

Mercer County Extension Office  
1007 Lexington Road  
Harrodsburg, KY 40330

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# Agriculture Natural Resources Newsletter December, 2024



**Cooperative Extension Service**  
Mercer County  
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Harrodsburg, KY 40330  
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*Linda McClanahan*  
Linda McClanahan  
Mercer County Extension Agent for ANR

**Did you know?** The word "Decem" is Latin for tenth. The month of December was originally 10th in the Roman Calendar until January and February were added.  
**Did you know?** Alabama was the first state to officially recognize Christmas in 1836. Oklahoma was the last, in 1907.



- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| December 4-6      | KY Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting, Louisville                     |
| December 5        | Fort Harrod Backcountry Horsemen Meeting, 7 PM                           |
| December 10       | UK Beef Management Webinar Zoom, 8pm                                     |
| December 16       | Central KY Hay Production Meeting, Fayette County Extension Office, 6 PM |
| December 17       | Mercer County Extension Council Holiday Open House                       |
| December 25-Jan 1 | Extension Office Closed for the Holidays                                 |
| January 1         | New Years Day, Extension Office Closed                                   |
| January 16-17     | Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention, Owensboro                               |
| January 16        | Kentucky Commodity Conference, Bowling Green                             |
| January 20        | MLK Jr. Day, Extension Office Closed                                     |
| January 21        | Central KY Ag Lenders Conference, Fayette County Extension Office        |
| January 23        | Area Grain Meeting, Boyle County Extension Office, 6 PM                  |
| January 29        | Equine & Endophytes Meeting, Fayette County Extension Office, 10 AM      |
| January 20        | Cattle Management Meeting, Mercer County Extension Office, 6:30 PM       |

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

Mercer County Extension Council invites you to our

## BIG BLUE OPEN HOUSE

**December 17**  
**4:00—6:30pm**



Cooperative  
Extension Service

See how Extension can be a benefit for you and your family! Meet your county agents and learn more about the programs we have to offer. We will have appetizers, refreshments, holiday crafts, and door prizes. Family-friendly event, all ages welcome. Freebies include: calendars, jar openers, pizza cutters, and more.

**Take your picture with Santa!**

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Join us for an evening of all things hay!

# CENTRAL KENTUCKY HAY PROGRAM

**CAIP Eligible**

**PROGRAM FEATURES:**

- Central KY Hay Contest Awards
- Understanding your forage test results
  - Dr. Jimmy Henning, UK Extension Forage Specialist
- Determining quality horse hay
  - Dr. Bob Coleman UK Extension Equine Specialist
- How I make quality hay: Tips for Success
  - Producer panel

**When:** Monday, December 16th, 2024  
**Where:** Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Harry Sykes Way, Lexington, KY 40504  
**Time:** 6:00 – 8:00pm

Dinner will be served so please RSVP to the Fayette County Extension Office at 859-257-5582 before December 9th!



Join us for

# Good Idea Shop Talks

A free meet-up series for row crop and livestock producers to exchange ideas for improving on-farm soil and water resources, while protecting profitability


We meet on the following Thursdays at 11:30am CT / 12:30pm ET via Zoom:

- December 12th, 2024
- January 23rd, 2025
- January 30th, 2025
- February 6th, 2025

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER:  
[HTTPS://GOODIDEAFARM.ORG/SHOP-TALKS](https://goodideafarm.org/shop-talks)



*December recipe*




## Sweet Potato Crisp

<b>3 large</b> fresh sweet potatoes, cooked until tender.	<b>1 teaspoon</b> vanilla	<b>½ cup</b> all-purpose flour
<b>8 ounces</b> reduced fat cream cheese, softened	<b>1 tablespoon</b> ground cinnamon	<b>⅔ cup</b> quick cooking oats
<b>1 cup</b> brown sugar, divided	<b>2 medium</b> apples, chopped	<b>3 tablespoons</b> butter
		<b>¼ cup</b> chopped pecans

- Preheat** oven to 350° F. Lightly spray a 13 x 9 x 2 inch pan with non-stick spray.
- Mash** sweet potatoes. Add cream cheese, ⅔ cup brown sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Mix until smooth.
- Spread** sweet potato mixture evenly into pan.
- Top** sweet potatoes with chopped apples.
- In a small bowl, **combine** flour, oats, and ⅓ cup brown sugar. **Cut** in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbles. **Stir** in pecans.
- Sprinkle** mixture over apples.
- Bake** uncovered for 35-40 minutes or until topping is golden brown and fruit is tender.

**Yield:** 16, ¾ cup servings.  
**Nutritional Analysis:**  
 240 calories, 6 g fat, 3 g sat fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 200 mg sodium, 44 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 20 g sugar, 4 g protein.

Plate it up!



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

**90 Days before calving – time to sort off your thin cows for extra feed**

Photo courtesy of Troy Walz, Nebraska Extension.  
 By Jay Jenkins, Nebraska Extension Educator

Now is the time to body condition score your spring-calving herd and sort off the thin cows so you can give them a little extra feed. March calving cows have about 90 days left to put on body condition before calving. The last 90 days before calving is your last opportunity to cost effectively put condition back on thin cows. Body condition at calving is an important factor affecting rebreeding performance of spring-calving cows. The longer you wait to put condition back on cows, the more difficult and expensive it becomes.



