# CARTER COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2020

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
*Cooperative Extension Service*

**Cooperative Extension Service**
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

All events held at the Carter County Extension Office unless otherwise noted.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| March 4 | 12:00 | Apple & Pear Rootstock Grafting Demo |
| March 4 | 5:00 | NRCS Young Forest Initiative Informational Meeting |
| March 4 | 6:00 | Tobacco GAP Certification @ Maysville Community & Technical College |
| March 5 | | Last Day to Order Strawberry, Raspberry, & Blackberry Plants |
| March 5 | 5:30 | Apple & Pear Rootstock Grafting Demo |
| March 5 | 7:00-8:30 | Forestry Webinar: Kentucky Forestry & Wildlife Assistance: Finding the Help You Need (Counts for Kentucky Master Logger Continuing Education Credits) |
| March 7 | 9:30-3:00 | Homebased Microprocessor Workshop @ Boyd County Extension Office |
| March 15 | | Deadline to enroll for ARC/PLC through the Farm Service Agency |
| March 16 | 10:00 | Ag Advancement Council Meeting |
| March 17 | 6:30 | Haylage Informational Meeting– Speaker: Dr. Jimmy Henning, UK Extension Forage Specialist; Cohosted by: Kee's Farm Service |
| March 19 | | Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop—Lexington |
| March 19 | 6:00 | Northeast Area Livestock Association Cattle Meeting—Sponsored by: Bluegrass Animal Clinic |
| March 26 | 6:00 | Tobacco GAP Certification—Sharpsburg Community Center (Preregistration required.) |
| April 7 | 12:00 | County Extension Council & District Board Meetings |
| April 7 | 6:00 | Little Sandy Beekeepers Association (Speaker: Dr. Ric Bessin, UK Extension Entomologist) |
| April 16 | 6:00 | Northeast Area Livestock Association Cattle Meeting |
| April 18 | 10:00 | Eastern KY Horse Expo @ Boyd County Fairgrounds Extension Education Center |

***Like us on Facebook for updates and new meeting announcements. https://www.facebook.com/CCESAG/***
***Meeting cancellations due to inclement weather will also be announced on our Facebook page.***

## Haylage Informational Meeting

March 17th at 6:30

Carter County Extension Office

Join us to learn all about the basics of haylage production.

Speaker: Dr. Jimmy Henning, UK Extension Forage Specialist

Cohosted by: Kee's Farm Service

## Northeast Area Livestock Association Cattle Meeting

March 19th @ 6:00

Topic: Vaccinations

Sponsored by: Bluegrass Animal Clinic

A meal will be provided. Feel free to bring your favorite dessert to share.

## Tobacco GAP Certification

The annual Tobacco GAP Certification will be held at the Maysville Community and Technical College on March 4th at 6 PM. Tobacco producers must be GAP Certified to grow a crop. The meeting will discuss production practices, GAP Connections updates, and labor/transportation updates.

## Young Forest Initiative

Come learn about a new Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Focused Conservation Project in Carter and Greenup Counties that has earmarked $1.2 million for land owners to implement conservation practices on their woodlands. This project targets forest landowners to improve forest health and habitat for upland wildlife. The meeting will be held at the Carter County Cooperative Extension Office on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 beginning at 5pm. Come learn how to participate in this project as well as other local, state, and NRCS Financial Assistance Programs available to Kentucky landowners available for Forestland and Agricultural land.

Image from https://ruffedgrousesociety.org/grouse-facts/#desc


## Forestry Webinar

March 5: 7:00PM -8:30 PM

Carter County Extension Office

Kentucky Forestry and Wildlife Assistance: Finding the Help You Need. (Counts for Master Logger Credit.)

Rebecca Konopka

Rebecca Konopka,
Carter County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources

# Beef Timely Tips

*Source: Les Anderson, Ph.D., UK Beef Extension Specialist*

## Spring-Calving Cows

Observe spring-calving cows closely. Check cows at least twice daily and first-calf heifers more frequently than that. Be ready to assist those not making progress after 1 to 2 hours of hard labor. Chilled calves should be dried and warmed as soon as possible.

See that each calf gets colostrum within an hour of birth, or administer colostrum (or a commercial colostrum replacement) with an esophageal feeder, if needed.

