MAY 2024

MCCREARY COUNTY EXTENSION

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

It's about that time...

Hay season is upon us once again. Hay is the most commonly stored forage on most Kentucky farms. Since hay is widely utilized, understanding the factors that affect the quality of hay is important, as well as how to produce high quality hay.

Maturity stage is the most important factor impacting forage quality and the easiest way to significantly improve quality. As grasses and legumes advance from the vegetative (leafy) to reproductive (seed) stage, they become higher in fiber and lignin content and lower in protein content, digestibility, and acceptability by livestock.

Making the first hay cutting early permits regrowth to begin at a time when temperatures and soil moisture are favorable for plant growth. This will generally increase the total yield per acre over the course of the year even though first cutting yield will be lower. Poor weather (i.e. rain, hail) and handling conditions can lower hay quality. Rain can cause leaf loss and can leach nutrients from the plants. Sunlight can lower hay quality by bleaching and lowering Vitamin A content. To reduce leaf loss, rake or ted hay while it SOUTH-GENTRAL KU Hay Contest

Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

HAY CONTEST COMING SOON!

Sample collection begins in June. Hay probes available for checkout OR ANR Agent can assist with collection.

Make plans to enter and get your hay tested & analyzed by professionals for FREE

You might just win!

Contact McCreary County Extension at 606-376-2524 for more information



is moist (above 40% moisture) and avoid baling when it is too dry (15% moisture or less). A good rule is to ted hay later than 7 p.m. the afternoon it was cut, or before 10 a.m. the day after cutting. To reduce drying time and help decrease damage, use wider swaths.

Storing twine-tied hay bales outside unprotected can result in losses exceeding one-third of the original crop. Plastic mesh wrap (net wrap) and solid, self-adhesive plastic wrap are recent developments in round bale storage that can provide some extra protection against weather conditions during outside storage. Storing inside or under a roof is recommended to preserve the hay better.

Producing quality hay will help maintain adequate cattle body condition and growth during times when pastures are not growing. Feeding low quality hay can negatively impact body condition, immune system, and weight gain- thus decreasing profit from each animal.

For more information on producing quality hay, contact Tracie Goodman, McCreary County ANR Extension Agent.



Tracie Goodman

ANR/4-H Extension Agent University of Kentucky McCreary County Cooperative Extension Service 141 College St.- P.O. Box 278 Whitley City, KY 42653 606-376-2524 Tracie.Goodman@uky.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS MCCREARY CO. EXTENSION

May 4th, 9am-1pm Opening Day McCreary County Farmers Market Every Saturday after, 9am-1pm 299 Wilburn K Ross Hwy. Stearns, KY 42647

> May 14th, 12pm Library Lunch Program Home Composting

May 14th, 6-8pm Ag Safety Night McCreary Cattlemen's Assoc. Kentucky Dept. of Agriculture Whitley City Fire Department

> May 23rd, 5:30pm Grow Appalachia Pest ID & Management

May 29th, 10am Get Healthy McCreary Hike Dog Slaughter Falls

> Call 606-376-2524 for registration info



May Garden Notes



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Publications.



Even if you have not planted beans, sweet corn, and vining crops (cucumbers, squash), you can continue to plant them in May in all parts of the state. Now is the time to plant crops that are particularly sensitive to cold and frost: this includes tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and okra. It is very important to protect these plants from frost.

If you are growing in raised beds or containers, the soil will dry out faster than it does in a regular garden. Water when the top of the soil feels dry. Evenly apply water around the bed or container. For raised beds, apply enough water to wet the soil about six inches deep. Use a garden trowel or shovel to check how deep the water has moved. For containers, apply water until some water drains out the hole at the bottom of the container.

Grow smart with SOW: Kentucky gardeners' ultimate app for planting success!

Visit the Google Play Store or App Store to download!





Google Play

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 SOW can link you to your local county extension office, where you'll find staff

information and ways to contact

Grow smart with SOW

 The app **SOW** is based on ID-128 Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky from the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension

Use the Library function to view informational sheets and pictures of 40 common home garden vegetables.
Enter your plants on My Garden
Take notes with the Journal, helping

you plan for next year.

extension agents!

Cooperative Extension Service

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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MCCREARY 4-H FORESTRY & WHEP TEAMS TAKE THE WIN!

Congratulations to our MCHS Forestry Team and new Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) Team for winning the 4-H State Competitions in April!

They will each advance to the 4-H National Forestry and WHEP competitions in July.

We are so proud to have them represent McCreary County and Kentucky 4-H!



McCreary County Extension Office PO Box 278 Whitley City, KY 42653 606-376-2524



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED