farm. If it, as he often said about first-calf heifers, "Put more on her back than in the bucket," she got a quick ticket to one of our two basement freezers. If the monthly Dairy Herd Improvement Association records showed a cow's production slacking, sliding, or slowing, a cocked eye greeted her every trip into the parlor.

And he never forgot the slackers or sliders. If they took one more step in the wrong direction—didn't breed back, jumped a fence, or gave anyone a hard time in the parlor—they were on the next truck to the National Stockyards in East St. Louis, IL, and, I later discovered to my horror, the nearest McDonald's.



**FOOD
&
FARM
FILE**

**Alan
Guebert**

My father, a lifelong dairy farmer, never offered one insight on evaluating cow flesh despite his annual purchase of six to 10 promising, pregnant heifers.

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.

Poultry industry tackles outbreak, tornado losses

FROM PAGE 5

lives and work opportunities as well. With that being said, let me introduce the new slate of officers of the Kentucky Poultry Federation: Barton Williams, pres-

ident; Melissa Philip, 1st vice president; Nathaniel Keith, 2nd vice president; and Kent Peter, secretary/treasurer. Executive director is Jamie Guffey, and Jennifer Hall serves as our NPPI and animal health coordinator.

This is a very strong team with much professional poultry experience. With this team, the KPF will continue to advance the poultry industry in Kentucky.

As current past president, I support our strong team and the KPF as I always have.

The gardening season

FROM PAGE 5

and we have found ourselves at the farmers' market for many of our favorite garden vegetables. We know to get there early because the market is quite popular and many of the products sell out quickly.

As the days grow warmer, the fresh produce is one of the things I look forward to. I think that is a good thing. Consumers should understand that there needs to be a season of planting, growing, and harvesting, along with a season of rest.

Oh, and there is the season of eating home-canned goods. I have done my share of canning, but I always think of my husband's grandmother when it comes to homecooked winter meals. Her green beans and corn were second to none, regardless of the time of year.

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Sheffield grows farmer-florist operation

FROM PAGE 3

something I'm proud of, I'll specify '90 percent grown by me,' or '100 percent Kentucky-grown,' which means not all grown by me, or even mention the wholesaler I got them from."

But not everyone is as clear about where the flowers they sell come from, something that KHC has heard issues about, she says, and is now asking sellers to follow the USDA rule.

"Interpretation is everything," Sheffield says.

There's also a personification of flower farming being "so beautiful, and that growers are out there wearing a big hat and sundress, posing in fields of color. Everyone sees that and wants to be a flower farmer."

In reality, she says it can be ugly, hard work filled with weeds, dirt and muck, and requires science and passion. Sheffield says she's most commonly seen in a flannel shirt and muddy jeans behind the wheel of her tractor.

Like many producers who participate in subscription-driven community supported agriculture (CSA) groups, Wild

Roots offers seasonal flower shares, broken up in four- or eight-week segments, ranging up to \$100.

Sheffield also joined forces with Jessica Merrick of Shooting Star Farms in Forkland, to offer a seasonal farm share box. She says Merrick has a few flowers, does a lot of herbs and veggies, and makes different culinary and bath products from what she grows.

Wild Roots has done some pop-up roadside stands, like for Easter weekend, and even a "pay-what-you-can flower stand that went really incredibly well."

Sheffield is proud of the Kentucky native flowers she's finding her niche in, because so many of them are "as good as cuts." A cut flower is defined as one that's specifically grown for stem length in specific color ranges.

She grows a lot of "downplayed, really romantic colors ..." because she says they create a different event look from the "bright yellows, oranges and pinks that your granny grows. That doesn't mean your granny's flowers are bad, I'm just able to offer something with a



Alexis and Tyler Sheffield bought their Mercer County Farm in 2020, where they run Wild Roots, a farmer-florist operation.

different vibe than that."

For those who want to make sure they buy locally-grown flowers, Sheffield says to check out the map that KHA and UK's Center for Crop Diversification developed.

