

Carter County Newsletter



Cooperative Extension Service

Carter County
94 Fairground Dr
Grayson, KY 41143-9520
(606) 474-6686
Fax: (606)474-8542
extension.ca.uky.edu

April 2019

Upcoming Events

- April 5- Orders can now be placed in the Northeast Area Livestock Association group Beef IRM mineral order and group hay twine order.
- April 11- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Certification Training and Double Dollars Program, 11:00am in the Carter County Extension Education Building.
- April 11- Beef Quality and Care Assurance Training, 3:00pm in the Carter County Extension Education Building.
- April 13- Mountain Master Forager meeting, 10:00am till 12:00pm at David and Jason McGlone Farm, 1101 N St. Hwy 7, Grayson. Topics: Pasture Repair, Harvesting and Storing Hay.
- April 15- Regional Cow/Calf Management Program, Dr. Prater speaking on Cow Nutrition at Calving and Newborn Calf Care, 6:00pm at the Morgan County Extension Farm, West Liberty.
- April 19- UK Dicamba Training, 6:00pm in the Fleming County Extension Office, 1384 Elizaville Rd., Flemingsburg, Ky.
- April 23- Northeast Area Livestock Association meeting, 6:00pm in the Carter County Extension Education Building with Jacob Givens from Y-Tex speaking. Fly control ear tags following our 3 year rotation can be purchased at the meeting.
- April 25- Last day to order Beef IRM Mineral and hay twine.
- April 29- Carter County Agriculture Advancement Council meeting, 10:00am in the Carter County Extension Office
- May 3 - Beef IRM Group Mineral Order delivery and pickup at 10:00am at the Carter County Extension Office Farmers Market Shed
- May 3- Hay Twine Group Order can be picked up at Kee's Farm Supply from 8:00am till 6:00pm.
- May 24- Beef Solutions Cow Delivery #4 to Lee City



NEALA Group Mineral Order



The Northeast Area Livestock Association is currently taking orders for the summer and fall livestock mineral. Hinton's Mills won the bid and the mineral is special blended to meet the UK Beef IRM guidelines.

Three minerals are available:

A Complete Basic Cow-Calf Mineral @ \$14.50/50lb.

A Complete Basic Cow-Calf Mineral with IGR Fly Control added @ \$19.35/50lb.

A Complete Stocker Mineral with Rumensin added @ \$18.50/50lb.

Mineral orders must be placed by **Thursday, April 25th**. Minerals will be delivered to the Carter County Extension Office on **Friday, May 3rd at 10:00 am**. You can pick up your minerals at the Carter County Extension Office on the 28th at 10:00am or at Hinton Mills any time after May 3rd at your convenience.

Please indicate if you are picking up your minerals at the extension office or at Hinton's when you place your order. To place an order, call the Carter County Extension Office at 474-6686 or call Harold Rice at 652-4605.

NEALA Group Hay Twine Order

The Northeast Area Livestock Association is also currently taking orders for their group hay twine order. Kee's Farm Supply won the bid for the Hay Twine order.

Five types of Hay Twine are available:

16,000 ft. sisal @ \$41.50/bale

10,000 ft sisal @ \$41.50/bale

9,000 ft. sisal @ \$41.50/bale

20,000 ft. plastic @ \$20.00/bale

9,000 ft. plastic @ \$20.00/bale



Hay Twine orders must be placed by **Thursday, April 25th**. You can pick up your hay twine at Kee's Farm Supply in Grayson on **May 3rd** any time from 8:00 am—5:00 pm. To place an order, call the Carter County Extension Office at 474-6686.

Eastern tent caterpillar egg hatch now underway for Central Kentucky



Newly hatched eastern tent caterpillars. Photo by Lee, Townsend, UK professor emeritus.

March 27, 2019 | By: Holly Wiemers

Lexington, Ky., - Eastern tent caterpillars have begun to hatch, with the first instances being seen in Lexington on March 24, according to Daniel Potter, professor of entomology, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

According to Potter, after spending about nine months as eggs in masses on twigs of wild cherry and related trees, the first tiny

eastern tent caterpillars of the season are now leaving their eggs.

The larvae are among the first insects to become active in the spring and are well-equipped to cope with Kentucky's erratic temperature swings.

According to UK's entomology researchers, egg hatch occurs over several weeks in early spring. This increases the chance for survival in case of late freezes. The caterpillars grow and develop when the temperature is above 37 degrees F. Their preferred food plants are wild cherry, apple and crabapple, but they may be found on hawthorn, maple, cherry, peach, pear and plum as well.

When mature, the 2- to 2.5-inch long hairy caterpillars have a habit of wandering from their host trees to seek protected areas to spin their cocoons, or to seek additional food if their natal tree becomes defoliated. At such times, they may crawl along fence lines and into pastures.

Consumption of large numbers of caterpillars by pregnant mares caused staggering foal losses in the Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome outbreak of 1999-2001. MRLS can cause early- and late-term foal losses or weak foals. UK researchers conducted studies that revealed horses will inadvertently eat the caterpillars, and the caterpillar hairs embed into the lining of the horse's alimentary tract. Once that protective barrier is breached, normal alimentary tract bacteria may gain access to and reproduce in sites with reduced immunity, such as the fetus and placenta.

If practical, farm managers should move pregnant mares from areas where wild cherry trees are abundant to minimize the chance of caterpillar exposure. The threat is greatest when the mature caterpillars leave trees and wander to find places to pupate and transform to the moth stage.

Eastern tent caterpillars are also a nuisance to people living near heavily infested trees. The nests and defoliation are unsightly, and the caterpillars may wander hundreds of yards in search of protected sites to spin cocoons and pupate.

"Managing ETC in small ornamental trees, such as flowering crabapples, is easy. Just wear a pair of grocery store plastic bags like mittens, climb a stepladder, pull out the tents, turn the bags inside out to 'bag' the caterpillars and stomp them," Potter said. "Pruning out nests in ornamental trees sounds great, but in reality, by the time they are noticed, they're often in branch crotches where pruning will compromise the symmetry of the tree.

"Spraying the flowering fruit and decorative trees preferred by the caterpillars can be a bee hazard – and with some products, a label violation – because the trees are in bloom with bees visiting them at the same time eastern tent caterpillars are active," he said.

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- “Except for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which is not all that effective once the ETC are about half-grown, the only spray product I know of that controls ETC and is bee-compatible is Acelepryn (chlorantraniliprole). That is available in a formulation used mainly by professional grounds managers and arborists, but has not yet found its way into homeowner spray products.”
- According to Potter, caterpillar management around horse farm paddocks comes down to keeping pregnant mares away from infested trees and either removing or not planting preferred host trees near paddocks. In addition to those preventive measures, controlling the caterpillars with insecticides may be warranted in some settings. That may require treating tall trees that are difficult to spray.
- For the latter scenario, professional arborists treat via trunk injection. Products labeled for eastern tent caterpillar control include Tree-age (emamectin benzoate), Inject-A-Cide B (Bidrin), Abacide 2 (abamectin) and Lepitect (acephate). End users should read and follow all label instructions. All four of those injectable products are labeled for use on horse farms.
- For more information about how to assess trees for egg masses, the UK Entomology publication, *Checking Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Masses*, is available at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef449>.

Contact:

- Daniel Potter, 859-257-7458; Holly Wiemers, 859-257-2226

Forage Timely Tips: April

- Graze winter annuals that were inter-seeded into thin pastures last fall.
- 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.
- Determine need for supplemental warm season forages such as pearl millet or sudangrass.
- Flash graze pastures newly seeded with clovers to manage competition.



