

**CARTER COUNTY
AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES
NEWSLETTER**



Carter County

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Rebecca.k@uky.edu

April & May 2025

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Highlights:

- ⇒ Looking for live demonstrations? Attend the sprayer clinic or tour Eden Shale Farm with us.
- ⇒ Join us on April 15 as we celebrate Alice's retirement.
- ⇒ Your last chance for a private pesticide applicator license is during the Sprayer Clinic.
- ⇒ Details about Senior Farmer's Market vouchers are inside.

Enjoy your newsletter,

Rebecca Konopka
Rebecca Konopka,

Carter County
Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural
Resources Education

**GROW EARLY WITH A
MINI GREENHOUSE!**

Many cool-season veggies like radishes, broccoli, lettuce and onions can be planted in early April. Another useful technique for getting a head start is creating a mini greenhouse in your garden bed.



MAKING A MINI GREENHOUSE

- Prepare the soil by tilling it.
- Use black plastic to warm up the soil.
- Build a frame with metal, wood, or PVC pipes.
- Cover the frame with clear polyethylene film.
- Regularly check your greenhouse for watering and ventilation

BENEFITS

This method extends your growing season, allows winter survival for some crops in mild climates, and enables the bed to be used for summer planting.

For more information on producing a successful garden this year, contact your local county extension office.

*Source: Rick Durham, Department of Horticulture extension professor
An Equal Opportunity Organization.*

**Cooperative
Extension Service**

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Upcoming Events

Denotes events where preregistration is required. Call 474-6686 or email Rebecca.k@uky.edu to register.

More details available at <https://carter.ca.uky.edu/anr>.

Sprayer Clinic

Tue, Apr 8 Boyd County Expo Building (Fairgrounds)
5:00 – Private Pesticide Applicator Training Begins
6:00 – Clinic Begins (for those not needing private applicator license)

Ag Advancement Council

Mon, Apr 14, 6:00pm Education Building

Ag Development Board

Mon, Apr 14, 7:00pm Education Building

Alice Perry's Retirement Celebration

Tue, Apr 15, 11:00 – 1:00 New Meeting Facility

Hike & Learn

Mon, Apr 21, 1:00pm Carter Caves State Resort Park
Meet at Welcome Center for Natural Bridge Trail & Stream Stomp

Northeast Area Livestock Association Meeting

Tue, Apr 22, 6:00pm New Meeting Facility
Topic: Are Parasites Eating Your Profits?

Eden Shale Farm Tour

Fri, Apr 25, 10:30 Eden Shale Farm
Meet at the Extension Office at 7:45 to ride in the van.

Little Sandy Beekeepers Association

Tue, May 6, 6:30pm Education Building
Topic: Honey Bee Aggression - A Drink From The Magic Well
Speaker: Clare Rittschof, Associate Professor UK Entomology

Hike & Learn

Fri, May 16, 10:00am Devil's Market House Arch Trail
Meet at 8:15 at the Extension Office to ride in the van.

Senior Vouchers-Carter County Farmer's Market

Wed, May 28, 8am - 4pm
Call 474-6686 to make an appointment to receive your voucher.

Pesticide Sprayers

Maintenance, Calibration, and General Use



Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
University of Kentucky.

Available shared use equipment will be on display.
Snacks will be provided.

April 8th, 2025

6pm - 8pm

Franks Building
1758 Addington Road
Ashland, KY 41102

**THOSE IN NEED OF PRIVATE APPLICATOR LICENSE
SHOULD ARRIVE AT 5pm
CAIP ELIGIBLE**



Boyd	(606) 739-5184	Meredith Hall
Carter	(606) 474-6686	Rebecca Konopka
Elliott	(606) 738-6400	Jacob Ison
Greenup	(606) 836-0201	Linda Hieneman
Lawrence	(606) 673-9495	Lane Hall



Please join us
Tuesday, April 15, 2025
as we celebrate the
Career & Retirement
of our sweet colleague

Alice Perry

We will have an
Open-House Reception from
11:00am - 1:00pm
in the large meeting room
of our new building.
Parking is available
in the gravel lot.