The Kentucky Commercial Cut Flower Grower directory can be found

at uky.edu/ccd/maps. Sheffield's Wild Roots services and products can be seen at wildrootsfarmerflorist.com, where an email list can also be joined to stay in tune with workshops, roadside stands and other offerings.

By Bobbie Curd
Field reporter

West Kentucky Select Bred Heifer Sale

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Easy Meatloaf

1 ½ pounds ground beef
 1 egg
 1 onion, chopped
 1 cup milk
 1 cup dried bread crumbs
 salt and pepper to taste
 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
 ½ cup ketchup

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a large bowl, combine the beef, egg, onion, milk and bread or cracker crumbs. Season with salt and pepper to taste and place in a lightly greased 9x5-inch loaf pan, or form into a loaf and place in a lightly greased 9x13-inch baking dish.

In a separate small bowl, combine the brown sugar, mustard and ketchup. Mix well and pour over the meatloaf.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour.



Air Fryer Spicy Green Beans

12 ounces fresh green beans, trimmed
 1 tablespoon sesame oil
 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
 1 clove garlic, minced
 ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

Preheat an air fryer to 400 degrees F. Place green beans in a bowl. Whisk together sesame oil, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, garlic, and red pepper flakes in a separate bowl and pour over green beans. Toss to coat and let marinate for 5 minutes.

Place half the green beans in the air fryer basket. Cook 12 minutes, shaking basket halfway through cooking time. Repeat with remaining green beans.

Strawberry Cream Pie

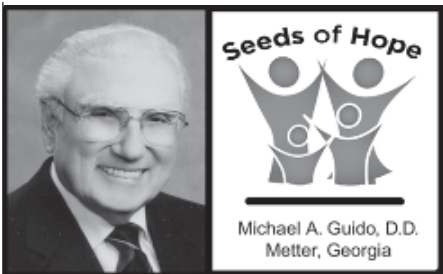


1 quart strawberries, sliced
 1 (13.5 ounce) package strawberry glaze
 1 (4 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
 ½ cup confectioners' sugar
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup heavy whipping cream
 1 (9 inch) baked pie crust

Stir strawberries with glaze in a bowl and place in refrigerator to chill. Stir cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla extract together in a bowl.

Beat cream in a separate bowl with an electric mixer just until it begins to thicken; add cream cheese mixture and continue beating until thick. Pour cream mixture into baked pie crust; top with strawberry mixture. Chill at least 1 hour before serving.

Recipes courtesy of allrecipes.com



“God Is Now Here!”

A professor of biology, who was an atheist, wrote on the dry erase board, “God is nowhere!” A student raised his hand and asked, “Sir, may I try something?”

“Of course,” said the professor.

Walking to the front of the class he moved the “w” from “where” to the end of the word “no,” and the sentence read, “God is now here!”

Wherever anyone is, God is! There is no place, nor can there be any place, where He is not. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of the universe.

There are approximately seven billion people on our planet occupying seven billion different places. Each of them could, if they would, say with equal certainty, “God is now here.” No one is closer to or further from God at any time in any place. Again, wherever anyone is, God is.

Do you remember the story of Jonah? God had a plan for him. It was to travel east – to Nineveh. But Jonah had his plan, and he decided to go west – to Tarshish. He crossed half of the world trying to get away from God, and when he got there, he found God waiting for him.

There was a king who made the same discovery. He said, “If I go up to the heavens, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.”

We may be above the clouds in an aircraft, or on the floor of the ocean in a submarine; but, He will be there waiting.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your presence in our lives knowing that “You will never leave us.” Never! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: If I go up to the heavens, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139:8-9

Technology helps predict antibiotic success in dairy calves

Antibiotics are expensive for livestock producers and many times, they fail to stop infections. University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment scientists have observed antibiotic failure in cattle is associated with behavior changes in the first days after treatment. Finding a way to predict antibiotic success or failure before treating dairy calves could save producers money and reduce antibiotic resistance.