Beef Timely Tips

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

Spring-Calving Cows

- Observe spring-calving cows closely. Check cows at least twice daily and first-calf heifers more frequently than that. Be ready to assist those not making progress after 1 to 2 hours of hard labor. Chilled calves should be dried and warmed as soon as possible.
 - See that each calf gets colostrum within an hour of birth, or administer colostrum (or a commercial colostrum replacement) with an esophageal feeder, if needed.
 - Identify calves with eartags and/or tattoos while calves are young and easy to handle and record birthdate and Dam ID. Commercial male calves should be castrated and implanted as soon as possible. Registered calves should be weighed in the first 24 hours.
 - Separate cows that have calved and increase their feed. Energy supplementation to cows receiving hay is necessary to prepare them for rebreeding. For example, a 1250 lb cow giving 25 lb/day of milk would need about 25 lb of fescue hay and 5 lb of concentrate daily to maintain condition. If you need to go from a condition score of 4 to 5, you will need to add about 2 more pounds of concentrate. Cows must be in good condition to conceive early in the upcoming breeding season.
 - Watch for calf scours! If scours become a problem, move cows which have not calved to a clean pasture. Be prepared to give fluids to scouring calves that become dehydrated. Consult your veterinarian for advice and send fecal samples to diagnostic lab to determine which drug therapy will be most effective. Try to avoid feeding hay in excessively muddy areas to avoid contamination of the dams' udders.
 - Continue grass tetany prevention. Be sure that the mineral mix contains high levels (~15%) of magnesium and that cows consume adequate amounts. You can feed the UK Beef IRM High Magnesium mineral.
 - Plan to vaccinate calves for clostridial diseases (Blackleg, Malignant Edema) as soon as possible. You might choose to do this at the prebreeding working in late April or early May.
 - Obtain yearling measurements on bulls and heifers this month (weight, height, pelvic area, scrotal circumference, ultrasound data, etc.) if needed for special sales. Heifers should be on target to be cycling by the start of the breeding season.
 - Prepare bulls for the breeding season. Increase feed if necessary to have bulls in adequate condition for breeding. Obtain Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) on bulls, even if they were checked last breeding season.
- Finalize plans for your spring breeding program. Purchase new bulls at least 30 days before the breeding. Order semen now, if using artificial insemination.

Fall-Calving Cows

- *Bull(s) should be away from the cows now!
- *Plan to pregnancy check cows soon. You can also blood test for pregnancy as early as 30 days after bull removal.
- *Creep feed calves with grain, by-products or high quality forage. Calves will not make satisfactory gains on the dam's milk alone after about 4 mos. of age – since there isn't much pasture in March, fall calves need supplemental nutrition. Consider creep grazing on wheat pasture, if available. Calves can also be early-weaned. At the best least, be sure that feed bunks are low enough that calves can eat with the cows.
- *Calves intended for feeders should be implanted.
- *Consider adding weight and selling your fall calves as "heavy" feeder calves. Keep them gaining!

General

- *Repair fences, equipment and handling facilities.
- *If you have a dry, sunny day, use chain-link harrow to spread manure in areas where cattle have overwintered. This may be done in conjunction with renovation.
- *Renovation and fertilization of pastures should be completed.
- *Start thistle control. They can be a severe problem in Kentucky pastures. Chemical control must be done early to be effective.
- *Watch for lice and treat if needed.



Caption: Spring seedings of cool season grasses are a risk, with an uphill battle against summer heat, invasive weeds and even competition from companion clovers, such as crimson clover above. Seedling grasses such as shown above emerge slower than legumes and are slower to form a canopy. A spring seeding of tall fescue on hay feeding areas is a risk we must take to get a thick stand of grass before next hay feeding season.

Forage Doctor Column for Farmer's Pride

March 14 for March 21 Issue

More stuff not in the book

Sometimes the book does not have the answers. Take establishing forage crops for example. There are sound principles for this process in the book; adherence to them maximizes the chance for success. Sometimes breaking one of them is a risk worth taking. The rule I am thinking of is seeding cool season grasses in spring rather than fall.