**Starting Seeds
Workshops**



Webinar Event

Living with Alpha-gal Syndrome

Learn more about AGS (red meat allergy) and how to reduce your risk with University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension



Topics Covered

- ✓ AGS basics
- ✓ Tick bite prevention
- ✓ Diet & lifestyle management
- ✓ Q/A session



Thursday, May 29th
6-7:30pm CDT
7-8:30pm EDT

Register Now!
ukfcs.net/AgS

Eden Shale Farm Tour



APRIL 25, 2025
10:30AM - TOUR

REGISTER NOW

CALL US

CARTER COUNTY: (606) 474-6686

DEPARTURE TIME
FROM EXTENSION OFFICE: 8:00 AM

We'll be joining other District 1 counties for our tour.

ATTENTION PLEASE

VAN SPACES ARE LIMITED TO THE FIRST 11 PEOPLE THAT REGISTER & REQUEST A SEAT IN THE VAN.

FOLKS CAN ALSO DRIVE & MEET US AT EDEN SHALE THAT DAY.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY: APRIL 8, 2025



Palpation Clinic

Senior Vouchers

Carter County Farmer's Market

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program provides seniors with \$50 to purchase locally grown fresh vegetables, fruits, cut herbs and honey from state approved farmer's markets

Eligibility

- 60 years of age and older
- Income less than or equal to 185% of the poverty level

Household size	Annual Income	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$27,861	\$2,322	\$536
2	\$37,814	\$3,152	\$728
3	\$47,767	\$3,981	\$919
4	\$57,720	\$4,810	\$1,110
5	\$67,673	\$5,640	\$1,302

For Each Additional Family Member Add \$ 9,953 \$ 830 \$ 192

How to sign up

- Starting May 28th, make an appointment by calling the Carter County Extension Office at 606-474-6686 between 8am & 4pm
- You will need to provide: Name, Address, Phone, Birthday, & Income
- Bring a valid government ID or other proof of ID to your appointment.



You must live in Carter County to receive vouchers in Carter County



The Olive Hill Farmer's Market will open on Monday, June 16 at 3:00 PM in the Save-a-Lot parking lot.

The Grayson Farmer's Market will open on Saturday, June 21 at 9:00 AM in the shed behind the Extension Office.

Don't Chase Price per Pound at the Expense of Value per Head

By: Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

Over the last few months, I have been able to talk with a lot of cattle producers at Extension programs. As you can imagine, the strength of the cattle market is almost always the first topic of discussion. We are seeing prices like we have never seen before for cattle of all types and weights. But my observation has been that producers tend to become a bit more enamored than they should with price per pound and sometimes don't think as much as they should about value per head.

I see this play itself out in a couple ways. First, I hear some producers talk about selling cattle sooner to capture the higher prices. I don't necessarily think that downside price risk is greater in high priced markets, but I think there is a perception among some that there may be "more to lose". This perception lowers interest in adding value to cattle by taking them to higher weight before sale and leads to more calves being sold off the cow, as opposed to being weaned and preconditioned. Secondly, I think people get too focused on price per pound differences across weight categories and don't make the mental adjustment to the new price environment. To illustrate this point, I am going to use Kentucky average auction prices from the last week of March. The table below shows the average price for medium / large frame #1-2 steers at 450 lbs, 550 lbs, and 650 lbs. For transparency, I am using the average prices for cattle without a description (not value-added or fancy), which represents most cattle being sold. Also, I am averaging the 50 lb weight ranges to arrive at my average price. In other words, the estimated price per lb for a 450 lb steer is the average of the 400 to 450 lb and 450 to 500 lb weight ranges.

Feeder Cattle Values by Weight and Price per Pound

KY Auction Prices (March 31, 2025)

Average Weight	ML#1-2 Steer Price	Value Per Head	Value of Last 100 lbs
450 lbs	\$3.88 per lb	\$1,746	-----
550 lbs	\$3.38 per lb	\$1,859	\$113
650 lbs	\$3.16 per lb	\$2,054	\$195

Examine the average prices from Kentucky last week in the table for 450 and 550 lb steers. The price per pound drops by \$0.50 on that 100 lb increase in weight. If one looks solely at price per lb, they may be tempt-

ed to sell calves sooner and avoid the \$0.50 slide. However, in this cattle price environment, those 550 lb steers were still worth \$113 per head more than the 450 lb steers. The relevant question becomes whether that difference justifies keeping those 450 lb steers longer. In many cases, the answer to that question may be yes, especially in the spring with pasture starting to grow.

