

APRIL 2024

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Newsletter by Bracken County Extension Office



Note from the Agent:

- Rental fees on shared equipment have increased, see page 9.
- Ag Development Council Meeting is **May 6th at 6:00**

Follow Bracken County Cattleman's Association Facebook page to learn more about exciting events coming up in May 2024 in celebration of National Beef Month.

Be on the lookout for the Bracken Beef Bonanza

#Beef It's What For Dinner
#Where's the Beef??



Holly Bowman

PAINT PARTY
Fundraiser

May 21st at 6:00PM
Bracken County Extension Office

Join us for a door hanger paint party to support Bracken County Cattlemen's Association.

\$25 PER PERSON

Registrations can be taken at the Bracken County Extension Office. Registration deadline is Friday May 17th. Spots will only be held with payment, no registration online.

Cooperative Extension Service
MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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- WHATS HAPPENING IN THE COUNTY
- PROGRAMS
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- POSION HEMLOCK
- STORMY WEATHER
- STINK BUGS
- RENTAL EQUIPMENT
- UPDATES

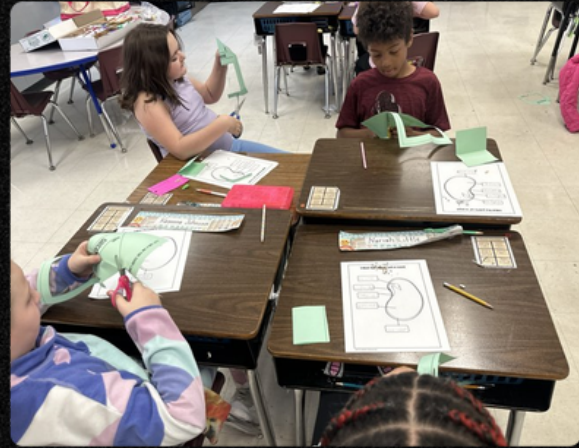


What's happening in the County?



0917

CANYA STORIES



0917

CANYA STORIES



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CANYA STORIES



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CANYA STORIES



0917

CANYA STORIES



0917

CANYA STORIES

Terrarium Workshop
Participants learned about succulent care while creating their own Terrarium/dish garden

Ag in the Classroom
Mrs. Ross's third grade class at Taylor Elementary and Mr. Bloomfield's at Augusta Independent School are learning all about seeds through identification, dissection, and growth.

Shared-Use Equipment Training

**Bracken County
Ag Advancement
Council**

MAY 2ND AT 6:30PM

**CAIP
EDUCATION**

BRACKEN COUNTY EXT OFFICE

About Shared-Use:

Our initiative is crafted to aid local farmers in embracing best management practices. Through our program, we provide easy access to specialized farm equipment at reasonable rates, fostering efficiency and productivity on your farm.

Training:

To guarantee the safe and efficient utilization of the equipment, our training program encompasses comprehensive instruction on correct operation, maintenance procedures, and safety protocols.

Rental:

- Reservations are made through the Bracken County Extension Office. These can be done of the same day or multiple weeks in advance.
- Call the office for availability at 606-735-2141
- Check or Exact Change ONLY
 - Checks payable to Bracken Co Ag Council
- Rental Agreement must be signed and must provide a copy of your vehicle proof of insurance.



**Equipment Available for Rent:
Portable Chute, Alley, Tub Unit
Squeeze Chute
Corral Kit
Lime Spreader
Pasture Sprayer**

**Cooperative
Extension Service**

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.