Melissa Cantor, former graduate student in the UK Department of Animal and Food Sciences, found during her doctoral research that among calves that received antibiotic treatment for respiratory disease, those that failed to respond to the antibiotics were less active and ate less than calves that did respond to the treatment.

Cantor and UK assistant professor of dairy sciences Joao Costa was the principal investigator of the project, suggest that response to antibiotic treatment in dairy calves, and possibly other species, is measurable using behavioral monitoring

technology.

"After treatment, it was interesting that calves with antibiotic failure behaved differently in the few days after the diagnosis compared to calves that were eventually cured from respiratory disease," said Cantor, who is now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. "Calves that will recover after an antibiotic treatment eat more, are more active, and have better activity patterns during recovery than those that fail to respond to antibiotic treatment. We now have data to demonstrate that behavior is a quantifiable metric."

UK Dairy Science researchers found that technology such as activity trackers and a robotic-automated feeder could help identify changes in a calf's behavior before clinical symptoms re-emerged in the calves. This is important because calves typically are not re-treated for respiratory disease until a week or longer after treatment when clinical symptoms of the disease have either not resolved or re-emerged. Costa believes



Photo by Melissa Cantor

the discovery is an important step in the journey to reduce antibiotic use on the farm and it could also impact other industries.

"These calves could be identified and given special attention on-farm which

improves their welfare," Costa said. "The possibility to automate this process with technology on any farm is an exciting step for the future."

Calves in the study wore an activity
SEE **TECHNOLOGY**, PAGE 14

MAY IS BEEF MONTH AUCTIONS

- EVERY WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY - 10 A.M.
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Photo by Steve Patton, UK Agricultural Communications.

UK specialists help producers learn about the latest research and trends in wheat production.

Wheat field day set for May 10

The University of Kentucky Wheat Science Group will host the 2022 Wheat Field Day May 10. Registration begins at 8 a.m. CDT. The tour starts at 8:45 a.m.

UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Grain and Forage Center of Excellence specialists host the annual meeting to help producers learn about the latest research and trends in wheat production.

"Producers are always looking for ways to better manage their crops, and the field day helps do just that," said Sam McNeil, extension agricultural engineer in the UK Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. "Since all crops are interrelated, the information they learn will not only affect their wheat crops, but also cross over into their soybean yields for those double-cropping."

Topics this year include wheat management in a warmer/wetter climate, wheat agronomics, drying and storage options for quality markets, how variable rate irrigation fits with wheat and an update on the UKREC's progress after the EF-4 tornado that significantly damaged the center in December.

Attendees can receive two hours in continuing education units for Certified Crop Advisers. These include one hour for soil and water management and one hour for integrated pest management. Pesticide applicators can receive two general and one specific hours in categories 1A and 10.

The UK Research and Education Center Farm is located at 1205 Hopkinsville St. in Princeton.

By Jordan Strickler
University of Kentucky

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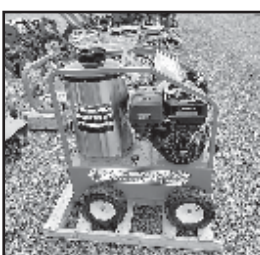
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2022 research looks different at UK's Princeton station

While it has only been a few months since the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center at Princeton took a catastrophic direct hit from an EF-4 tornado, center scientists are beginning to ramp up their research programs for the growing season.

Depending on the program, research will look different at the center than in past years. The center, which encompasses nearly 1,600 acres, lost almost all of its facilities and research-grade equipment. Due to these losses and supply chain issues, some research programs may not be able to resume normal operations for the foreseeable future.

"While we are resuming research, some programs are going to look and feel a little different for at least the next year," said Carrie Knott, UKREC director. "All researchers are committed to supporting Kentucky producers and are going to great lengths to do so with what facilities remain. Please bear with us as we work to rebuild."

Research programs will vary depending on the amount of equipment and facilities needing to be replaced or

repaired. Some researchers will start the season with small setbacks while others may take much longer before they can return to their pre-tornado levels.