To be fair, cattle prices are extremely high by historical standards. Price slides widen as the overall market gets higher and we have never seen a calf market this high. What may have seemed like a bizarre price slide a few years ago, may make perfect sense now. For example, if 450 lb steers were selling for \$2 per lb and we applied the same \$0.50 price slide for 550 lb steer, that 550 lb steer at \$1.50 per lb is actually worth \$75 less than the 450 lb steer at \$2. But that is irrelevant in the current market.

The main point is that the spring 2025 feeder cattle price environment is like nothing we have seen before. Given that, we must be careful about using rules of thumb and simple approaches that may have worked in the past. Focusing on price per lb, without consideration of weight impacts, can be very misleading. And one needs to be careful they aren't chasing price per lb at the expense of value per head!



Stocker Outlook for 2024

Author(s): Greg Halich & Kenny Burdine , UK Department of Ag Economics

The cattle market has been on a tear since early 2023 with feeder cattle prices at levels not seen before. As we write this in mid-March, calf prices in the Commonwealth are running about \$30-\$40 per cwt higher than the same time last year and \$60-\$70 per cwt higher than last year's fall lows. After a long winter, it appears that spring has arrived and stocker operators are making plans for placement of cattle into grazing programs. At the time of this writing (March 18, 2025), fall 2025 CME® feeder cattle futures were trading around \$287 per cwt. This suggests a very strong fall market for heavy feeders and largely explains the current strength in calf prices. But the strong calf market does create questions for stocker operators purchasing calves for sale this fall.

The purpose of this article is to assess the likely profitability of summer stocker programs for 2025 and establish target purchase prices for calves based on a range of return levels. While it is impossible to predict where

feeder cattle markets will end up this fall, producers need to estimate this and not rely on the current price (March) for 750-850 lb feeder calves. Fall CME® feeder cattle futures prices (adjusted for basis) provide the best estimate of feeder cattle prices for fall. Grazing costs including pasture costs, veterinary and health expenses, hauling, commission, etc. are estimated and subtracted from the expected value of the fall feeders. Once this has been done, a better assessment can be made of what can be paid for stocker cattle this spring in order to build in an acceptable return to management, capital, and risk.

Key assumptions for the stocker analysis are as follows: 1) Graze steers April 1 to October 15 (197 days), 1.4 lb/day gain (no grain feeding), 2% death loss, and 7% interest on the calf. The interest rate used in this analysis may seem high for producers who are self-financed or have very low interest rates, but is likely pretty close for those going through traditional lenders. Given these assumptions, sale weights would be 775 lbs and 875 lbs for 500 lb and 600 lb purchased calves, respectively. Using a \$287 CME® futures contract price for October 2025 to estimate sale price, a 775 lb steer is estimated to sell for \$2.79/lb and an 875 lb steer is estimated to sell for \$2.71/lb. This estimate uses a -\$10 per cwt basis for an 800 lb steer and a \$8 per cwt price slide.

Estimated costs for carrying the 500 and 600 lb steers are shown in Table 1. Stocking rates of 1.0 acre per 500 lb steer and 1.2 acres per 600 lb steer were assumed in arriving at these charges. Most of these are self-explanatory except the pasture charge, which accounts only for variable costs such as bush-hogging, fertilizer, seeding clovers, etc., and is considered a bare-bones scenario. Sale expenses (commission) are based on the assumption that cattle will be sold in larger groups and producers will pay the lower corresponding commission rate. However, producers who sell feeders in smaller groups will pay higher commission rates which could exceed \$50 per head based on the

revenue assumptions of this analysis. Any of these costs could be much higher in certain situations, so producers should adjust accordingly.