The two week period at the first of April is a prime seeding period for cool season forages, including cool season grasses. The 'book' as well as forage experts tend to discourage spring seedings of grasses like tall fescue because the success rate for this period is much lower than fall. Fescue seedlings are slow to emerge and remain a slender spike for a long period. These young plants do not fare well against the heat and aggressive weeds of summer.

But this spring, seeding tall fescue into torn up hay feeding areas is going to be a risk worth taking. Taking this risk (spring planting) is the only chance to have the kind of stand of grass needed to support cattle when hay feeding begins again next year. Here is the way to manage the risk associated with seeding tall fescue in the spring.

Plant as soon as possible, even if it is later than April 15. Hay feeding areas are going to need tillage and smoothing prior to seeding which may delay planting. Get the tillage done as soon as possible and be ready to seed immediately afterward.

Seed at a higher than normal seeding rate. Seeding rates of tall fescue range from 15 to 25 lb per acre. Use at least 25 pounds per acre. There is not perfect seeding rate for this situation, although there is a thumb rule for seeding problem areas that says use double the recommended rate. A rate of 30 pounds per acre (2x15) is a reasonable amount.

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Plant shallow and get good seed-soil contact. Grass seed needs to be no more than ½ inch deep, maximum. If using a no-till drill into tilled ground, be very careful not to bury the seed because the cutting coulters will go too deep if you are not careful. When drilling, go over the field twice, with the rows at right angles using a half rate of seed each time. This will speed up ground coverage.

Broadcasting the seed followed by a corrugated roller is a great way to get shallow seed placement, good seed soil contact. Seedlings made from this method are quick to give ground cover. Rollers and billion-type seeders are hard to find, but they are ideal for seeding small forage seeds on prepared seedbeds.

Get a soil test for the field and be ready to topdress in mid-summer or early fall as needed. Hay feeding areas are likely high in fertility, at least P and K. Mark your calendar now for application of some late summer (mid to late August) nitrogen to stimulate fall growth. Remember that top growth is proportional to root growth, and we need all the roots and soil structure we can get for next winter.

Prepare for weeds. You are going to have weeds on this site. Weeds are more easily controlled when small, so keep an eye on the field to know when they are small and tender. We have many options for controlling small broadleaf weeds – be ready to use one of them. Grassy weeds are a problem that we will just have to deal with by mowing or flash grazing.

Don't graze this area except as needed to remove a canopy of crabgrass or other summer grasses. These new seedlings are going to need time to establish. Just getting through the summer is going to be stress enough.

Plant only grass. In this case, tall fescue. Especially don't include fast establishing legumes like red and white clover. The taprooted clovers outcompete for soil moisture. They also form a leaf canopy much faster than seedling grasses. Low rates of a small grain can be added for rolling sites to help control erosion.

Spring seedings of tall fescue are difficult but not impossible. Control the factors you can, and you manage the risks associated with these plantings. Finally, fall stockpile the fescue to produce the maximum growth



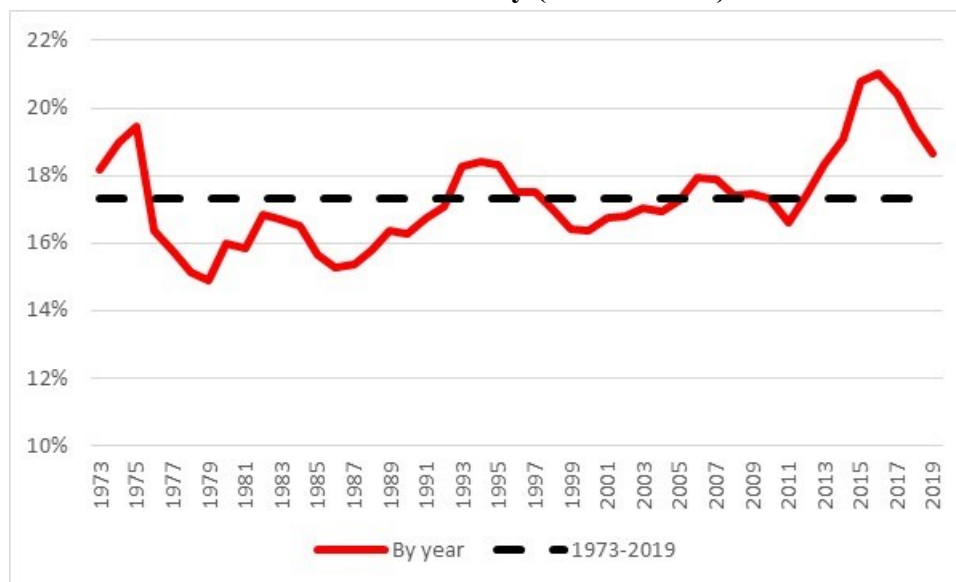
Does 2019 Mark the End of Beef Herd Expansion?