Kiersten Wise, UK extension plant pathologist, lost many important disease samples and will have to restart many of her research efforts. This includes a project studying the Northern corn leaf blight fungus, *Exserohilum turcicum*, adaptation to fungicide use and potentially resistance development. Wise's program was the only laboratory in the United States working on this project, and prior to the tornado, she received samples from across the country for analysis. Those samples are now mostly gone along with samples for a project on ear rots and historical disease samples that were stored in her lab under special conditions.

"We have to build our collections up and restart our laboratory research program," Wise said. "The hard thing is I want answers for the farmers I work with, but now it is going to take some time."

The center's beef unit facilities and



Photo by Stephen Patton

UK Research and Education Center director Carrie Knott stands by a corn planter and a newly constructed storage structure.

fences sustained significant damage. All handling facilities were destroyed. The station also lost six miles of fence. Due to this loss, some of the center's herd was temporarily relocated to UK's Oran C. Little Research in Woodford County. Katie VanValin, UK extension beef specialist, plans for those cattle to return to the station this spring as perimeter

fencing gets rebuilt.

"The damage has probably set us back a year because cattle research needs to be conducted at certain times to be valuable," VanValin said. "Our first priority is to maintain the health of our cowherd."

SEE 2022, PAGE 12

ESTATE AUCTION

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Photo by Stephen Patton, UK
Agricultural Communications
Specialist

Andy Bailey, UK extension tobacco specialist, lost nine of 10 barns at the station and sustained damage to his transplanter and sprayer.

2022 research looks different at UK's Princeton station

FROM PAGE 11

VanValin joined the faculty at the center in 2020 and was in the beginnings of her research program at Princeton when the tornado hit. This year, she will continue the long-term selenium study started by Roy Burris, James Matthews and Phillip Bridges. She also plans to focus on research areas that do not require live animal handling.

While all the solar panels that transmitted data from the herd's smart ear tags to a computer at the station were destroyed in the tornado, VanValin was able to secure data up until the tornado hit. She hopes to analyze this data collected just prior to the tornado from the herd's CowManager Ear Tags to gain better insights into the animals' reaction to the natural disaster.

Andy Bailey, UK extension tobacco specialist, lost nine of 10 barns at the station and sustained damage to his transplanter and sprayer. He expects it will take a few years to rebuild his facilities and is working with an equipment supplier to repair the transplanter. He and his graduate students Andrea Keeney and Caleb Perkins will continue research this year with Keeney on track to graduate with her doctorate in May 2023. Thanks to partnerships with Murray State University and the University of Tennessee Highland Rim AgResearch and Education Center, Bailey and the students will conduct almost all of their

planned research at both locations.

Bailey has conducted research at both locations for the past two decades, but it will be ramped up this year. He also plans to do more on-farm trials with Kentucky producers including black shank trials in Hopkinsville and a burley trial on a Daviess County farm. The Calloway County office of the UK Cooperative Extension Service is providing them with office space so they can be closer to their research at Murray.

While Bailey hopes the transplanter is fixed before spring planting, both UT and Murray State have offered to allow him to use their on-site equipment so he can get his research plots planted.

"I'm really happy we have these relationships," he said. "We won't be able to do everything we had planned, but we will come close. I can't thank Murray State University and the University of Tennessee enough."

No tobacco was in the barns destroyed by the tornado. Bailey had finished stripping his research in mid-November. His research data for the past 10 years was also retrieved from the station's server.

Soil scientist Edwin Ritchey plans for much of his research program to continue as planned but will do more research and extension activities off station property than he has in past years.

By Katie Pratt

MAY IS BEEF MONTH



CHIMICHURRI-MARINATED STRIP FILETS

A homemade Chimichurri sauce is used as a marinade for Strip Steaks.