Table 1: Expected Variable Costs 2024

	500 lb Steer	600 lb Steer
Pasture Charge	\$30	\$36
Vet	\$30	\$30
Interest	\$63	\$69
Death Loss	\$34	\$38
Sale	\$25	\$25
Haul	\$18	\$21
Mineral	\$20	\$24
Other (water, etc.)	\$20	\$24
Total Variable Costs	\$240	\$266

NOTE: Interest and death loss varies slightly by purchase price.

Target purchase prices were estimated for both sizes of steers and adjusted so that gross returns over variable costs ranged from \$100-\$200 per head. Normally we would use a range of \$50-\$150 per head, but we feel that the higher return range will be more representative this year. This gives a reasonable range of possible purchase prices for calves this spring. Results are shown in Table 2. For 500 lb steers, target purchase prices ranged from \$3.19 to \$3.38 per lb. For 600 lb steers, target purchase prices ranged from \$2.93 to \$3.09 per lb. For an estimated gross profit of \$150 per head, target purchase prices were \$3.28/lb for 500 lb steers and \$3.01/lb for 600 lb steers.

As an example of exactly how this works for a 500 lb steer targeting a \$150 gross profit:

775 lbs steer x \$2.62 (expected sale price) \$2031

Total Variable Costs - \$240

Profit Target - \$150

Target Purchase Cost \$1641

Target Purchase Price = \$1641 / 500 lbs = \$3.28 / lb

Table 2: Target Purchase Prices For Various Gross Profits 2024

Gross Profit	500 lb Steer	600 lb Steer
\$100	\$3.38	\$3.09
\$125	\$3.33	\$3.05
\$150	\$3.28	\$3.01
\$175	\$3.23	\$2.97
\$200	\$3.19	\$2.93

NOTE: Based on costs in Table 1 and sale prices of \$2.62/lb and \$2.54/lb for 775 lb and 875 lb sales weight respectively for 500 lb and 600 lb purchased steers.

For heifers, sale price for heavy feeders will be lower than comparably sized steers and they will not generally gain as well. In this analysis, we assumed the price discount for these heifers is \$12 per hundredweight lower than the same weight steers and we assumed heifers would gain 10% slower than steers. With these assumptions, purchase prices would have to be \$0.27/lb lower for 500 lb heifers and \$0.24 lower for 600 lb heifers compared to the steer prices found in Table 2. Thus, when targeting a \$150 per head gross profit, breakeven purchase prices were \$3.01/lb for 500 lb heifers and \$2.77/lb for 600 lb heifers.

Your cost structure may be different from that presented in Table 1, and if so, simply shift the targeted gross profit up or down to account for this.

If your costs are \$25 higher per calf, then you would shift each targeted profit down by one row: For example, you would use the \$175 gross profit to estimate a \$150 gross profit if your costs were \$25 higher. Another way to evaluate this is that a \$1 increase in costs would decrease the targeted purchase price by \$0.20 per cwt for 500 lb steers and \$0.17 per cwt for 600 lb steers.

It is important to note that the gross profits in Table 2 do not account for labor or investments in land, equipment, fencing, and other facilities (fixed costs). Thus, in the long-run, these target profits need to be high enough to justify labor and investment, as well as a management return. Typically, by the time this article is written in mid-March, calf prices are approaching levels that would place returns on the upper end of the profit range analyzed. While there is a lot of variation in the price of calves across Kentucky right now, a lot of calves are selling well below many of the target purchase prices estimated in this analysis. This is all the more reason that stocker operators should carefully think through their budgets and make rational purchasing decisions.

In all likelihood, stocker operators will spend more money on calves this spring than they ever have. This means there will be a great deal of capital at risk from day one and there is always uncertainty about fall sale price. 2023 served as a perfect risk illustration as the feeder cattle market dropped sharply from mid-September until mid-December. The impact on the value of heavy feeders was drastic. That does not mean the same will happen in 2024, but it does speak to the importance of risk management strategies to protect potential returns. Forward contracts, futures and options have long been utilized for price risk management and remain viable strategies today. Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) insurance has greatly increased in popularity over the last few years and continues to be a viable strategy. LRP works similar to a subsidized put option in that it provides downside price protection (for a premium), but also allows the producer to capitalize on rising prices. But the beauty of LRP lies in its scalability, as it can be purchased in almost any quantity. Regardless of

what risk management strategy is utilized, time spent considering price risk management is likely time well spent in these volatile markets. The best way to ensure profitability is to budget carefully and to manage downside price risk.



