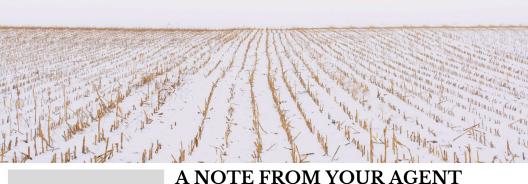


Mason Co Extension

A Monthly Agricultural Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE:

Hello all.

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and had a chance to relax and spend time with family. As we step into the new year, I am excited to dive into programming and continue serving the producers in our county!

We'll kick off the year with the Master Cattlemen Series, a six-week program hosted by the Buffalo Trace agents. In February, we'll host our annual Agronomy Day and begin Private Pesticide Applicator trainings. If you're unsure whether your pesticide certification has expired, give me a call and we can check.

Winter is here and it's the perfect time to focus on learning and growing your skills. Take advantage of this season to attend programs, connect with others, and set yourself up for a successful year ahead.

Audrey W

Audrey Wright Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent **Mason County Extension**

New Lime Buggy

IRM Calendars

Timely Tips

Cull Cow Program

Winter Cattle Nutrients

Hay & Soil Testing

Upcoming Programs

Important Dates



FOLLOW OUR FACEBOOK!







For rental information, contact the Mason Co. Conservation District at (606)759-5570 Ext. 3

TIMELY TIPS

DR. LES ANDERSON, BEEF EXTENSION PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Spring Calving Cows

- Be sure that we ned heifer calves are on a feeding program that will enable them to reach about 65% of
 their mature weight before the start of the breeding season. Rations should be balanced to achieve gains
 sufficient to get heifers from their current weight to that "target" weight. Heifers should reach their
 target weight approximately 30 days before the start of the breeding season.
- Body condition is important, plan an adequate winter program for cows to be at least body condition
 score 5 (carrying enough flesh to cover the ribs) before the calving and breeding season. This will help
 them to breed early in the spring. Thin cows should be fed to regain body condition prior to winter.
 Don't let cows lose weight/condition. Supplementation will most likely be needed. Find low-cost
 supplemental feeds to meet the nutrient needs of cattle.
- Divide the herd into groups for winter feeding:
 - weaned heifer calves
 - first-calf heifers, second-calvers and thin mature cows
 - the remainder of the dry cows which are in good body condition
 - herd sires
- Begin feeding the lowest quality forage to dry cows which are in good condition during early winter and save the best hay for calving time or for weaned calves.
- Order and number ear tags for next year's calf crop this winter. It is also a good time to catch up on freeze branding and replacing lost ear tags.

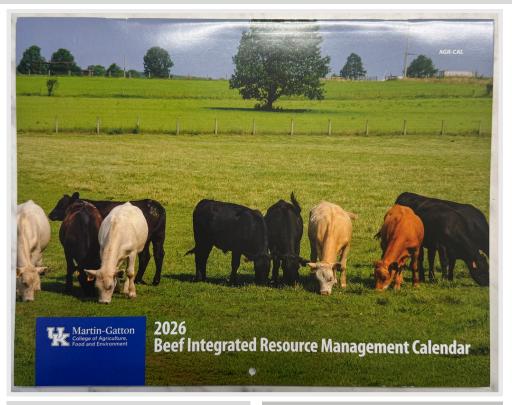
Fall Calving Cows

- The fall breeding season has started. Breeding can best be accomplished on stockpiled fescue pasture; otherwise, cows with calves should be fed 25-30 pounds of good quality hay or its equivalent.
 Supplement with grain, if needed, and minimize hay waste. DON'T ALLOW THESE COWS TO LOSE BODY CONDITION PRIOR TO OR DURING THE BREEDING SEASON. It is easy to wait too long to start winter feeding.
- If you haven't turned bulls out yet, have a Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) performed on them
 (even if you used them this spring). A BSE is a risk management tool as BSE's accurately identify
 infertile bulls.
- Observe performance of bulls during breeding season. Watch cows for return to estrus, if you see several
 in heat, try to determine the cause and consider changing bulls.

