CARTER COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service
Carter County
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May 2023 Upcoming Events

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

May 4 @ 1:00 PM	**Hike & Learn**—Laurel Gorge Cultural Heritage Center
May 5 @ 8:00 AM	***Twine & Minerals can be picked up after this time**.—Kee's Farm Service*
May 9 @ 10:00 AM	**Extension District Board Meeting**—Extension Office
May 11 @ 12:00 PM	***Floral Care & Arranging Workshop**—Extension Office*
May 11 @ 6:00 PM	***Beneficial Insects**—Online*
May 14-19	***International Grassland Congress**—Covington*
May 15 @ 6:00 PM	***Growing Online**—Online*
May 23 @ 6:00 PM	**Carter Co. Farmer's Market Organizational & Business Mtg.**— Ext. Office
June 1 @ 9:00 AM	**Hike & Learn**—Carter Caves State Resort Park
June 6 @ 6:30 PM	**Little Sandy Beekeepers**—Extension Office
June 9 @ 6:00 PM	**Ag Advancement Council**—Extension Council
June 30 @ 3:30 PM	**Deadline to submit CAIP receipts and educational form to the Soil Conservation Office for reimbursement.** *If you were approved and are not planning to use your CAIP money, please let Shelby Oakley know ASAP so that she con notify the next person on the waiting list*.

Enjoy your newsletter,

Rebecca Konopka

Rebecca Konopka,
Carter County Extension Agent for Agriculture & Natural Resources Education

Little Sandy Beekeepers Association

*** New Meeting Time — 6:30 PM***

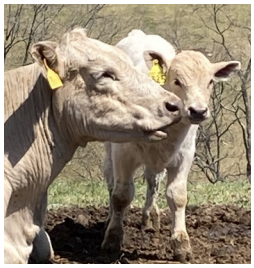
First Tuesday of the Month

June 6th @ 6:30 PM

Speaker: Max Runzel, CEO of Hive Tracks

If you picked up a gardening bag at one of our events last month, don't forget to send a picture of your child's Farmer's Market coloring sheet and/or a picture of them with their plants in the garden for a chance to win Farmer's Market Kid's Bucks! Pictures can be sent to our Facebook page @CarterCoKYAg or Rebecca.k@uky.edu.

May is Beef Month in Kentucky



First Thursday of the Month

June 1st @ 9:00 AM

Carter Caves State Resort Park

* Natural Bridge Hike

* Optional Post Hike Activity: Owl Pellet Dissection

*Distance: 3/4 miles

* Difficulty: Easy

*Meet at the picnic table under the hemlock tree to the left of the welcome center.

*Bring your own snacks & drinks.

*Wear closed-toe shoes.

July 6th @ 9:00 AM

Pamela Howard will be leading us on some trails near the Bit O' Time Vintage Lake Retreat at Grayson Lake.

Sign up to receive Hike & Learn reminders, updates, and cancellation notifications by scanning this code. All Hike & Learn activities are free.

Carter County Farmers Market Organizational & Business Meeting

May 23rd @ 6:00 PM

Agenda Items Include: Officer & Board of Director Elections, Setting Market Days & Times, Events for the Year, and More

There will be a Produce Best Practices Training after the business meeting.

Please plan to bring your scales with you to the meeting. All farmer's market scales should be certified every year. An inspector from KDA will stop by the Extension Office to inspect the scales. Scales can then be picked back up from the Extension Office prior to the start of the market season.

Selling at farmers markets? Check out these trainings!

April 2023 Center for Crop Diversification Newsletter; Brett Wolff, Editor & Christy Cassady, Editor/Designer

Farmers market season is officially underway in some parts of Kentucky. If you sell directly to consumers at a farmers market, the Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) encourages you to consider accepting cashless payments. Extension Specialist Brett Wolff with the CCD and Extension Associate Emily Spencer with the UK Department of Agricultural Economics offered a training on how to create a Square account and why you should accept cashless payments at the recent Kentucky Horticulture Council Direct Marketing Summit. Get up to speed on the process by checking out the recording at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpjW7WwPj8A.

Growers selling at farmers markets should make sure their Google Business profile is up to date. When customers meet you at the market, they often want to learn more about your farm business when they get home, which can translate into farm visits and more income for your farm business. You can learn how to add your business to Google Maps in a training provided by CCD Senior Extension Associate Joshua Knight at https://www.uky.edu/ccd/content/adding-your-farm-business-google-maps. For information about other recorded trainings, visit the CCD Facebook page.

Meanwhile, the CCD has started its weekly farmers market price reports from around Kentucky. These reports are made possible by people who are willing to provide the high and low prices as well as the number of vendors selling various products at their farmers market each week. For details on how to participate, email brett.wolff@uky.edu. Also look for the Tennessee farmers market price report to return in May.

Register for the Growing Online webinar at www.uky.edu/ccd/content/growing-online-webinar.

Pythium Diseases of Vegetable Crops

By Kimberly Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate, and Nicole Gauthier, Extension Plant Pathologist

Pythium diseases can affect a large number of vegetable crops. Vegetables produced in structures, such as greenhouses or high tunnels, may be at an increased risk for disease losses once the pathogen is introduced. Infections may impact above and below ground plant parts, resulting in plant decline or fruit rot. Cultural management strategies and fungicides may be used to limit the impact of Pythium diseases.

Figure 1: Brown, rotting roots are a symptom of Pythium infection. (Photo: Penn State Department of Plant Pathology & Environmental Microbiology Archives, Penn State University, Bugwood.org)

Figure 2: Fruit infected with Pythium develop a white, cottony growth. (Photo: Cheryl Kaiser, UK)

Pythium Disease Facts:

⇒ Pythium diseases can impact plant roots, stems, and crowns. Root infections result in brown, rotting roots (Figure 1), while stem infections appear as lesions that girdle stems or crowns. Both types of diseases can result in wilting, stunting, reduced vigor, yield reduction, nutrient deficiency-like symptoms, and plant death. Early plant infections cause damping-off.

⇒ Pythium diseases can also cause damage to fruit. Symptoms include sunken, wet, or slimy lesions. Over time, a white, cottony growth can cover infected portions of fruit (Figure 2). Disease development frequently occurs where fruit are in contact with soil. Disease development can occur in the field or in storage.

⇒ Wet soils from excess irrigation or rainfall are conducive for disease development.

⇒ Infested soil, water, tools, and plant debris can harbor disease causing pathogens.

⇒ Caused by multiple species of *Pythium*, a fungus-like pathogen called a water mold.

Management Options:

⇒ Improve soil drainage.

⇒ Avoid overwatering.

⇒ Avoid introduction of natural soil into hydroponic systems.

⇒ Use clean, new soil for seeding and transplanting.

⇒ Clean and sanitize pots, tools, and structures.

⇒ Avoid movement of infested soil. Work in clean fields first and infested sites last to avoid spread.

⇒ Wash and disinfect tools, equipment, shoes, and clothing after working in infested fields, greenhouses, or tunnels.

⇒ Apply a mulch layer to limit contact between fruit and soil.

⇒ Infected fruit may not show symptoms at harvest, but disease may develop in storage. Damaged, wounded, and diseased materials should be discarded.

⇒ Use approved fungicides labeled for *Pythium* spp. Commercial growers can find information on fungicides in the Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers (ID-36) and the Southeast U.S. Vegetable Crop Handbook. Information on fungicides available to homeowners is available in Home Vegetable Gardening Guide (ID-128).

⇒ For additional resources contact the Carter County Extension Office.

Sclerotinia Diseases of Vegetable Crops

By Kimberly Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate, and Nicole Gauthier, Extension Plant Pathologist; Photos: Kenny Seebold

Sclerotinia diseases can infect numerous vegetable crops and can be known by many different names. The most commonly affected vegetable hosts include beans (white mold), cabbage (head rot), lettuce (drop), and tomato (timber rot). Vegetable crops in commercial production (field and high tunnel) and home gardens may become infected. Severe infections may result in plant death, leading to significant losses for growers.

Sclerotinia Disease Facts:

⇒ Most infections can be identified by a white, cottony fungal growth at or near the soil surface (Figure 1). As disease progresses, small, black, irregularly shaped overwintering structures (sclerotia) develop (Figure 2). Information on crop specific symptoms is detailed in the publication Sclerotinia Diseases of Vegetable Crops (PPFS-VG-29).

⇒ Stems, crowns, lower leaves, and fruit may become infected.

⇒ Initial infection occurs during spring following wet weather and cool temperatures (55° and 75°F).

⇒ Sclerotia may survive for up to 5 years in soil.

⇒ Disease may be spread through movement of infested soil, tools, or infected plants.

⇒ Caused by the fungi *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*.

Figure 1: White, cottony fungal growth that is characteristic of Sclerotinia infection.

Management Options:

⇒ Once Sclerotinia is confirmed in a field, management is critical to reduce future crop loss.

⇒ Rotate to non-host crops.

⇒ Select resistant or tolerant vegetable cultivars.

⇒ Utilize disease-free, certified seed.

⇒ Inspect transplants prior to planting.

⇒ Increase airflow by properly spacing plants and prune as needed. Maintain ventilation in greenhouses and high tunnels.

⇒ Apply a mulch layer to prevent splash.

⇒ Avoid wounding plants.

⇒ Avoid overhead watering and excessive soil moisture.