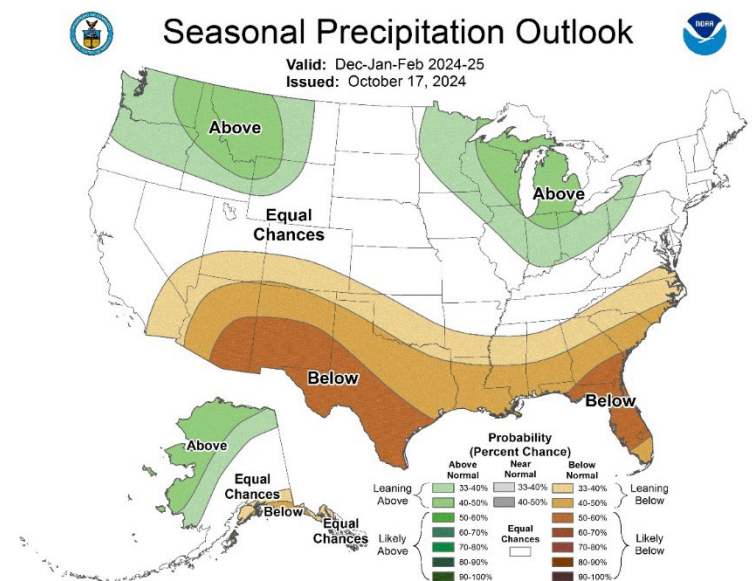
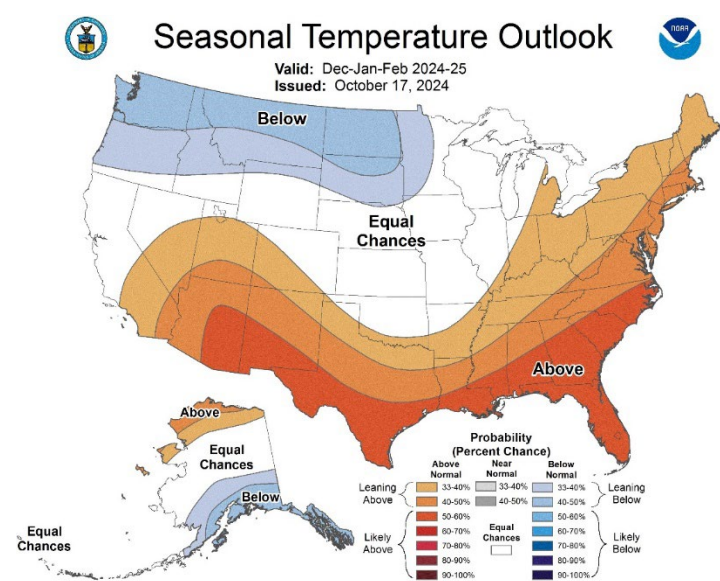
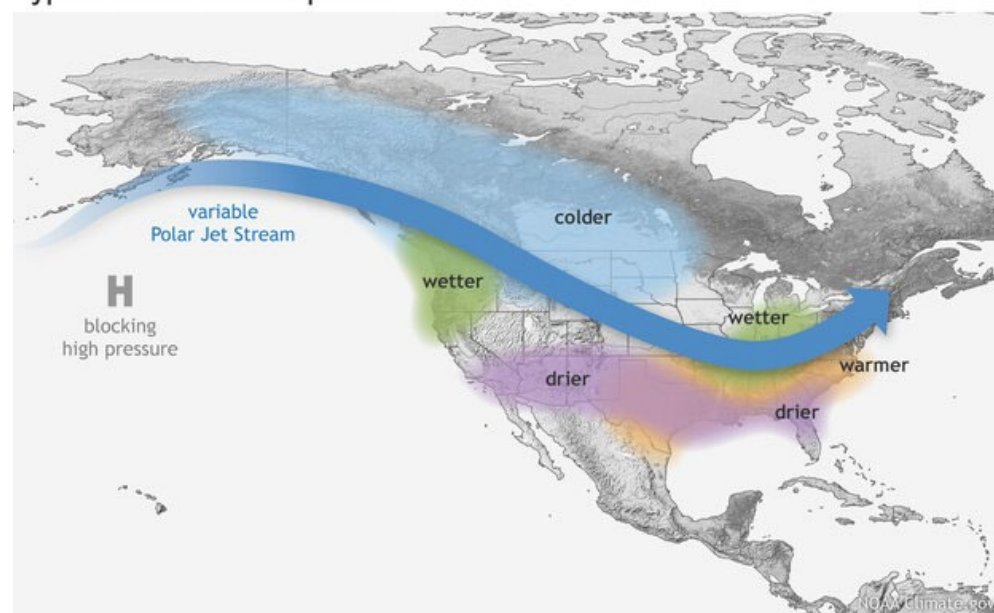
Cows calving in a body condition score of 5 or higher rebreed more quickly after calving than cows that are in a lower condition. Pregnancy rate increases as body condition at calving increases to a score of 5. Not only do cows in a body condition score of 4 and thinner have reduced chances of rebreeding, but they also produce less colostrum, and their calves have lower immunoglobulin levels. This means they may be less able to fight off disease. On top of that, calves from thin cows are less vigorous and slower to stand. So, thin cows have a lessened chance of rebreeding and give birth to weaker calves. These are two good reasons to sort off thin cows and give them extra feed. Managing spring calving cows in two groups for the 90 days before calving allows you to better manage your feed resources. You can save feed by not overfeeding the cows that don't need it.