General

- Complete soil testing pastures to check for fertility and pH.
- Consider putting down geotextile fabric and covering with gravel in feeding areas before you begin hay
 feeding to minimize waste of expensive hay. Or, perhaps, construct concrete feeding pads for winter
 feeding areas.
- Another option to consider for winter feeding is bale grazing. Bale grazing helps spread nutrients across
 the pasture and can have regenerative effects on your pastures.
- Monitor body condition and increase feed, if needed, for all classes of cattle. It often gets cold in
 December and the nutrients needs of cattle increase as temperatures fall below their comfort level. Be
 especially mindful of cold, wet conditions and increase energy availability. Consult your nutritionist to
 ensure that your rations are meeting the nutrient requirements during stressful weather.

IRM CALENDARS



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Stop by the office to pick up a 2026 Beef IRM calendar!

These calendars are full of helpful tips and record keeping resources!

CULL COW PROGRAM

BEEF Solutions...

What is Beef Solutions?

When Kroger asked the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association for a fresh, local ground beef product in 2017, KCA launched Beef Solutions. Today, Kentucky Cattlemen's Ground Beef is sold in 182 Kroger stores across KY, OH, and TN, plus at the KFC Yum! Center and the State Fairgrounds. Since 2018, the program has put over \$3.7 million back into Kentucky farms.

<u>Ideal cow for the program:</u>

- About 1,300 lbs
- Body Condition Score (BCS) around 5.0
- Produces an 80% lean / 20% fat blend without trimming (No pulling out any loins, briskets, anything, so ideal cow hits 80/20 by herself.)

Enrollment details:

- One-page form
- Proof cows were on a Kentucky farm for 60+ days
- Ear tags with unique ID/barcode: \$1.50 each
- Plan ahead: 30-60 days lead time for harvest scheduling

Pricing:

Based on previous week's KY market price for boner cows, converted to hot carcass weight

<u>Processing location:</u>

Marksbury Farm Market, Lancaster, KY

Consumer side:

Kroger sells the beef in 1-lb vacuum-sealed bricks and two-patty packs. Demand is strong and growing.

Questions or want to enroll?

Call us at the Extension Office – we can help you get started!

Beef Solutions website:

https://www.beefsolutionsllc.com/





THE REAL COST OF LIMITING NUTRIENTS

DR. LES ANDERSON, BEEF EXTENSION PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Few would argue that the last several months in Kentucky have been challenging. Our summer was marked by severe heat and drought for most producers. October finally brought some relief, but this weather pattern led many to feed hay as early as July. Even with record market prices through September, the heat/drought has taken a real toll on our cow herd and our bank accounts. Even with the recent rains, thin cows abound. Spring-calving cows have time to recover but fall-calving cows may be in trouble. Most of us realize the link between body condition score and reproductive rate. Unfortunately, many producers face the ageold decision of how much money should I put into my cows? Can I afford to feed them? So, what is the cost of letting your cows get thin?

Let's use a real-world example from a producer with a fall-calving herd that participated in UK and the Kentucky Beef Network's MAG-60 program, which is short for Management and Genetics, 60 days post weaning. This program required the use of AI, and this farm had not used AI for their breeding program in the past. The farm had 100 fall-calving cows, and these cows weighed about 1,350 lbs. at a BCS of 5. Like this year, the farm experienced drought throughout the summer and early fall. The first farm visit required for the program occurred at the end of August just as the calving season was beginning. At this time, these cows were in good condition, averaging a BCS of a 5 with several scoring 6. Because the lack of rain resulted in limited pastures, and the producer began to feed hay on August 1. The hay was "good grass hay" with a TDN of 48% and CP of 7%. Money was tight for this producer, so they made the decision NOT to supplement these cows. Average lactating cows in this size require 60% TDN and 11% CP and were only provided 48% and 7%, respectively.