Identify calves with eartags and/or tattoos while calves are young and easy to handle and record birthdate and Dam ID. Commercial male calves should be castrated and implanted as soon as possible. Registered calves should be weighed in the first 24 hours.

Separate cows that have calved and increase their feed. Energy supplementation to cows receiving hay is necessary to prepare them for rebreeding. For example, a 1250 lb cow giving 25 lb/day of milk would need about 25 lb of fescue hay and 5 lb of concentrate daily to maintain condition. If you need to go from a condition score of 4 to 5, you will need to add about 2 more lb of concentrate. Cows must be in good condition to conceive early in the upcoming breeding season.

Watch for calf scours! If scours become a problem, move cows that have not calved to a clean pasture. Be prepared to give fluids to scouring calves that become dehydrated. Consult your veterinarian for advice and send fecal samples to diagnostic lab to determine which drug therapy will be most effective. Try to avoid feeding hay in excessively muddy areas to avoid contamination of the dams' udders.

Continue grass tetany prevention. Be sure that the mineral mix contains high levels (~15%) of magnesium and that cows consume adequate amounts. You can feed the UK Beef IRM High Magnesium mineral.

Plan to vaccinate calves for clostridial diseases (Blackleg, Malignant Edema) as soon as possible. You might choose to do this at the prebreeding working in late April or early May.

Obtain yearling measurements on bulls and heifers this month (weight, height, pelvic area, scrotal circumference, ultrasound data, etc.) if needed for special sales. Heifers should be on target to be cycling by the start of the breeding season.

Prepare bulls for the breeding season. Increase feed if necessary to have bulls in adequate condition for breeding. Obtain Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) on bulls, even if they were checked last breeding season.

Finalize plans for your spring breeding program. Purchase new bulls at least 30 days before the breeding. Order semen now, if using artificial insemination.


## Fall-Calving Cows

Bull(s) should be away from the cows now!

Plan to pregnancy check cows soon. You can also blood test for pregnancy as early as 30 days after bull removal.

Creep feed calves with grain, by-products or high quality forage. Calves will not make satisfactory gains on the dam's milk alone after about 4 mos. of age – since there isn't much pasture in March, fall calves need supplemental nutrition. Consider creep grazing on wheat pasture, if available. Calves can also be early-weaned. Be sure that feed bunks are low enough that calves can eat with the cows.

Calves intended for feeders should be implanted.

Consider adding weight and selling your fall calves as "heavy" feeder calves. Keep them gaining!

## General

Repair fences, equipment and handling facilities.

If you have a dry, sunny day, use chain-link harrow to spread manure in areas where cattle have overwintered. This may be done in conjunction with renovation.

Renovation and fertilization of pastures should be completed.

Start thistle control. They can be a severe problem in Kentucky pastures. Chemical control must be done early to be effective.

Watch for lice and treat if needed.

# Don't Let This Weevil Eat Your Alfalfa Profits

By: Ric Bessin, Extension Entomologist

The earliest field crop pest of the year is often the alfalfa weevil. While adults do some leaf notching, larvae (Figure 1) attack buds and developing leaves, reducing yield and quality of alfalfa. Last year, high numbers were observed in several Western and Central Kentucky counties. With the relatively mild winter, producers are cautioned to scout for young larvae this spring before alfalfa weevil has a chance to inflict serious losses to the first cutting.

*Effect of Winter Weather on Insect Survival*

Winter weather conditions play a key role in terms of the numbers of weevil larvae we are likely to see and when they show up. Fields with weevils last year are likely to have weevils again this year. Weevils spend winter in alfalfa fields as adults, which lay eggs in dead stems when temperatures are above 48°F. Temperatures below -7°F can kill these winter laid eggs, but Kentucky has not had temperatures to reduce egg survival. There have been several periods of above 48°F, so there have been several egg-laying events this winter.

*Scouting for Alfalfa Weevil*

The Ag Weather Center has a temperature driven degree-day model used to identify times to begin monitoring for alfalfa weevil activity in fields. Degree days based on a threshold above 48°F are summed from Jan 1; when the total reaches 190DD, it is time to begin scouting fields. Based on winter weather, this can range from late February to Mid-April, depending on the year and location. Surviving winter-laid eggs begin hatching at 190DD, before hatching of spring-laid eggs. Once begun, scouting should be done weekly through the first cutting and its regrowth.