Timely Tips

Dr. Les Anderson, Beef Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

Spring Calving Cow Herd

- Watch cows and calves closely. Work hard to save every calf (you can cull/sell them later). Calves can be identified while they are young and easy to handle. Commercial male calves should be castrated and implanted. Registered calves should be weighed at birth.
- Cows that have calved need to be on an adequate nutritional level to rebreed. Increase their feed after calving. Don't let them lose body condition. Keep feeding them until pastures are adequate.
- Don't "rush to grass" although it can be really tempting. Be sure that grass has accumulated enough growth to support the cow's nutritional needs before depending solely upon it. Cows may walk the pastures looking for green grass instead of eating dry feed. This lush, watery grass is not adequate to support them. Keep them consuming dry feed until sufficient grass is available to sustain body condition. We've spent too much money keeping them in good condition to lose it now!
- Prevent grass tetany! Provide magnesium in the mineral mix until daytime temperatures are consistently above 60°F. Mineral supplement should be available at all times and contain a minimum of about 14 percent magnesium. Make sure that your mineral mix also contains adequate selenium, copper, and zinc. You can ask your feed dealer about the UK Beef IRM High Magnesium Mineral.
- Make final selection of heifer replacements. Strongly consider vaccinating with a modified-live BVD vaccine. Vaccinate at least 60 days before the start of the breeding season.
- Purchase replacement bulls at least 30 days prior to the start of the breeding season. Have herd bulls evaluated for breeding soundness (10-20% of bulls are questionable or unsatisfactory breeders). Get all bulls in proper condition (BCS 6) for breeding.
- If you are going to use artificial insemination and/or estrous synchronization, make plans now and order needed supplies, semen, and schedule a technician.
- Prebreeding or "turn-out" working is usually scheduled for late April or May - between the end of calving season and before the start of the breeding season (while cows are open). Consult your veterinarian about vaccines and health products your herd needs. Plan now for products needed and have handling facilities in good working order. Dehorn commercial calves before going to pasture.

Fall Calving Cow Herd

- Pregnancy check cows now and cull open ones at weaning especially if the open cows are older than 5 years of age.
- Re-implant feeders.
- Consult with your veterinarian about preweaning working the herd.
- You may let calves creep-graze wheat or rye if it is available. Calves will benefit from extra feed until spring grass appears.
- Plan marketing strategy for feeder calves.

Stockers

- Don't go to pastures too soon, give plants some growing time. Then stock at two to three times the July rate and rotate rapidly.
- "Condition" purchased calves prior to grazing. They should be processed and fed a conditioning diet prior to being placed on pasture. You can also use this time to introduce them to electric fences which are used in rotational grazing.
- Provide a good mineral supplement which contains a rumen modifier (Rumensin, Bovatec, etc.) along with adequate levels of copper and selenium.

General

- We've made a muddy mess this winter, so be prepared to reseed bare spots. Our forage group has some excellent information on restoring heavily traffic areas.
- Make plans to improve hay feeding areas to avoid muddy conditions like we have faced this winter. Consider geotextile fabric with gravel or concrete feeding pads.
- Prepare for the grazing season. Check fences and make necessary repairs. Check your corral, too.
- Get everything ready to make high quality hay in May! Have equipment serviced and spare parts on hand. Order baler twine now. Be prepared to harvest an adequate supply of hay when you have the opportunity. Re-supply the extra hay that you fed out of the barn. This past winter caused most producers to exhaust their hay supply, so it's time to re-stock.
- Plan now for fly control ... decide what fly control program that you will use but don't put insecticide ear tags on cattle until fly population appears.

Act Now to Control Poison Hemlock

Dr. J. D. Green, Extension Weed Scientist, Dr. Megan Romano, UKVDL Toxicologist, Dr. Michelle Arnold, Ruminant Extension Veterinarian

During the early summer, the presence of poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is more evident. Although this plant is often seen along roadways, abandoned lots, fencerows, and other non-cropland sites, in recent years it has expanded out into grazed pasture lands and hay fields. Poison hemlock is toxic to a wide variety of animals including man, birds, wildlife, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses. It contains several neurotoxic piperidine alkaloids; the two major ones are coniine (major alkaloid in the mature plant and seed) and the more toxic gamma-coniceine (predominate in green, vegetative growth). These alkaloids cause muscle paralysis by acting as a neuromuscular blocking agent, resulting in two major effects: 1) rapid, sometimes fatal effects on the nervous system and 2) they are teratogenic agents, meaning they are known to cause birth defects when consumed during certain times of gestation. Cattle seldom choose to eat poison hemlock unless no other forage is available or it is incorporated in hay, silage, or the seeds in grain. A commonly asked question is how much plant material must be consumed by cattle to kill them. Unfortunately, the answer is not clear cut as there is considerable variation in the toxic alkaloid content of the plant depending on its stage of growth, season, moisture, temperature, time of day, and geographic region. Cattle have died by eating 0.2–0.5% of their body weight in green hemlock.