So, these cows were going to lose weight. I arrived back on the farm on Nov. 21 when the timed AI was performed. The herd's average BCS was 4. Remember, each BCS point equals about 75 pounds, so these cows were losing weight rapidly. Conception rate, either natural service or AI, can decrease by as much as 20% if cows are losing weight between calving and breeding. A 20% decline in conception rate doubles the length of time required to achieve a 90% pregnancy rate. After the insemination, the bulls were turned out for 60 days then removed. Conception date was confirmed about 40 days after the insemination and their average BCS was a weak 4, so the cows likely lost another 30 pounds or so of body weight. Reproductive performance was terrible. Only 29 conceived to the AI, 31 conceived via natural service and 40 were OPEN!

CONCEPTION RATE, EITHER NATURAL SERVICE OR AI, CAN DECREASE BY AS MUCH AS 20% IF COWS ARE LOSING WEIGHT BETWEEN CALVING AND BREEDING. This example may seem exaggerated, but this scenario occurs more often than we think and, if we are not aware, producers could be facing this decision again this fall. The question becomes which is the more economical management scheme; no supplementation and reduced reproduction or supplementation to meet nutrient needs.

To help determine this let's first look at our losses. In the above scenario, 40 cows were open. Of these, likely seven would have been open regardless, so 33 calves were lost due to the reduced input management. Let's say these 33 calves (17 steers, 16 heifers) would have weaned at 525 pounds (550 for steers, 500 for heifers) so we lost 17,350 pounds of product. If we would have sold these calves last Monday, they would have averaged about \$380 cwt for the steers and \$350 cwt for the heifers. Our lost income would be about \$63,350 (17×550×\$3.80=\$35,530 and 16×500×\$3.50=\$28,000).

Now, let's look at what could have happened. What would it cost to supplement these cows to maintain their weight for this period? To meet their nutrient needs, these cows would need about 12 pounds of a soy hulls/distillers grain supplement mixed at a ratio of 2:1. The cost of this supplement this fall would have averaged \$240 per ton for the feeding period which lasted from Sept. 1 to bull removal on Feb. 1 or 123 days. So, the cost of supplementation would be about \$17,712 (\$0.12 per pound \times 12 pounds \times 123 days \times 100 cows = \$17,712).

Wow. Invest about \$17K to return \$63K! Deciding to invest in the BCS of the herd in this real-life example was nearly a fourfold return on investment. It's not hard to understand that in today's market, every calf sold is significant revenue but making the decision to maintain the BCS is simply good business even when the market value is lower. Remember, you are not "spending money" on your cows when you feed them to maintain a BCS of 5 or greater. You are making a wise investment!

If you have questions about supplementing, reach out to the extension office and we can help! There is also a tool on UK's Beef Integrated Resource Management website to help you determine what to supplement based on hay quality.

Scan this qr code to view the forage supplement tool:



HAY TESTING

The Mason County Extension Office now has a hay probe available to check out at the office to help producers collect hay samples for lab analysis.

WHY TEST YOUR FORAGE?

- Tested forages can mean higher profit, whether feeding cattle, horses, goats, sheep or other livestock. Knowing the nutritional value will help you minimize your cost and maximize your production.
- The analysis report, assists producers in balancing feed rations for their livestock. Each livestock species take a different energy level at different stages of their lives. A ration balance will help maintain a healthy diet.
- Forage testing helps determine fair market value and establish an equitable price for forage sales.
- Buying or Selling Hay: The Forage Testing Program maintains a list of Kentucky hay producers that have their hay tested through KDA. The service is offered throughout the state and the information may be viewed on this KDA "Forage Sales Directory/Tested Hay" webpage.

Contact me if you have any questions or to learn more about submitting samples for analysis!