Table 1. Variation in date to begin scouting for alfalfa weevil based on 190DD accumulations from Jan 1 by location and year.

| Location | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Princeton | March 11 | April 7 | April 3 | April 2 | March 13 | Feb 22 | March 12 | April 4 |
| E-Town | March 14 | April 9 | April 9 | April 5 | March 14 | Feb 24 | March 18 | April 3 |
| Bowling Green | March 8 | April 7 | April 3 | April 1 | March 12 | Feb 22 | Feb 25 | March 23 |
| Lexington | March 15 | April 10 | April 11 | April 9 | March 14 | March 1 | March 24 | March 28 |

For Alfalfa weevil, use the stem sampling method to scout fields. While walking in a "U" or "Z" pattern through a field, collect 30 alfalfa stems. Carefully cup the top of each stem in one hand and break it from the crown with your other hand; place stems bud-end downward in a plastic bucket. Be sure your samples are at least 20 feet from the edge of a field so that they are representative of the entire interior of a field. Rap groups of 4 or 5 stems at a time against the inside of the bucket to dislodge the larvae. Count the number of larvae. Measure the length of 10 random alfalfa stems. Use the economic threshold tables in ENTFACT 127 or ENT-17 to determine the need to spray the field for alfalfa weevil. If the field is close to harvest, cutting can be an alternative to spraying, but producers need to watch for damage to the regrowth; there are similar scouting tables for regrowth after the first cutting.

Figure 1. Alfalfa weevil larva is legless and green with a white stripe down its back and a black head capsule (Photo: Ric Bessin, UK).

## Controlling Buttercup

One of the signs that spring has arrived is when the yellow flowers of buttercup begin to appear; but it's during the winter months that the vegetative growth of buttercup takes place. As a cool season weed, this plant often flourishes in over grazed pasture fields with poor stands of desirable forages. In fact, many fields that have dense buttercups populations are fields heavily grazed by animals during the fall through the early spring months.

Buttercups are sometimes classified as short-lived perennials, but often grow as winter annuals. Plants typically produce five, shiny yellow petals in the early spring. There are four different species of buttercups that may be found in Kentucky: bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), and small flower buttercup (*Ranunculus arbortivus*). Although each of these plants may have somewhat similar flower heads, each of these buttercup species differs somewhat in their vegetative leaf characteristics.

New seeds are produced during the time petals are showy. Waiting until after flowers appear can be too late to implement control tactics. This is one reason buttercups can survive year to year and new plants emerge each year. Most buttercup plants emerge from seed during the fall or late winter months. Therefore, pasture management practices that improve and promote growth of desirable plants during these months is one of the best methods to help compete against the emergence and growth of this plant. Whereas, livestock animals allowed to overgraze fields during the fall and winter months is one of the main factors that contribute to buttercup problems. Mowing fields or clipping plants close to the ground in the early spring before buttercup plants can produce flowers may help reduce the amount of new seed produced, but mowing alone will not totally eliminate seed production. For chemical control, herbicides registered for use on grass pastures that contain 2,4-D will effectively control buttercup. Depending on other weeds present products that contain dicamba+2,4-D (eg. Weedmaster), aminopyralid (eg.ForeFront, Milestone), triclopyr (eg. PastureGard, Crossbow), or metsulfuron (eg. Cimarron) can also be used. However, legumes such as clovers interseeded with grass pastures can be severely injured or killed by these herbicide products. For optimum results apply a herbicide in the early spring (February-March) before flowers are observed, when buttercup plants are still small and actively growing. For best herbicide activity wait until daytime air temperatures is greater than 50 F for two to three consecutive days. Consult the herbicide label for further information on grazing restrictions, precautions, or other possible limitations. For fields heavily infested with buttercup a variety of control tactics may be needed. Apply a herbicide to help reduce the population of buttercup plants in the spring plus use good pasture management techniques throughout the year to help improve and thicken the stand of desirable forages.

## Forage Timely Tips

- Continue pasture renovation by no-tilling seeding legumes.
- Place small seed at 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep and check depth several times during planting; slow down for more precise seeding.
- Continue feeding hay until adequate forage exists in the pasture for grazing.
- Spring seeding of grasses should be done in early to mid-March (but fall is preferred)
- Begin smoothing and re-seeding hay feeding and heavy traffic areas.
- Graze pastures overseeded with clover to reduce competition from existing grasses. <Pull off before grazing new clover plants.>
- Provide free choice high-magnesium mineral to prevent grass tetany on lush spring growth.
- Apply 30-40 lbs N/acre (65-90 lbs urea/acre) for quicker spring greenup.