Poison hemlock is classified as a biennial that reproduces only by seed. It is capable, however, of completing its lifecycle as a winter annual in Kentucky if it germinates during the fall months. New plants emerge in the fall as a cluster of leaves that form a rosette which remains green throughout the winter in a semi-dormant state. It is most noticeable at this stage of growth in late fall through early spring with its parsley-like leaves which are highly dissected or fern-like with leaf petioles that have purple spotting and no hairs (Figure 1). The individual leaves are shiny green and triangular in appearance.



FIGURE 1. POISON HEMLOCK ROSETTE.

After resuming active growth in late winter, they form larger rosettes. As the plant begins to send up flower stalks, the leaves are alternately arranged on the main stem. Each individual leaf is pinnately compound with several pairs of leaflets that appear along opposite sides of the main petiole. As the plant matures, poison hemlock can grow upwards to about 6 to 8 feet tall (Figure 2). At maturity the plant is erect, often with multi-branched stems, and forms a deep taproot. The hollow stems are smooth with purple spots randomly seen along the lower stem that helps distinguish it from other plants similar in appearance. The flowers, when mature, are white and form a series of compound umbels (an umbrella-shaped cluster of small flowers) at the end of each terminal stalk. Poison hemlock foliage has an unpleasant mouse urine-like odor, detectable when near the plant or when a stem or leaf is crushed. Although this weed is often associated with areas that have moist soil conditions, it can also survive in dry sites.



FIGURE 2. MATURE POISON HEMLOCK PLANTS GROWING IN HAYFIELD.

Fortunately, most animals avoid grazing poison hemlock if other forage is readily available. However, animals are more likely to consume green plants during the late winter and early spring when other forage species are limited or when droughted or starving animals gain access to an overgrown field. All parts of the plant, including the seeds, contain the toxic alkaloids coniine and gamma-coniceine. Gamma-coniceine is more toxic than coniine and is at its highest concentration in early growth. As the plant matures, gamma-coniceine undergoes chemical reduction to the less toxic alkaloid coniine. Seeds and dried plant material contain the highest concentrations of coniine. Although toxicity is reduced Figure 1. Poison hemlock rosette. Figure 2. Mature poison hemlock plants growing in hayfield. during drying due to volatility of coniine, animals will eat much more dried poison hemlock than fresh because palatability is greatly improved. Seeds are highly toxic and can be a source of poisoning when they contaminate cereal grains fed to livestock. Therefore, avoid feeding animals hay or grain known to contain poison hemlock.

Symptoms of acute poisoning can occur rapidly after ingestion of plant material anywhere within 30 minutes to 2 hours depending on the animal species, quantity consumed, and stage of plant growth. Initially the affected animal may develop nervousness, salivation, tearing, frequent urination, and signs of abdominal pain. There may be a detectable mousy odor to the breath and urine. Symptoms progress to muscle tremors, incoordination, and weakness, difficulty breathing, and death can result within hours due to respiratory failure. If acute poisoning does not progress to collapse and death, signs can begin to improve within several hours, with full recovery in as few as 6–8 hours.

Diagnosis is based on history of plant ingestion, clinical signs, and chemical analysis for presence of alkaloids in rumen contents. Activated charcoal may help bind alkaloids if administered prior to onset of signs. Avoid exciting or stressing symptomatic animals, as that may exacerbate symptoms and result in death. Poisoning is prevented by providing sufficient, good-quality forage and preventing livestock exposure. Public health is a concern when dealing with poisoned animals because of the possibility of alkaloid residues in meat. Elimination of plant toxicants through the milk is a minor route of excretion but may be important when consumed by a calf or a human. More importantly, people have been accidentally poisoned when they confused poison hemlock for plants such as parsley, wild carrot, or wild anise.

Although acute poisoning is a primary concern, an equally serious problem is subacute intoxication of pregnant livestock that results in congenital birth defects. These defects are caused by inhibition of fetal movement by the plant toxin during critical fetal development. In cattle, the susceptible period of pregnancy is 40 to 100 days while in swine, sheep, and goats the susceptible period of gestation is 30 to 60 days. Defects possible include severe limb deformities (Figure 3), joint rigidity, rib cage anomalies, vertebral curvature, and cleft palate. Diagnosis of plant-induced congenital defects is only through known exposure during gestation since the alkaloids are long gone once the calf is born.