**The 2024-2025 Winter Outlook** Derrick Snyder – National Weather Service, Paducah, KY

La Niña conditions are favored to emerge and persist during the winter months, with a 75% chance of La Niña by November to January. La Niña, which is defined by much cooler ocean temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, will likely affect temperature and precipitation through the winter season. A typical La Niña pattern will bring disturbances through the Ohio Valley more frequently than usual, but whether this means Kentucky will see more snow than usual remains unclear. During the last few winters, the most impactful winter storms have occurred when a sudden, sharp transition from above normal to below normal temperatures is forecast, so that will be one item to pay close attention to during the day-to-day forecast.

The long-range winter outlook slightly favors increased chances for warmer than normal conditions across the Commonwealth. The outlook favors equal chances for above, below, or near normal seasonal precipitation (including all rain, snow, and ice) across much of Kentucky, with the exception of far northern Kentucky, where above normal precipitation is slightly favored. Much of the fall months have been marked by persistent drier and warmer than normal conditions across the state, with persistent areas of widespread drought. The winter precipitation outlook suggests some drought improvement is possible through the winter.

Typical winter La Niña pattern



**Top 10 Reasons to Test Hay**

Dr. Jimmy Henning, UK Forage Extension Specialist

Most of you recognize the value of testing hay and make sure your livestock are fed the right hay at the right time. If you don't regularly test hay then the following is a list the top ten reasons you should make the effort to test the hay you produce or the hay you are buying.

- 1. It saves feed costs.** Overwintering costs are the single biggest cost in a cow-calf operation. UK budgets place the hay cost of overwintering a cow at \$150 (2.5 tons at \$60 per ton). Since much of the profit in a cow-calf operation comes from saving money, it makes good sense to know what is in your hay and to not purchase nutrients you don't need.
- 2. It keeps livestock healthy.** By preventing underfeeding, you keep cows in better condition and they can better handle the disease stresses of winter.
- 3. It tells you about your legume content.** The calcium to phosphorous ratio will indicate how much legume is in the hay. If calcium and phosphorous are present in similar amounts (in other words the ratio is 1 to 1), your hay is mostly grass. If it is 2 to 1 or greater, you have a significant amount of legume.
- 4. You get more calves.** In other words, skinny cows don't rebreed. Testing hay and feeding accordingly lowers the risk of cows losing significant body condition over winter.
- 5. It is a scorecard for your hay program.** Hay quality is something you can do something about but only if you get it tested. Comparing current values to historic values for your hay quality will "red flag" production issues before you find out about them in the form of fewer calves or thin cows.
- 6. It can make you money.** A hay test can help leverage higher prices for cash sales. Having a hay test says to potential customers that you are a serious forage producer.
- 7. It can tell you if your hay got hot.** A hay test can tell you if your hay got hot in storage, if you specify the correct assay when you submit the sample. Commonly used acronyms for heat damaged protein are ADICP, ADF-CP, ADIN, HDP and ICP. All of these represent the same thing – the amount of insoluble nitrogen associated with the acid detergent fiber in forage. All forage will have some insoluble nitrogen in the acid detergent fiber, but if it is more than 10% of the total, then you have heat damaged protein and you may need supplement.
- 8. It helps you use your hay efficiently.** You will be able to feed the best hay to the livestock that need the most nutrition.
- 9. It helps diagnose storage problems.** Getting around to all your hay barns and storage locations will give you a chance to make note of any barn leaks, water encroachment from poor drainage, and other problems.
- 10. It will impress** (and maybe shock) your county agent, your ag dealer, and even your neighbors.



**Forage Timely Tips: December**

- ▶ Begin utilizing stockpiled pastures. Graze pastures with orchardgrass and clovers first. Save tall fescue pastures for late winter grazing.
- ▶ Using polywire, strip graze stockpiled pastures to improve utilization. Start at the water source and allocate enough forage to for 2-3 days. Back fencing is not necessary since pastures are not regrowing this time of the year.
- ▶ Make plans to frost seed red and white clover onto closely grazed tall fescue pastures in February. Seed supplies of improved varieties may be tight.
  - ▶ Begin hay feeding as stockpiled forage is used up.
  - ▶ Supplement hay with commodity feeds as needed.
  - ▶ Minimizing waste by utilizing ring feeders.