## Planting Blackberries & Raspberries

Strawberry, Raspberry, & Blackberry plant orders are due to the Extension Office by March 5.

Blackberries (*Rubus* spp.) are included in the group of small fruits generally referred to as 'brambles' or 'caneberries.' They have perennial crowns and roots. Most blackberry types produce canes the first season (primocanes) that do not bear fruit. The following year these are called floricanes, and bear fruit and then die naturally after harvest. Primocane-fruiting blackberries are an exception. They produce fruit on the primocanes in late summer and fall and again on these same canes (floricanes) the following July and early August before dying. With favorable growing conditions, brambles may produce for 12 or more years. Blackberries are grouped according to their growth habit: erect, semi-erect or trailing. Erect (thorny and thornless) and semi-erect (thornless) blackberries grow and yield well in most parts of the state. The trailing types are not recommended for commercial production in Kentucky due to their lack of winter hardiness. Primocane-fruiting thorny and thornless blackberries also do well in Kentucky; however, hot summers substantially reduce the primocane crop because a week of temperatures above 85 degrees F causes flowers to abort.

Choose a production site a year before planting to allow time for adequate preparation. A well-drained, deep fertile soil, high in humus and free from hard pans is best for blackberries. When possible, plant brambles on a northern slope or where there is afternoon shade. Blackberries should not follow solanaceous vegetables (such as tomatoes and peppers), strawberries or other bramble crops for three to four years. Irrigation is essential for commercial production, and beehives are needed to ensure adequate pollination. Certified virus-free stock, particularly tissue-cultured plants, are highly recommended. The distance between plants and rows varies depending on the type of blackberry, training method, and the size of farm equipment. Blackberries are a high maintenance crop, requiring spring pruning and training, as well as the removal of dead fruiting canes from the previous season. Semi-erect cultivars must be supported on trellises, while erect cultivars may not require trellising, depending on soil fertility. The trellis should be constructed either before planting or during the first season.

Raspberries (*Rubus* spp.) are also included in the group of small fruits referred to as 'brambles' or 'caneberries.' They have perennial crowns and roots that produce biennial canes. The canes bear fruit the second year and then die naturally after harvest. Some raspberries (known as 'everbearing' or 'fall-bearing') also produce fruit at the tips of the first-year canes.

June-bearing red, purple and black raspberries can be successfully grown commercially in Kentucky. Everbearing raspberries are no longer recommended because of the extensive spray program required for spotted wing drosophila (SWD) control. Raspberry cultivars can vary in terms of cold hardiness, yield potential, length of time to ripening, as well as sensitivity to disease and insect problems. Fruit firmness, size, flavor, and shape can also differ between cultivars. Growers should select marketable cultivars adapted to their locale.

Source: UK Center for Crop Diversification

## Blacklegged Ticks Keep on Ticking Regardless of Winter

By: Jonathan Larson, Extension Entomologist and Anna Pasternak, Entomology Graduate Student

When people think of ticks, they often think of them as a spring or summertime problem. This is the case for two of our common Kentucky ticks, the lone star tick and the American dog tick. Adults of these species are most common between April and August, with nymphal and larval stages popping up as well. These two species of tick can be important vectors of spotted fever rickettsia (American dog tick) and the Alpha-Gal red meat allergy (Lone star tick).

The most famous tick though, tends to be the blacklegged deer tick, also known as just the deer tick. This species is noteworthy as they are the only vector for Lyme disease in the eastern half of the United States. Blacklegged ticks like to feed on their favorite host, the white tail deer, but are more than happy to also slurp up some blood from a human. Unlike their aforementioned cousins, adults of this species are most common from October to May and will be out and about on any day above freezing. This winter has been particularly mild, so they have likely been out and about enjoying the balmy days of February.