The principal strategy for poison hemlock control is to prevent seed production which can be a challenge since a fully mature plant can produce 35,000 – 40,000 new seeds. It is too late to utilize herbicide control methods after plants have produced flowers. Therefore, mechanical control efforts (if feasible) such as mowing or cutting down individual plants should be initiated just before peak flower production to avoid or reduce the number of new seeds produced. The best time for control using herbicides is generally when plants are in the younger rosette stages of growth in late October/ early November or February/ early March when daytime temperatures reach the 60°s. Make note of areas heavily infested with poison hemlock (Figure 4) and begin to look there for emergence of new plants in the fall. Herbicide products containing 2,4-D, dicamba+2,4-D (e.g. Weedmaster, Brash, Rifle-D, etc.), and aminopyralid (e.g. DuraCor, GrazonNext) are the preferred choices for obtaining effective control. Effectiveness of chemical control can decrease as plants begin to elongate and become more mature. When using herbicidal control methods on larger plants, it is important to remove animals from treated areas since animals are more likely to graze poison hemlock plants following herbicide treatment.

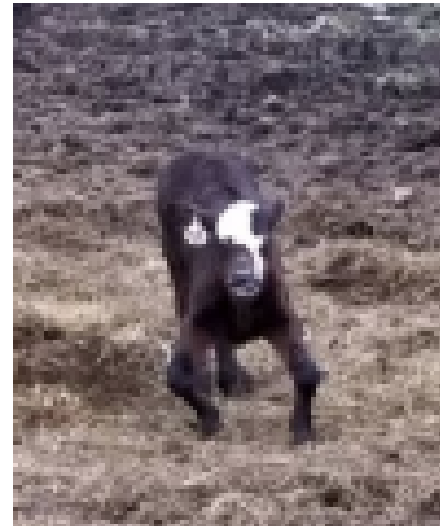


FIGURE 3. LIMB DEFORMITY DUE TO INGESTION OF POSION HEMLOCK DURING 1ST TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY



FIGURE 4. POISON HEMLOCK GROWING ALONG FENCE LINE DECEMBER.

Forage News

Forage Timely Tips: April

- ✓ Graze cover crops using temporary fencing.
- ✓ As pasture growth begins, rotate through pastures quickly to keep up with the fast growth of spring.
- ✓ Creep-graze calves and lambs, allowing them access to highest-quality pasture.
- ✓ Finish re-seeding winter feeding sites where soil disturbance and sod damage occurred.
- ✓ As pasture growth exceeds the needs of the livestock, remove some fields from the rotation and allow growth to accumulate for hay or haylage.
- ✓ Flash graze pastures newly seeded with clovers to manage competition.

Upcoming Events

2024 Spring Fencing Schools—Hands on school focusing on the installation of fixed knot woven wire fence and electrified smooth high tensile fence. April 23 in Morehead, KY; April 25 in Mayfield, KY

2024 Beginning Grazing School—Not sure where to start? This school is designed to provide you with the tools needed to establish a profitable and sustainable grazing system. April 30-May 1 in Princeton, KY

Electric Fence Troubleshooting School—This school is designed to provide students with tips on installation of new and troubleshooting of existing electric fencing. June 12 in Morgantown, KY

Go to <https://forages.ca.uky.edu/events> to register or for more information or contact Caroline Roper at 270-704-2254 or Caroline.Roper@uky.edu

Farm and home safety tips for stormy weather

Sources: Matt Dixon, UK Agricultural Meteorologist; National Weather Service, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ag Safety Database

It's that time of year when we get more thunderstorms. Weather patterns are more active, and storms thrive with the moisture and rapidly rising warm air that is very common during the transition to warmer seasons.

Stormy conditions also increase the potential for lightning to strike people at work or play outdoors and, possibly, while they're inside a building. Although thunderstorms are more common during the spring and summer, they can take place all year long and at all hours.

All thunderstorms produce lightning. Sometimes called "nature's fireworks," lightning is produced by the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between negatively and positively charged areas. An average lightning charge can provide enough energy to keep a 100-watt light bulb burning for more than three months.

