

Spencer County Agriculture & Horticulture Newsletter

 Cooperative
Extension Service

Cooperative Extension Service
Spencer County
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March 2025

Between the ice and snow in January and more snow and rain just a couple of weeks ago, I'm ready for spring to get here and I know many of you are ready for that as well.

Many times through the year, I'll get a phone call or email and they will say: "I saw this on google but I wanted to verify it." I appreciate getting those calls.

If you are ever searching for anything, make sure you put "uky" or "extension" in the box along with the topic you are researching as that will bring up relevant results to Kentucky or from another extension service.

As always, feel free to call or email me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Bryce Roberts,
Spencer County Extension Agent for
Agriculture and Natural Resources

More Information

As always, if you need more information, feel free to **call me** at 477-2217.

You can also **email me** at broberts@uky.edu or you can **visit my website** to view archived newsletters and news articles. The web address is: www.spencerextension.com



Soil Sample Now

As we are now approaching spring, this is one of the best times to sample your fields, gardens, or lawns to see what type and how much fertilizer you need to make the soil as productive as possible. For each sample you want to submit, we need at least one pint (sandwich bag) of dry soil 4-8 inches below the soil surface. Please put your name and sample ID (north lawn, hayfield 2, etc.) on each bag.

Bring those in now so that you can get the results more quickly and in some cases go ahead and apply the fertilizer now so that the soil will be ready for your yard or crops.

This is a free service provided by the Spencer Co. Conservation District. Thanks to them for sponsoring the soil sampling program.

Our office is open normal business hours, but you have the option to drop off your samples anytime you like.

As you pull into our parking lot, please go to the right to the back of our building. You will then see our pavilion and on the pavilion, you will see a black tub with a yellow top to the right of the double doors. Inside the tub, you will find some paperwork that you will need to fill out so that we can properly test your soil. Place the paperwork and samples back into the tub. I'll review the results and mail them back to you in 2-3 weeks.

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

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Farmers Market Planning Meeting

The Taylorsville Farmers Market will be holding an informational meeting on March 6, 2025, beginning at 6 p.m. and will be held at Fresh Take Market.

The market will open up on April 12 and we do have applications here at our office. If you have any questions, please contact Sandi Deutsch at 502-376-3888.

Beginning Producer Sessions

We, along with the Bullitt Co. Extension Service, are continuing our Beginning Producer Sessions in 2025. Please note that these sessions are for anyone, but for those especially with 10 years or less ag production experience.

March 25—6 p.m. Bullitt Co. Extension

“Marketing Small Scale Farm Products”

This free class will cover the basics of reaching customers, branding your farm, and selling your products effectively.

April 22—6 p.m. Spencer Co. Extension

“Funding Sources for Your Operation”

This class will help you identify and apply for grants, loans, and other funding sources available for small and beginning farms. A light meal will be served at each meeting so registration is required. Please call our office at 477-2217 or you can email me at broberts@uky.edu to register.

Spring Weather—Be Prepared

As March begins and winter starts to wind down, now is the time to start thinking about being prepared for what the unpredictable spring weather can throw at us. March is a transitional month where we need to be prepared for anything and everything. In recent years, we’ve seen snow and cold snaps, but we’ve also experienced flooding and tornadoes as well. March tends to represent the battle between winter ending and spring beginning. Eventually, as we move into April and May, signs of winter disappear and spring develops in full force.

Spring can bring beautiful weather, with warm temperatures and sunny skies - great to get the flowers blooming. But it can also bring violent, dangerous weather. Do you or your family know what to do if severe weather strikes where you are? Preparation can be key for everyone’s safety!

Always be weather aware! Make sure you know the weather risks of the day ahead of time. When severe thunderstorm, tornado, and flash flood warnings are issued, having multiple methods to receive these warnings and weather information is very important for you to be able to take the appropriate action. This could include a NOAA weather radio, a reverse call system, television/radio, or nearby sirens if you are outdoors. In addition, you should know what to do when these

warnings are issued. Have a plan - and put that plan into action. Make sure you have a safety kit ready to go, as well as a point of contact who can make sure everyone is accounted for and safe.

A Severe Thunderstorm Warning means severe weather (damaging winds at least 60 mph and/or large hail of 1 inch or greater) has been reported by spotters or indicated by the National Weather Service’s radar. Take shelter in a substantial building, away from windows. If the severe thunderstorm warning states winds in excess of 80 mph, treat it like a tornado warning.