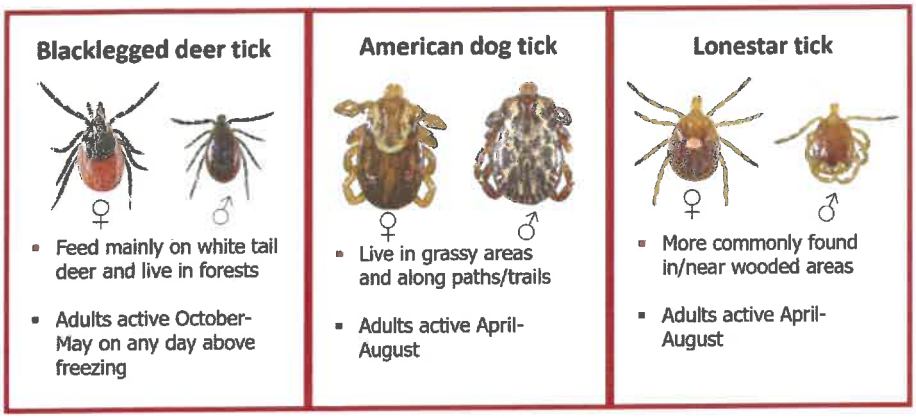


Figure 1: The three most common types of ticks that may affect people in Kentucky are the blacklegged tick, American dog tick, and Lonestar tick. The adults can be active at different times of the year and may be encountered in various habitats. (Photos: Anna Pasternak, UK Entomology)

*Lyme Disease & the Blacklegged Tick* — Cases of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases in the United States are increasing each year—they are also increasing in Kentucky. Lyme is very common in the north-eastern region of the United States, but in recent years doctors have seen more cases in the mid- and south-eastern states as well. Scientists believe this is because blacklegged tick populations are growing. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) cites that Lyme disease affected an estimated 450,000 people in 2018, a 1,400% increase from the number of cases seen in 2003. In people, Lyme disease symptoms include fever, fatigue, joint pain and a rash that appears in a bullseye pattern at the site of the bite (Figure 2). This disease also infects dogs and can cause lameness, joint pain, and fever. Proper removal of the tick and early treatment for illness are the most important steps you can take if an infection takes place.

*Blacklegged Tick Facts*— Blacklegged ticks are found anywhere that deer may roam. They "quest" at the tips of branches or on plants that deer would be likely to rub up against. When they get on humans, they will seek out a thin-skinned area where they can plug in their mouthparts. Ticks must drink blood in order to develop through their life cycle and females need blood to produce eggs as well. The mouths of ticks have backward facing spines and they can produce a natural "cement" to help anchor them in place (Figure 3).

*Tick Removal*—If you find a tick feeding on you, you need to safely remove it as soon as possible. There are many "remedies" you can find for removing ticks on the internet, but the most basic advice is best. Use a pair of tweezers to grab the tick as close to your skin as possible and firmly pull the tick straight up. Do not wiggle the tick out, do not twist it around; just one swift pull upwards from the skin. You must also avoid treating the tick with essential oils, alcohol, or fire while it is still "plugged in" to you. You will drive the tick off with these kinds of products, but you will also increase the chance the tick "vomits" into you, possibly transferring any pathogens that may be inside of them.

*Protection from Ticks*—Because the Lone star and American dog ticks are active during spring and summer and Blacklegged ticks are active through winter, it's smart to protect yourself from ticks whenever you spend time outside in areas where ticks may live. Using repellants for your skin (such as DEET or picaridin) can help but treating your clothing with permethrin will provide the best protection. Permethrin is not to be used on the skin and should only be applied to clothing items. Everyone should also be performing routine tick checks after spending time in tick habitat to hopefully intercept ticks before they bite. Treating your pets with tick preventive medicine will keep them tick-free and help to prevent them from accidentally bringing the little bloodsuckers into your yard and house.

Figure 2: A bullseye patterned rash is common in patients who have acquired the pathogen responsible for Lyme disease. (Photo: Center for Disease Control).

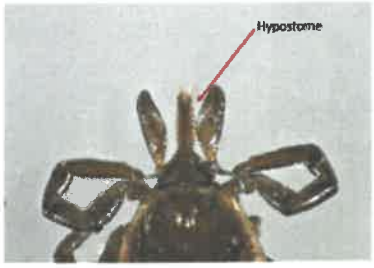


Figure 3: When ticks feed, they insert a hypostome into their host. This mouthpart has many backward facing spines and can make it difficult to remove the tick! (Photo: Anna Pasternak, UK Entomology)

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