INGREDIENTS: 4 beef Strip Filets, cut 1 inch thick (about 4 to 6 ounces each)

Chimichurri Sauce: 2 cloves garlic • 1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro • 1/2 cup packed fresh parsley • 1/4 cup olive oil 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice • 1/2 teaspoon salt • 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated lemon peel • 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper

COOKING: Prepare Chimichurri Sauce. Place garlic in food processor container. Cover; process until finely chopped. Add remaining sauce ingredients. Cover; process until well blended. Remove and refrigerate 1/4 cup sauce for serving. Place beef Strip Filets and remaining sauce in food-safe plastic bag; turn steaks to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 15 minutes to 2 hours.

Remove filets from marinade; discard marinade. Pat steaks dry with paper towels. Place filets on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 11 to 14 minutes (over medium heat on preheated gas grill, 11 to 15 minutes) for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally.

Serve filets with reserved Chimichurri Sauce.

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Stretching hay supplies

The Forage Doctor

By Jimmy Henning



The early part of hay cutting season is just about here, and everyone's trying

to figure out what this first harvest will be like. We are having internal discussions about how much less hay land will be fertilized and at how much of a lower rate. We are also trying to predict whether the cool spring has or will have a significant impact on May/June growth. Ensuring that hay supplies are

SEE **STRETCHING**, PAGE 22



Less acres fertilized, lower nitrogen rates and possibly a colder than normal weather pattern all point to sharply lower first cuttings of hay this year. Hay supplies can be stretched with some pretty simple practices.



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Technology helping to predict antibiotic success in dairy calves

FROM PAGE 9

tracker on their left rear leg. A robotic automated feeder recorded the calf's daily milk intake, drinking speed, visits and grain intake. Researchers performed daily health exams on a group of calves for the first 90 days of life. Of this group, 38 calves with respiratory disease were enrolled in the study and treated with antibiotics on the day of diagnosis. Recovered calves improved their grain intake and were generally more active, while relapsed calves had depressed feed intake, and had longer lying-down times in the first week after treatment. Costa said these results suggest that there is the new potential for precision technology devices on farms to automatically identify calves relapsing with respiratory disease before re-emergence of the clinical disease.

"Sickness behavior may be an early indicator of failure to respond to antibiotic treatment for respiratory

disease, and it may be useful to create algorithms that will automatically detect antibiotic failure," Costa said. "Future research will focus on the development of these technology-based alerts to identify antibiotic

failures early, increasing the chance of recovery in the calves."

By Aimee Nielson
University of Kentucky

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Fertilizer prices and cooler temps could affect first hay cutting



Photo by Matt Barton

A lot of farmers probably have some hay carryover, but will it be enough?

LEXINGTON - Farmers typically don't need a lot of supplemental hay in late spring, but it's something University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension agent Nick Roy has been seeing in his part of the state. Add to that, higher than normal fertilizer prices and hay and livestock producers are facing a challenging situation.

"The general feeling from farmers around here is that grass hay growth has been stunted from the recent cooler

temperatures," said Roy, the agricultural and natural resources extension agent in Adair County. "Those comments are even coming from folks who applied fertilizer according to soil test recommendations and others using poultry litter."

Roy said in addition to a cooler-than-normal spring, south-central Kentucky has also been on the dry side, which could also be a factor. UK agricultural meteorologist Matt Dixon

noted that temperatures have been slightly below normal.

"But (the temperatures) don't tell the whole story," he said. "Rainfall has been slightly below normal in some areas as well."

Dixon said April 2021 was also cooler, but he doesn't remember farmers talking about a big hay reduction then. The price of fertilizer is likely a bigger culprit to potential lower hay yields this spring and throughout the rest of the year. As fertilizer prices continue to soar to record highs, farmers are not only experiencing the sticker shock that comes with those prices but may even face product shortages.

Recent DTN reports indicate that retail fertilizer prices are trending higher as of April 27. Monoammonium phosphate showed an average price of \$1,079 per ton, which ties the all-time high set in 2008. Nitrogen is also at an all-time high at \$730 per ton. Diammonium phosphate, potash, urea anhydrous ammonia and urea ammonium nitrate were also on the rise in April.