Reclaiming Pugged Up Pastures

To maximize success with summer annual grasses, check out these tips!

- Choose adapted species suited for Kentucky soils such as Sudangrass or crabgrass
- Use high seeding rates
- Wait for the soil temperatures to warm up
- Control broadleaf weeds
- Manage grazing
- Manage haying
- Reseed cool-season grasses

For more information on renovating pastures and no-till seeding visit your local county extension office. Check out UK Extension publication AGR-229 for additional tips.

Program Payments to Offset Increased Input Costs, Market Decline

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, on National Agriculture Day, announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing up to \$10 billion directly to agricultural producers through the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) for the 2024 crop year. Administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), ECAP will help agricultural producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices.

Authorized by the American Relief Act, 2025, these economic relief payments are based on planted and prevented planted crop acres for eligible commodities for the 2024 crop year. To streamline and simplify the delivery of ECAP, FSA will begin sending pre-filled applications to producers who submitted acreage reports to FSA for 2024 eligible ECAP commodities soon after the signup period opens on March 19, 2025. Producers do not have to wait for their pre-filled ECAP application to apply. They can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap to apply using a login.gov account or contact their local FSA office to request an application once the signup period opens.

Eligible Commodities and Payment Rates

The commodities below are eligible for these per-acre payment rates:

Wheat - \$30.69	Eligible oilseeds:
Corn - \$42.91	Canola – \$31.83
Sorghum - \$42.52	Crambe – \$19.08
Barley - \$21.67	Flax - \$20.97
Oats - \$77.66	Mustard - \$11.36
Upland cotton & Extra-long staple cotton - \$84.74	Rapeseed - \$23.63
Long & medium grain rice - \$76.94	Safflower - \$26.32
Peanuts - \$75.51	Sesame - \$16.83
Soybeans - \$29.76	Sunflower – \$27.23
Dry peas - \$16.02	
Lentils - \$19.30	
Small Chickpeas - \$31.45	
Large Chickpeas - \$24.02	

Producer Eligibility

Eligible producers must report 2024 crop year planted and prevented planted acres to FSA on an FSA-578, *Report of Acreage* form. Producers who have not previously reported 2024 crop year acreage or filed a notice of loss for prevented planted crops must submit an acreage report by the Aug. 15, 2025, deadline. Eligible producers can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap for eligibility and payment details.

2024-2025 US Beekeeping Survey

Amanda Skidmore, PhD, State Apiarist, Office of State Veterinarian, Kentucky
Department of Agriculture

“What are Kentucky’s Colony Loss Numbers?” is a very common question asked at many of the beekeeping talks and events that I participated in. But where does this number come from? And why is it important to talk about?

The first US Beekeeping Survey was conducted nationwide in 2007 as part of a collaboration led by nonprofit organizations led (Bee Informed Partnership, Apiary Inspectors of America) and research universities (University of Maryland, Auburn University). “Each April beekeepers – from hobbyist to commercial – are encouraged to take the survey by completing an online questionnaire . By doing so, you will become a Citizen Scientist, contributing to valuable long-term monitoring of managed colony losses and beekeeping practices in the United States. Data obtained from this survey is used by a diversity of stakeholders, ranging from national beekeeping organizations that request for federal and state support of the industry, to scientists at our country’s land-grant universities that design research plans to address major industry issues.” (Apiary Inspectors of America).

You can review the 2023-2024 Survey results and interactive maps here: <https://apiaryinspectors.org/US-beekeeping-survey-23-24/>

The data collected in this survey directly impacts you as beekeeper! The data reveals trends in colony losses “data collected by the surveys have contributed to our understanding of long-term honey bee colony loss trends across years and regions, as well as the identification of important risk and protective factors”. This data is used by educators