FALL SOIL TESTING

Soil samples can be collected through much of the year, although fall (September to December) or spring (February to April) are the best times. Fall sampling will often result in a faster return of results and recommendations. Fall sampling will also allow the grower time to have the fertilizer applied well before planting the next crop. However, fall sampling results in lower pH and soil test K levels when conditions are dry. In either case, a field should always be sampled the same time of the year in order to make historical comparisons. Most fields should be sampled every three to four years. High-value crops, such as tobacco, commercial horticultural crops, alfalfa, red clover, and corn silage, should be sampled annually so that plant nutrient levels can be monitored more closely. Application of manure can change soil test phosphorus, potassium, and zinc levels dramatically, so sampling manured fields each year is also recommended.





OWNER SAMPLE ID: #1

AGRICULTURE CROP INFORMATION:

.... CROP: Cool Season Grass MANAGEMENT: Annual Top Dressing USE: Hay or Silage

Determination	Result	V Low	Low	Med	High	V High	Recommendation
Soil pH	7						None
Nitrogen							see comments below
Phosphorus	41 lbs/acre						40 lb P205/ac
Potassium	157 lbs/acre						100 lb K20/ac
Calcium	5736 lbs/acre						
Magnesium	170 lbs/acre						None
Zinc	3.3 lbs/acre						None
Cation Exchange Capacity	16 meq/100g	Result is typica	l for KY (11 to 19 me	eq/100g)			
Cation Saturation	>>>>>	1% K, 90% Ca,	4% Mg, 95% total b	ases			

Soil pH Recommendation: pH is adequate, no lime needed

UK Beef Management Webinar Series

If you are interested and would like to be registered, send an email to dbullock@uky.edu with Beef Webinar Series in the Subject and your name and county in the message to receive a Zoom link and password. (If you have previously registered, you do not need to re-register). You will receive an invitation and password the morning of the presentation. Zoom will start at 8:00 Eastern/7:00 Central.

November 13

Winter Feeding Approaches: Matching Strategy to Your Herd and Resources - Dr. Katie VanValin, Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky

December 11

Shooting the Bull: Answering all your Beef-Related Questions! -Updates and Roundtable discussion

January 8

Making the Most of the Good Years: Profits, Reinvestment, and Tax Management in Beef Cattle - Jonathan Shepherd, Agricultural Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

February 12

Impact of Bull Nutrition During Development on Semen Quality -Dr. Pedro Fontes, Associate Professor, University of Georgia

March 12

Bull Selection Practices in Kentucky: What are we Doing Right and What Could we Improve! - Dr. Darrh Bullock, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

If you have any questions or need additional information please email dbullock@uky.edu.

If you are already registered you will get a Zoom invitation the morning of each session

with the link and password.

KCA CONVENTION



JANUARY 15-16 • OWENSBORO

Early Bird Registration (October 15 - November 30) \$60 Registration (After November 30) = \$85

The Kentucky Cattlemen's Association Convention & Trade Show is the state's largest annual gathering for cattle producers, industry partners, and ag professionals. Each year, hundreds of Kentucky cattle farmers come together to learn, connect, and celebrate the beef industry.

The event includes:

- Educational sessions
- Trade show
- KCA business meetings
- Youth events
- Award presentations
- Recognition of leaders in Kentucky agriculture
- Networking opportunities

The convention serves as a chance for cattlemen and women to stay informed, gain practical tools for their farms, and support the continued growth of Kentucky's beef industry.

To register, visit www.kycattle.org

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

12:00-5:00 Trade Show Move-In

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

7:00-6:00	Registration Hours
8:00-10:00	Trade Show Move-In
9:00-12:00	Beef Efficiency Conference
11:00	Trade Show Opens (exclusive Trade Show hours 12-2 & 4:30-6:30)
12:00	Welcome Lunch (in Trade Show, sponsored by KBC)
12:20-2:30	Women's Session (Ticket Required)
1:00-2:00	Barn Talk Session 1
2:00-4:00	Opening General Session
4:30-6:30	KCA Roundup Reception