"A large majority of farmers are struggling with those prices and yields are going to reflect that," said Jimmy Henning, extension professor in the UK College of Agriculture, Food and

SEE **FERTILIZER**, PAGE 17

EQUIPMENT CONSIGNMENT PUBLIC AUCTION

**SATURDAY, MAY 14 AT 10 A.M. CST.
HORSE CAVE, KY.**

Location: 3561 LaGrande Hwy., Horse Cave, Ky., 42729. From I-65 take Hwy. 218 East approximately 9.6 miles and the sale location is on the right, look for posted signs.

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Tick season is here and UK wants your ticks

Ticks are a threat in Kentucky year-round, but especially in the summer months. The next time one bites you, stop and think before flushing it down the toilet. You could help other people by mailing it to the University of Kentucky entomology department to see if it carries disease or not.

Here's how: If you find a tick on yourself or your pet, remove it with tweezers, place it in alcohol in a sealed container or bag, and mail it to the university's entomology department. Those are the instructions Professor Reddy Palli, who chairs the department and serves as state entomologist, told Aaron Mudd of the Lexington Herald-Leader.

A university spokesperson told Mudd to check with your local UK Extension office to see exactly where to mail a

specimen for study.

"We will contact the person who submits the specimen if we detect pathogens in the tick and encourage them to contact their physician," Palli told the Herald-Leader in an email.

Mudd reports, "As a leader in his field, Palli is overseeing several researchers who are studying tick populations in Kentucky, monitoring the diseases they spread and potentially engineering ways to repel them or even stop them from searching for blood in the first place."

Katie Pratt of the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment also wrote about the work of Palli and his colleagues.

She reports that one of the Palli's graduate students is Anna Pasternak, who leads the Kentucky Tick Surveil-

lance Program. She collects ticks to analyze their genetic material and any disease-causing pathogens hiding within them. The program has been collecting information on ticks in the state since January 2019.

"Preliminary results show that the greatest number of ticks exist in wooded areas of the state and at Land Between the Lakes, and 10 percent of them carry a pathogen that cause diseases like Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, alpha-gal and others," Palli said. The last disease he mentioned can cause an allergy to red meat.

"We really did not expect pathogen presences in these ticks to be that high," Palli said.

SEE TICK, PAGE 18



Photo by Matt Barton
Lucie Conchou works in UK entomologist Zainulabeuddin Syed's lab.

Fertilizer prices and cooler temps could affect first hay cutting

FROM PAGE 16

Environment's Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. "Yield factors are complex and interrelated. Weather, input costs and pests all can affect yield quality and quantity. We need to focus on where we go from here. A lot of farmers probably have some hay carryover since most are conservative and forward thinking about anticipating their hay needs, but will it be enough?"

Roy said the current scenario will have a longer-lasting effect.

"Regardless of the cause, I wager that the demand for hay this fall will be huge," he said. "While many had a lot of hay to hold over, many did not. We've already seen some herds culled hard and even sold out. I expect to see more of that."

John Grove, professor of agronomy, located at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton, said dealing with high prices means farmers should focus on efficient nutrient management.

"This means doing better at getting the right rate, right timing, right fertilizer source and the right

placement for each pasture or hayfield," he said. "I refer to this as the 4R concept and it has been applied to row crops, but our purpose is to apply it to the forage production system, where the whole soil-plant-animal continuum is under consideration."

He said there is no silver bullet for high fertilizer prices, but key management strategies will help farmers achieve maximum fertilizer nutrient use efficiency with the commercial fertilizer inputs they purchase.

"Start with a soil test first, as soil pH values between 6 and 7 are important to good soil nutrient availability and legume growth. Lime fields with acid soils," he said. "Don't apply fertilizer phosphate and potash if soil test phosphorus and potassium values, respectively, are medium-high or greater. UK's nitrogen rate recommendations are given as a range, so applied N rates should be at the lower end of that range. Avoid products that are 'too good to be true,' promising that small amounts will substitute for large amounts of conventional fertilizer. Whether biological or chemical, almost none of these products (legume inoculants are the exception) have ever delivered on those promises."