⇒ Promptly remove infected plants.

⇒ Remove and destroy crop residues.

⇒ Deep till to bury sclerotia (8 to 10 inches).

⇒ Avoid movement of infested soil. Work in clean fields first and infested sites last to prevent spread.

Figure 2: Black overwintering structures (sclerotia) of Sclerotinia.

⇒ Wash and disinfect tools, equipment, shoes, and clothing after working in infested fields or tunnels.

⇒ Soil solarization may be effective in destroying sclerotia if soil temperatures can be raised above 104°F. Research is ongoing to determine solarization recommendations for Kentucky climates.

⇒ Infected fruit may not show symptoms at harvest, but disease may develop in storage. Damaged, wounded, and diseased materials should be discarded.

⇒ Commercial growers can find information on fungicides in the Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers (ID-36) and the Southeast U.S. Vegetable Crop Handbook. Fungicides labeled for management of Sclerotinia diseases are not labeled for homeowner use.

⇒ For additional resources contact the Carter County Extension Office.

Tobacco Economics Update

Snell, Will. *Economic and Policy Update* (23):4, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, April 6th, 2023.

*The 2023 Kentucky-Tennessee tobacco budgets for burley, dark air-cured, dark fire-cured, and cigar wrapper tobaccos are available on the UK Ag Economics budgets page. Keep in mind that tobacco returns will generally generate a much greater variation across growers compared to many other agricultural enterprises given tobacco producer differences in the primary labor source (H2A vs non-H2A), labor hours, yield expectations, equipment and housing/stripping facilities, GAP fees, and price outcomes. Consequently, growers are encouraged to use our budget templates to develop a baseline that fits their individual farm and then review price and yield sensitivity tables (a separate tab in the spreadsheet) to assess a wide variety of outcomes. Below is one of the burley sensitivity tables given budget default values, along with varying yields and prices for expected per acre returns above variable (cash) costs. This represents anticipated net returns to management, operator labor, land, and fixed (overhead) costs.

Table 1: 2023 Burley per acre Return Above Variable Costs at Varying Yields and Prices

Yield per Acre	Average Sale Price Per Pound				
	$2.10	$2.20	$2.30	$2.40	$2.50
1900	-$424	-$234	-$44	$146	$336
2000	-$214	-$14	$186	$386	$586
2100	-$4	$206	$416	$626	$836
2200	$206	$426	$646	$866	$1,086
2300	$416	$646	$876	$1,106	$1,336
2400	$626	$866	$1,106	$1,346	$1,586

*Demand for U.S. burley continues to be suppressed amidst depressed exports and accelerating declines in premium U.S. cigarette sale volumes in the United States (down nearly 10% over the past twelve months). Despite reduced aggregate needs for burley by cigarette manufacturers worldwide, burley remains in a relatively tight global supply/demand balance given smaller than desired U.S. burley crops in recent years and reductions in burley supplies outside the U.S. Consequently most, but not all, U.S. burley buying interests offered a vanishing burley grower base additional production opportunities for 2023.

*Based on burley contract price schedules among the top 6 buyers, the weighted average price for the 2023 crop given a "typical" crop throw is $2.46/lb for a crop that has 50/50 split among the top two quality grades ($2.44/lb with 25/75 split). The top buyer average with a 50/50 split among the top two quality grades is $2.50/lb with the lowest buyer average being $2.35/lb. This compares to the burley price averaging $2.17/lb for the 2022 crop.

Table 2: 2023 Burley Prices per Grade: Top 6 Buyers

Buyer	Grade		
	1	2	3
A	$2.42	$2.35	$1.92
B	$2.52	$2.48	$2.13
C	$2.50	$2.39	$2.05
D	$2.51	$2.42	$1.97
E	$2.47	$2.40	$2.01
F	$2.39	$2.29	$2.09

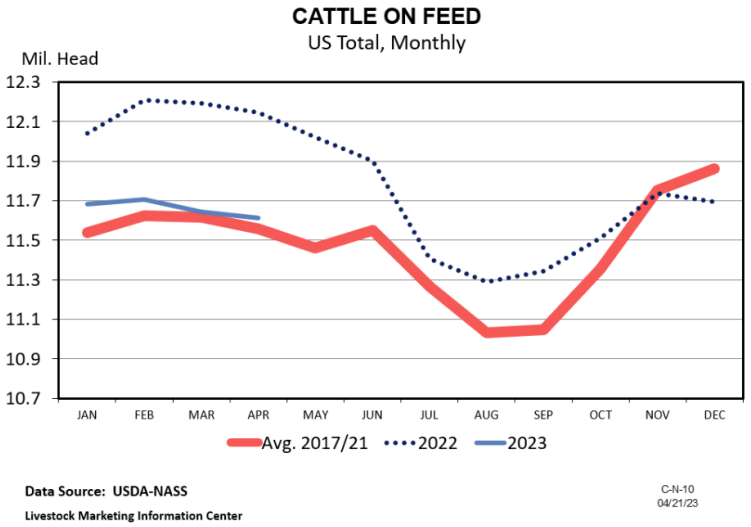
*Changes in dark tobacco contract volumes for 2023 varied considerably among companies, but overall were down significantly amidst a changing smokeless tobacco product market. Overall, U.S. smokeless product sale volumes continue to increase, but domestic sales of most major premium moist snuff products have generally been down in the 5% to 10% range over the past year, while sales of tobacco leaf-free nicotine pouches (a substitutable product for moist snuff consumers) increased by nearly 40% over the past twelve months.