A Tornado Warning means a tornado has been spotted or indicated by radar. There is imminent danger to life and property. Take action now! Move to the basement or an underground cellar if possible. If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room (multiple walls between you and the outside of the house) on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. You should be sheltered well away from windows or any outside doors. The smaller the interior room the better (closet, bathroom, hallway).

This information is provided by Brandon Peloquin— National Weather Service Wilmington, OH.



Price Risk Always Exists, even in a Bull Market

By: Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

I doubt many would take issue with me calling the last couple of years a “bull market” for cattle. The combination of tight supplies and strong demand has resulted in cattle markets tracing an upward trajectory over the last couple of years. As an illustration, the chart below tracks the daily nearby CME© feeder cattle futures price over the last 26 months. In January of 2023, the nearby feeder cattle futures price was in the \$180’s. As I write this article in February of 2025, the nearby futures price is in the \$260’s.

While it is hard to dispute the overall strength of the recent cattle market, it is also important to note that during the last 26 months there have been multiple times when markets saw significant downward swings. The most recent of these occurred since the end of January and was likely sparked by the resumption of live cattle imports from Mexico, continued talk of trade disruptions, Avian Influenza, and any number of other factors. The market also fell by more than \$40 per cwt from September to December of 2023 and more than \$30 per cwt from late May to early September of 2024. For producers who sold cattle during those pullbacks, the impact on returns was significant.

There are a lot of potential strategies to manage price risk and the simplest may be a forward contract. By forward contracting cattle, price risk is largely eliminated as the seller and buyer agree on a purchase price prior to delivery of the cattle. A similar strategy would be selling cattle through an internet auction and specifying delivery at a later time. In both cases, the seller entering the forward contract still has production risk as they must meet the specifications of the contract (weight, quality, etc.), but market swings are no longer a concern.

Futures and options markets are also common tools for price risk management. Short futures positions allow producers to capitalize on the expectation of cattle prices in the future through CME© futures prices. When utilizing a short futures position to offset potential decreases in cattle prices, farmers are essentially exchanging price risk for basis risk. Producers utilizing short futures positions also need to plan for potential margin calls if markets move substantially higher. Put options give producers the right to sell a future contract if they choose and they pay a premium for this flexibility. This effectively sets a price floor for cattle as the strike price on the put option and the premium paid sets a minimum price for the cattle being sold.

Finally, I have talked more about Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) insurance than any other risk management strategy recently. It works almost exactly like a put option but has the advantage of flexibility on scale. Unlike several of the other price risk management tools, LRP insurance can be purchased on any number of head, which is much easier for smaller operations to utilize. LRP has been made more attractive over the last several years through increased premium subsidies and allowing producers to pay premiums after the ending date of the policy.

The specific tool or strategy that cattle producers utilize to manage price risk is less important than their overall risk management plan. I encourage producers to know what risk management tools are available to them, understand how changes in sale price impact their profits, and plan to cover themselves from downside price risk. I still feel good about the fundamentals of the cattle market, but I think the first couple weeks of February have been a good reminder that price risk always exists, even in a bull market.

This is a part of the Cattle Markets Notes Weekly that is published by UK, University of Arkansas and Mississippi State University. To sign up for this weekly newsletter, please go to

<https://bit.ly/CattleNotes>

 Cooperative
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SAVE THE DATE

March 29, 2025

9:30 - 12:30

“March into Wellness” with us at the
second annual Wellness Day hosted
at the Spencer County Extension Office.

A variety of free services, health
information, and community
health partners will be available.

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506





Blueberry Cream Cheese Pound Cake

1 (8 ounce) package fat free cream cheese	1 (5 ounce) package instant vanilla pudding mix	2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup canola oil	2 large egg whites	2 cups fresh blueberries
1 (18 ounce) package yellow butter cake mix	2 large eggs	

- 1. Preheat** oven to 325° F.
 - 2. Lightly spray** Bundt pan with nonstick cooking spray and dust with flour.
 - 3. Combine** cream cheese and oil in a medium bowl; beat with mixer at high speed until smooth and creamy.
 - 4. Add** cake mix, pudding mix, egg whites, eggs, and vanilla extract. Beat at medium speed until blended.
 - 5. Fold** in berries.
 - 6. Spoon** batter into prepared pan.
 - 7. Bake** 60 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
 - 8. Cool** cake in pan for 20 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely.
- Yield:** 16 slices.
Nutrition Analysis: 260 calories; 10g fat; 1.5g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 30 mg cholesterol; 390mg sodium; 38g carbohydrate; 1g fiber; 23g sugar; 4g protein.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