Additionally, Grove suggested that farmers use rotational grazing, bale grazing, manure recovery/spreading and other animal management techniques to conserve and amplify the value of the farm's existing nutrient resources.

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Tick season is here and UK wants your ticks

FROM PAGE 17

"Our goal is to take Anna's data and educate farmers, loggers, physicians and health care workers about the ticks in the state and ways to minimize their effects. For example, if someone gets bitten by a tick carrying the Lyme disease pathogen and they get an antibiotic within 72 hours, it is likely the antibiotic will kill the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Not many people know that, and by the time symptoms appear, it's often too late."

Blacklegged ticks, tiny bugs otherwise known as deer ticks, are the main transmitter of Lyme disease, the top insect vector-borne disease in America. And as these ticks expand their region from New England to the eastern half of the United States, cases of Lyme disease are growing too, Pratt reports.

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint aches and swollen lymph glands. Upwards of 80% of infected persons have a distinctive "bull's eye" rash that appears at the site

of the bite three to 30 days after infection.

The American dog tick and the brown dog tick can carry and transmit the bacteria that causes Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Signs and symptoms of RMSF are fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, muscle pain, lack of appetite and a spotted rash. The rash usually develops several days after the onset of a fever and can vary between splotches and smaller pinpoint dots.

The Lone Star tick carries the bacteria that causes ehrlichiosis. Signs and symptoms of ehrlichiosis are fever, headache, chills, cough, malaise, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, confusion and red eyes. A rash is common in children, but less so in adults.

The Lone Star tick is also a vector for alpha-gal syndrome, known as the red-meat allergy, which is becoming increasingly more common.

Ways to protect yourself from ticks are:

- Avoid grassy, wooded and leaf-covered areas

ered areas

- Keep grass and shrubs trimmed and cleared away

- Walk in the center of walking trails
- Wear light-colored clothes, which make it easier to spot ticks

- Wear long pants tucked into boots and tuck in your shirts

- Use tick repellent that has the repellent DEET or picaridin

- Treat your clothes with permethrin, which repels and kills ticks

- Do a body check along the way and at the end of each day

- Check your pets and equipment for ticks

- Shower within two hours of potential exposure, if possible

To kill ticks on clothing, tumble dry for 10 minutes or wash them in hot water. If clothes can't be washed in hot water, tumble dry for 90 minutes on regular heat or 60 minutes on high.

Kentucky Health News



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Market reports are currently not available from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Updated reports will be published as they become available.

SCIENTISTS: modern farming, climate change have lowered nutrition

The advent of modern farming methods has caused fruits, vegetables and grains to become less nutritious over the past 70 years, Stacey Colino reports for National Geographic. Multiple scientific studies show that many current crops have "less protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, riboflavin, and vitamin C than those that were grown decades ago," Colino writes.

Climate change and rising carbon-dioxide levels are partly to blame, but the biggest problem is "modern agricultural processes that increase crop yields but disturb soil health," Colino reports. "These include irrigation, fertilization, and harvesting methods that also disrupt essential interactions between plants and soil fungi, which reduces absorption of nutrients from the soil."

Nutritional decline could make it harder for people to get the nutrients they need to fight off chronic illnesses, said David R. Montgomery, a professor of geomorphology at the University of Washington and co-author with Anne Biklé of What Your Food Ate. It's increasingly important to grow nutritionally dense foods, he told Colino: "We can't afford to lose arable land as

population grows. We need to prevent further damage and work to restore fertility to already degraded lands."

Montgomery and other experts still encourage people to eat more fresh produce and less-processed foods, but told Colino they hope this knowledge will inspire more people to care about how their food is grown.