Other dangers associated with thunderstorms are heavy rains that lead to flash floods, strong winds, hail and tornadoes. These weather conditions can injure or kill people and pets, as well as cause billions of dollars in crop and property damage.

Thunder is the result of a shock wave caused by rapid heating and cooling of air near the lightning channel.

If you want to estimate the miles between yourself and a lightning flash, simply count seconds between lightning and thunder and divide this time by five. Sound travels about a mile every five seconds. So if you count 30 seconds between lightning and thunder, lightning has flashed within six miles of you. This puts you within lightning striking distance, according to scientific research.

The most important thunderstorm safety precaution is simply to be aware of an approaching thunderstorm and move to a safe shelter before the storm arrives in your area. If you see lightning, hear thunder, observe dark clouds, or your hair stands on end, immediately go inside a sturdy, completely enclosed building, home or a hard-top vehicle with closed windows. Avoid picnic shelters, sports dugouts, covered patios, carports and open garages. Small wooden, vinyl or metal sheds provide little to no protection.

Since metal conducts lightning, don't touch metal inside or outdoors; drop metal backpacks; release golf clubs, tennis rackets, fishing gear and tools, and get off bicycles and motorcycles.

Lightning can strike water and travel a long distance in it. So standing in water, even in rubber boots, isn't safe during a thunderstorm. It's also unsafe to go swimming, wading, snorkeling and scuba diving if lightning is present. If you're in a small boat during a storm, crouch in the middle and stay away from metal items and surfaces.

Crouch down in an open, exposed area and stay away from tall objects, such as trees. Remember to stay away from clotheslines, fences, exposed sheds and other elevated items that can conduct lightning.

If you're indoors, remember lightning can enter buildings as a direct strike, through pipes and wires extending outside, or through the ground. Telephone use is a leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in America, because the charges can travel a long way in telephone and electrical wires, especially in rural areas.

Windows and doors provide a direct path for lightning to enter a building; so avoid them. During a thunderstorm, stay away from laundry appliances as they are connected to plumbing and electrical systems. Dryer vents offer a direct electrical pathway outdoors.

On the farm, ungrounded wire fences can put livestock at risk when lightning strikes. Surprisingly, lightning can travel almost two miles along an ungrounded fence. According to the National Ag Safety Database, you can ground wooden or steel posts that are set in concrete by driving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch or $\frac{3}{4}$ inch steel rods or pipes next to fence posts at least 5 feet into the ground, at intervals of no more than 150 feet along the fence. You should securely fasten the grounding rods so that all the fence wires come into contact with them. You can also substitute galvanized steel fence posts for wooden posts at intervals of no more than 150 feet. You should not however, ground electric fences in this manner, because they have a direct path to the ground in their circuitry. More tips for lightning protection on the farm are available on the National Ag Safety Database website, <http://nasdonline.org/1882/doi1825/lightning-protection-for-farms.html>.

Also remember pet safety. Lightning can easily strike animals chained to a tree or wire runner. Doghouses generally aren't protected against lightning strikes.



How to properly manage the damage caused by brown marmorated stink bugs

Source: Jonathan Larson, UK extension entomologist

As their name implies, brown marmorated stink bugs are not just stinky—they can seriously harm crops. You must take action to keep this pest away, regardless of the size of your field or garden.

Although brown marmorated stink bugs have long been present in the eastern part of the state, since 2019 they have started appearing in more counties in Western Kentucky. This invasive species resembles native stink bugs in appearance, but it has a gray belly, and a brown, mottled top along with white bands on its antennae.

These stink bugs will consume any crop. Sweet corn, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes are a few of their favorite foods. They also prey on ornamental trees like redbuds and field crops like soybeans. Their feeding discolors crops, turns their insides corky, and—most importantly—makes them inedible.

Home and commercial growers should take prompt action to control brown marmorated stink bugs because of their capacity to quickly decimate crops.