*USDA's 2023 Prospective Plantings report indicates that burley tobacco growers in Kentucky intend to set 31,000 acres up 3,000 acres (+11%) from 2022. For the burley-producing states, USDA's March planting intention survey reveals growers plan to set 35,370 acres, (+9%) which would yield around a 70 million pound crop – still potentially lower than the industry needs in these tight market conditions. For dark tobacco, USDA expects U.S. dark fire acreage to be down 10%, while U.S. dark air cured acres are projected to be 12% lower in 2023 compared to last year.

April Cattle on Feed - What to Make of March Placements

By: Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

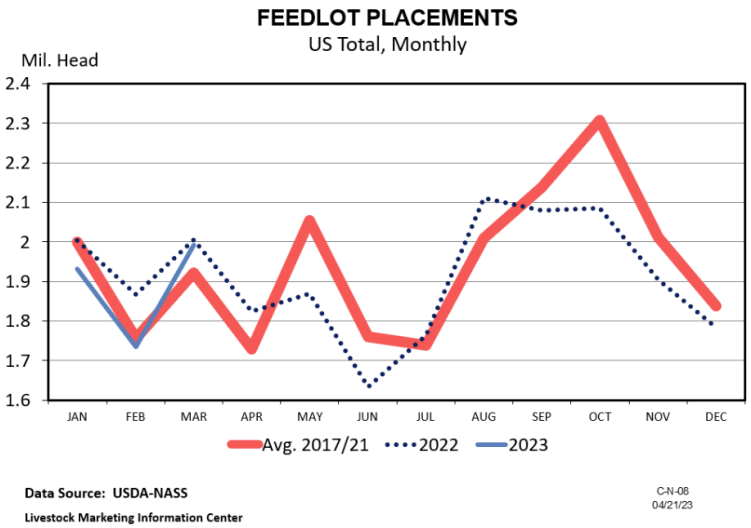
USDA released the April Cattle on Feed report on Friday April 21st. This monthly publication estimates the number of cattle on feed at feedlots with capacity of over 1,000 head and serves as a measure of likely beef production over the next several months. While the cow herd has been decreasing in size for several years, an increase in the number of females in the beef system kept on-feed numbers running relatively high for much of 2022. Finally in the fall, the long-expected shift occurred, and on-feed numbers have been running below year-ago levels since then.



In Friday's report, April 1, 2023, on-feed inventory was estimated to be down about 4.5% from April 1, 2022. While this might not immediately raise any eyebrows from casual observers, this on feed number was higher than expected and really came down to March placements being greater than most pre-report estimates. The net effect was that total on-feed inventory was virtually unchanged from March 1 to April 1, which was counter to what many expected. As I write this on Monday April 24th, live cattle futures were mixed while feeder cattle futures were down a bit. On the feeder cattle board, the negative price change lessens as we move away from the spring contracts.

While I am hesitant to make light of any surprise in a major USDA report, it does appear that the market response has been pretty minimal. This is especially true when one is reminded that feeder cattle futures have been steadily increasing for months. Even as this report is digested, fall feeder cattle futures are still above $230 per cwt and well above where they started 2023. Further, there have been numerous factors impacting placement patterns over the last couple of years with high feed prices and drought being at the top of the list.

There are some possible explanations for the larger-than-expected March placements number. First, March is a month when cattle are often moved off of wheat pasture. Continued dry weather in much of the Southern Plains, combined with high wheat prices, likely impacted movement of feeders last month. Secondly, live cattle imports from Mexico were higher in March, which would contribute to placement numbers. And finally, there is still a lot of carry on the feeder cattle board, so it is very possible that feedlots are aggressively buying feeders ahead, in anticipation of the rising price levels suggested by deferred feeder cattle futures contracts. Put simply, I absolutely think that feedlot placements bears watching in the coming months, but I suspect the larger placement number last month had more to do with timing than a major shift in market fundamentals.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MAY 2023

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