Kentucky Health News

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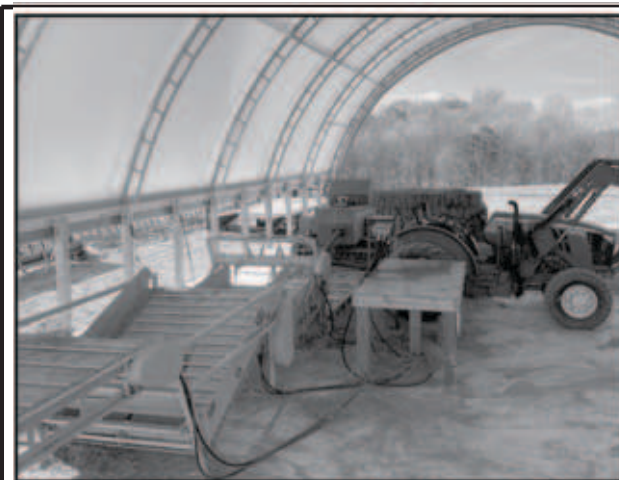
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Stretching hay supplies

FROM PAGE 13

going to be adequate this year is going to be a good use of everyone's time. Here are a few thoughts on how you might impact how long your hay supply will last.

First of all, do the math. Perhaps experience tells you how many bales you need per cow, but this would be a good year to actually weigh a few bales. Daily forage need is usually estimated by multiplying live weight by 2 to 3 percent, with 2 being on the low side. Using a less risky figure of 3 percent for intake, a 1200 pound cow (or horse) would need to be supplied with 36 pounds of hay per day. Adjusting for hay wastage during feeding (10 percent is a reasonable loss figure), this results in a forage need of 40 pounds of hay per day per cow. For a 120 day hay feeding season, that comes to 4800 pounds of hay per cow per year, or 5 1000 lb rolls. Culling open cows will lower your hay need next winter and may let you squeeze a few more hay acres.

Rotationally graze. One of the first and biggest impacts of initiating a well-designed rotational grazing system is having more hay to harvest. With rotational stocking, more forage is harvested and less is wasted either by trampling or from plant death due to shading in underutilized areas. With continuous grazing, annual per acre utilization rates can be as low as 30percent. A simple rotational stocking system can move utilization numbers up to 50percent. That is a 20percent increase in productivity per acre. A grazing plan that keeps grazing periods per paddock 7 days or less minimizes regrazing of the same area before it gets a chance to recover. The regrazing of areas before recovery is one of the biggest reasons that continuously grazed pastures underproduce. With continuous stocking, the forage is never growing at optimal rates because it is always in the slow growth phase that immediately follows defoliation. Rotational stocking also does a better job of distributing nutrients from manure and urine.

Test your hay. Okay, I am obsessed with testing hay. If there ever was a year to test hay, this is it. First, we need to know what nutrients we have, so we can have a strategy for supplementation. Test hay that you are going to buy too. Costing out the hay nutrients will help you evaluate supplement purchases. If you can get 60 percent TDN hay for \$120 per ton, that equates to about 10 cents per pound of TDN. Corn at \$7 per bushel and 88 percent TDN equates to 14 cents per pound of TDN. Makes expensive hay look much more cost effective. With hay you do have to factor in losses due to storage and feeding, but at least you can evaluate your nutrient costs when you have a forage test.

Reduce your storage losses. If it is a good year to test hay, it is an even better year to get as much hay under cover as you can. One producer has a good amount of carryover in the barn but does not have enough barn space to hold this year's crop too. His solution is to rent an inline bale wrapper and wrap the 2021 hay to make room for the new crop in the barn. Essentially the plastic wrap is like a quick hay barn. He will want to use enough plastic to ensure good protection

from moisture from above AND below, so at least two layers of plastic are needed. Protecting bales from moisture infiltration can save 20 percent in dry matter losses and sometimes more.

Less acres fertilized, lower nitrogen rates and possi-

bly a colder than normal weather pattern all point to sharply lower first cuttings of hay this year. No matter how you do it, spend some time developing a strategy to not get caught with hay in short supply.

Happy foraging.



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