Trade Show Closes

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16

6:30-12:00	Registration Hours
6:30-8:00	President's Breakfast (Invitation Only)
8:00	Trade Show Opens (exclusive Trade Show hours 10-12)
8:00-10:00	Forages at KCA
8:30-9:00	KJCA Board of Directors Meeting (2025 KJCA Board Members Only)
9:00-10:00	Who is the KJCA?
10:00-10:45	Trade Show Scavenger Hunt
10:00-11:00	Barn Talks Session 2
10:45-12:00	Alumni Town Hall
12:00	Trade Show Closes
12:00-2:30	Foundation Luncheon
2:30-3:30	Jeopardy Tournament
3:00-4:00	KJCA - Board of Directors Elections

3:15-4:00 Regional Meetings

Closing Business Session

4:00-5:30

Not sure if your certification is up for renewal? Give me a call at (606) 564-6808 and I'll be happy to check for you.



PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING



Mason County
Extension Office



- February 11- 1-4 PM
- March 5 5-8 PM
- March 24 8-11 AM

REGISTER HERE:



Please register at least a week prior to the training- if no one registers, it will be cancelled.

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources Family and Consumer Sciences 4-H Youth 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 mor, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, ser, secual orientation, gender dentersity, gender expression, pregnancy marial status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or restaliation 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 Kennucky, Kennucky State University u.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kennucky Counties, Cooperating.







Location for all classes:

Montgomery County Extension ED. Center,
104 E Locust Stret, MT. Sterling, KY 40353

2026

FREEZER BEEF SHORT COURSE

Four Part Series



To Register Call 859-498-8733 OR



This four part series course is designed to help beef producers wanting to finish a beef for personal use or for those wanting to sell their beef directly to the consumer.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER 2/23/2026

Hosted by The University of Kentucky Montgomery County Extension Office.

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 6:00pm

Thursday, March 5, 2026 6:00pm

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 6:00pm

Thursday, March 12, 2026 6:00pm Nutrition and Management for Finishing Cattle, Dr. Katie VanValin University of KY Beef Nutrition Specialist

Marketing and Economics of Freezer Beef, Dr. Kenny Burdine University of KY Livestock Economics Specialist

Working with the Processor, Dr. Gregg Rentfrow University of KY Meat Science Specialist

Building a Brand and Beef Tasting Demo, Dr. Katie VanValin University of KY Beef Nutrition Specialist

Program Meals Sponsored By:



Behaviously programs of Kentucky Cooperative Entendins serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of suce code echolor origin, seated origin, creed, singless, publicable before a constructive construction of the c



Disabilities accommoduted with prior cotification





AGRONOMY DAY

FEBRUARY 19, 2026



9:00AM-3:00PM

AT MASON COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

FREE TO ATTEND!

REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY: FEBRUARY 7th

<u>TOPICS</u>

(In no particular order)

- PESTICIDE UPDATES & DRONE APPLICATIONS
- WEED CONTROL IN GRAIN CROPS
- PESTICIDE APPLICATION EQUIPMENT & PROPER USE
- SOIL FERTILITY & DIFFERENCES IN LAB RESULTS
- CONTROL OF INVASIVES
- APPLYING PESTICIDES/PRIVATE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION

USE THE QR CODE OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OFFICE TO REGISTER:

BRACKEN COUNTY: (606) 735-2141 FLEMING COUNTY: (606) 845-4641 LEWIS COUNTY: (606) 796-2732 MASON COUNTY: (606) 564-6808

ROBERTSON COUNTY: (606) 724-5796

LUNCH PROVIDED



Cooperative Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification



- February 26 5:00 PM
- March 18-10:00 AM MARCH is FREE!
- April 9-5:00 PM
- April 30-10:00 AM

Please bring \$5 certification fee and \$10 you wish to purchase a farm sign

REGISTER HERE:



Cooperative Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources Family and Consumer Sciences 4-14 Youth Development Community and Economic Develop

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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SAVETE DATE



This program is designed for producers and agricultural professionals to learn the newest fencing methods and sound fencing construction through a combination of classroom and hands-on learning.