Here are some quick tips:

- They smell strongly, so you don't want to smash them. Even if you inadvertently crush them, their odor will keep other stink bugs away from your crops. To eliminate them in large quantities, you can sweep them off plants and place them in buckets of soapy water.
- When stink bugs are small, homeowners can control them with insecticidal soap; for larger stink bugs, use products containing pyrethroids. You can also utilize physical exclusion techniques like netting or row covers to keep the stink bugs out of your yard. When using row covers, timing is crucial because you don't want to use them to impede pollination.
- Since the brown marmorated stink bug most frequently infiltrates along field edges, commercial producers should concentrate their monitoring efforts there. In these circumstances, pyrethroid products can also be helpful.
- Throughout the summer, stink bugs will most likely produce two generations, so keep a careful eye on your crops. Early summer is when the first generation will emerge, and late summer or early fall is when the second generation does.
- Brown marmorated stink bugs may begin to appear in your home as the weather cools off and they seek cover from the elements. Toward the end of August, they can also begin to cluster on the exterior of homes. If homeowners spot these stinkbug parties, they can spray them with soapy water and kill them before they end up inside.

Rental Equipment

To reserve please call the office at (606)-735-2141


*****RENTALS HAVE CHANGED*****

Equipment	Rental Fee	Notes
Portable Chute, Alley, Tub Unit	\$50 per day	Certification is required
Squeeze Chute	\$25 per day	
Corral Kit	\$25 per day	
Lime Spreader	\$50 per day	
Pasture Sprayer	\$25 per day	No non-selective herbicides (roundup)



Spinach Pasta Bake

Servings: 9 Serving Size: 1 cup

 Cooperative
Extension Service



Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat penne pasta
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, shredded
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ teaspoons dry basil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 can (14 ounces) Italian diced tomatoes, drained
- 10 ounces fresh spinach, chopped
- 1 cup low-fat shredded Mozzarella cheese

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions.
3. Drain and cover to keep warm.
4. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the beef and onions until beef is no longer pink.
5. Drain.
6. Return beef to skillet.
7. Add carrots and spices and cook an additional two minutes.
8. Stir in tomatoes.
9. Reduce heat to low.
10. Cover and simmer 10 minutes.
11. Add pasta and spinach and mix well.
12. Cover and cook an additional 3 minutes or until spinach is wilted.
13. Pour into greased 3-quart baking dish.
14. Sprinkle with Mozzarella cheese.
15. Bake, uncovered for 10 minutes.

Source: *Plate it up! Kentucky Proud Project.*

QUALITY HAY PRODUCTION

FIELD DAY



FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024

LOCATION: 1965 MARTHA MILLS RD, FLEMINGSBURG

9:00AM-2:00PM

RAIN DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 17

- **9:00AM:** REGISTRATION, DONUTS, & VENDORS OPEN
- **10:00AM-NOON:** UK SPECIALISTS COVER VARIETY OF TOPICS ON WEED ID, VISUAL COMPARISONS OF HAY QUALITY AND MORE!
- **NOON:** LUNCH & VENDORS
- **12:30PM:** LOCAL EQUIPMENT DEALERSHIPS DEMOS

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FLEMING COUNTY: (606) 845-4641

LEWIS COUNTY: (606) 796-2732

MASON COUNTY: (606) 564-6808

ROBERTSON COUNTY: (606) 724-5796



PLEASE REGISTER BY: MAY 3RD

Cooperative Extension Service

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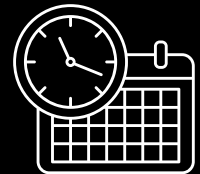
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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506



Bracken County Extension Office
1120 Brooksville Germantown Road
Brooksville, KY 41004

Important Dates



- **April 13 | Portable Chute Certification | Bracken Co. Ext Office | 9:00AM**
- **April 25th | Private Pesticide Applicator Training | Bracken County Ext Office | 6:00PM**
- **April 30th | Private Pesticide Applicator Training | Bracken County Ext Office | 9:00AM**
- **May 2nd | Shared-Use Equipment Training | Bracken County Ext Office | 6:30PM**
- **May 7 | Mommy & Me Hanging Baskets | Bracken Co. Ext Office | 6:00PM**
- **May 10 | Quality Hay Production Field Day | Fleming County | 9:00AM**
- **May 21st | Paint Party for Cattlemen's | Bracken County Ext Office | 6:00PM**
- **May 30 | Equine Nutrition | Bracken Co. Ext Office | 6:00PM**
- **June 11 | Grow it, Eat it Salsa | Bracken Co. Ext Office | 6:00PM**