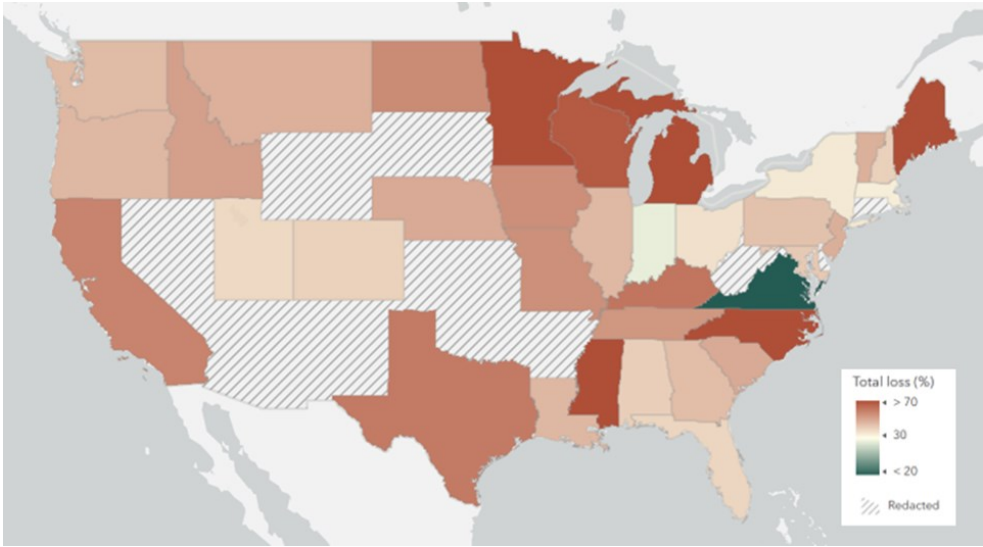
Last year Kentucky reported colony losses of 60.95% between April 1, 2023 – April 1, 2024, higher losses than the 55.1% observed nationally. However, it is important to recognize that the information we can glean from this is only as good as the data we collect. Last year only 17 of Kentucky’s estimated 5,000 beekeepers participated in the survey, representing only 158 hives of the ~50,000 managed within the state. While we are thankful for these beekeepers sharing their observations, the data represents only 0.3% of Kentucky’s beekeepers and 0.3% of Kentucky’s hives. This means that while we do have a data point we can reference,

its only representative of a very small fraction of Kentucky's beekeepers. This means we may be missing crucial information that could be relevant for creating better beekeeping practices in the state that could reduce our colony losses.

Here is my challenge to you: If all of the KSBA members were to take 15mins to fill out the survey we would have representation of >10% of beekeepers in the state. This number is much more powerful for all us, beekeepers, educators, and researchers to be able to make more accurate predictions of bee health. There is a version of the survey for those with less than 50 hives and those with more than 50 hives.

You can find the 2025-2026 Survey Here: <https://apiaryinspectors.org/US-beekeeping-survey>

Image: Heat map of annual colony losses observed.



Hike & Learn



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

PRESORTED
 STANDARD
 US POSTAGE PAID
 GRAYSON, KY
 PERMIT #94

Carter County
 94 Fairground Drive
 Grayson, KY 41143

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CARTER COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER



Peach Leaf Curl

Peach leaf curl, a fungal disease caused by *Taphrina deformans*, results in distorted, reddish leaves, and can also affect twigs and fruit.

If peach leaf curl is present, the following management techniques can be used.

- Thin fruit heavily to reduce stress on the tree.
- Provide good growing conditions and irrigation to reduce tree stress.
- Replant with cultivars that have an increased tolerance of the disease, such as 'Redhaven'.
- Fungicides are not effective once the disease is present.

Visit your local county extension office to learn more.

*Source: Nicole Gauthier and Kimberly Leonberger
 An Equal Opportunity Organization.*

< Reminder

⋮ Done

April 23, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Preemergence Herbicides for Kentucky Lawns

- Apply when soil hits 50-55°F for five days (or forsythia blooms).
- Use two applications, 6-8 weeks apart.
- Mow high to thicken grass and suppress weeds.
- Fertilize moderately, if necessary.
- Skip pre-emergent if weed-free. Prioritizing it now saves later work.
- Consult UK Extension publication AGR-52: Selecting the Right Grass for your Kentucky Lawn for more information.

*Source: Nicole Gauthier and Kimberly Leonberger
 An Equal Opportunity Organization.*