April 28, 2026



Mason Co Extension Office & Local Farm

MORE INFO TO CO

Cooperative







Chicken and Brussels Sprouts One Pan Meal

2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts (about 1 pound)

1 tablespoon olive oil Salt and pepper to taste 12-14 Brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered

1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

1 red bell pepper, diced, about 1 cup medium yellow onion, diced, about 1 cup

2 cloves garlic, minced 1/2 cup half-and-half

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces.
Heat oil in a heavy, oven-safe skillet
or pan over medium heat. Add chicken
and sauté 3-4 minutes. Lightly season
with salt and pepper. Add vegetables
and stir gently to combine. Cook
3-5 minutes until vegetables are tender.
Remove from heat. If skillet or pan
is not oven-safe, transfer mixture to a
baking dish. In a small bowl, combine
half-and-half, nutmeg and salt and

pepper to taste. **Pour** mixture over chicken and vegetables. **Sprinkle** with Parmesan cheese. **Bake** 25-30 minutes until lightly golden on top. **Serve** hot.

Yield: 6, 1 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis:

220 calories, 9 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 70 mg cholesterol, 340 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 23 g protein.

Kentucky Brussels Sprouts

SEASON: June to November NUTRITION FACTS: Brussels sprouts provide a good amount of vitamin C, folate, potassium and vitamin K.

SELECTION: Choose sprouts that are similar in size, firm and compact, with leaves free of blemishes. Stem ends should be white and clean. Avoid sprouts that are soft or puffy, or have yellowed or wilted leaves.

STORAGE: Sprouts stored in a covered container or perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator will hold for 3 to 5 days. Remove yellow or wilted leaves and wash immediately before use.

PREPARATION: Soak Brussels sprouts in water for about 10 minutes, then rinse with fresh water to thoroughly clean the sprouts.

To boil: Using 1 cup of water for every cup of sprouts, boil uncovered for 6 to 8 minutes or until tender.

To microwave: For ½ pound of sprouts, use ¼ cup liquid; place in a microwaveable dish and cover. Cook 4 minutes for medium sprouts; 8 minutes for large sprouts.

To steam: Place sprouts in saucepan with ¼ inch of boiling water and cover. Steam for 5 to 10 minutes or just until tender.

KENTUCKY BRUSSELS SPROUTS Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences University of Kentucky, Dietetics and Human Nutrition students October 2018

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers market, or roadside stand. http://plateitup.ca.uky.edu



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

IMPORTANT DATES

UK Beef Management Webinar | 8:00 PM | Zoom

January 8

January 8

March 12

April 28

Master Cattlemen Session 1 | 6:00 PM | Mason County Extension Office

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January 15	Master Cattlemen Session 2 6:00 PM Bracken County Extension Office	/
January 19	MLK Day Office Closed	
January 22	Master Cattlemen Session 3 6:00 PM Fleming County Extension Office	/
January 29	Master Cattlemen Session 4 6:00 PM Mason County Extension Office	/
February 5	Master Cattlemen Session 5 6:00 PM Lewis County Extension Office	/
February 11	Private Applicator Training 1:00 PM Mason County Extension Office	/
February 12	Master Cattlemen Session 6 6:00 PM Robertson County Community Center	/
February 12	UK Beef Management Webinar 8:00 PM Zoom	
February 19	Agronomy Day 9:00 AM Mason County Extension Office	/
March 5	Private Applicator Training 5:00 PM Mason County Extension Office	/
March 6-8	Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo Louisville, KY	
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Tobacco GAP Training | 6:00 PM | Mason County Extension Office

March 24 Private Applicator Training | 8:00 AM | Mason County Extension Office February 26 BQCA Certification | 5:00 PM | Mason County Extension Office March 12 UK Beef Management Webinar | 8:00 PM | Zoom March 18 BQCA Certification | 10:00 AM | Mason County Extension Office April 9 BQCA Certification | 5:00 PM | Mason County Extension Office

April 30 BQCA Certification | 10:00 AM | Mason County Extension Office CAIP Education Eligible

UK Fencing School | Time TBD | Mason County Extension Office



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