Dr. Kenny Burdine, Livestock Marketing Specialist, University of Kentucky

After some delay due to the federal government shutdown, USDA released their January 1 estimates for cattle inventory on February 28th. At the national level, beef cow numbers were estimated to have grown by 1% from 2018. This is a lower rate than was seen last year, but growth nonetheless. Going back to 2014, the beef cow herd has grown by almost 10%. Heifer retention estimates provide further evidence that herd growth is slowing as the number of heifers held for beef cow replacement was down by 3%.

My preferred way to consider heifer retention is to look at it as a percentage of beef cow inventory. Based on these most recent estimates, heifer retention is running at 18.7% of beef cow inventory, which is slightly above the average going back to 1973 (see figure 1). Figure 1 really illustrates how high heifer retention was during the 2015-2017 time period, running above 20% in each of those three years. When one considers recent cow slaughter volume, and the likely age of this cow herd, it is my opinion that this level of heifer retention is probably about at replacement level for the current level of beef cow inventory.

Figure 1: Jan 1 Beef Heifer Retention as a % of Beef Cow Inventory (1973 to 2019)



Source: USDA-NASS, Livestock Marketing Information Center, Author Calculations

Last year's report was a bit of an oddity as total cattle-on-feed numbers were estimated to be up 7% from 2017. Much of this was due to poor winter grazing conditions, which led to unusually high feedlot placements in fall 2017. The 2% increase in cattle-on-feed seen in the 2019 estimate is largely in-line with the increase in the size of the 2018 calf crop. There was also a sizeable increase (+27%) in cattle grazing small grains in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, which serves as a gauge of winter grazing programs. While this percent increase looks incredibly high, it is really just a return to normal, after the huge drop last winter.

It is also interesting to look at Kentucky beef cattle numbers as compared to the national average. USDA estimated Kentucky beef cow inventory down 1.5% from 2018, placing our cowherd at just over 1 million head. There is no question that calf prices have not encouraged expansion in Kentucky, but I really feel like weather challenges are the primary factor behind this decrease. It was a very challenging fall / early winter and we also know that things haven't improved since January 1st. I would not be at all surprised to see more cows move if weather conditions improve and cull cow prices increase this spring.

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Thinking ahead, I expect US beef cow inventory to remain pretty stable during 2019. Obviously, weather can completely change this and some will argue that cow-calf returns are too low and producers should be running fewer cows. I can't argue with this logic, other than to say that producer profit perception drives inventory decisions and we are still seeing growth in a lot of major cattle producing states. Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Kansas, (five of the top seven cow-calf states in the US) saw increases in beef cow numbers during 2018. My guess would be that expansion will slow in these areas and some liquidation will be seen in other areas such that the size of the cowherd is roughly the same when the 2020 estimates come out.

The USDA report is summarized in table 1 and the full report can be accessed at: <https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/h702q636h/765377121/bc386r54d/cat10219.pdf>

Table 1: USDA January 1, 2019 Cattle Inventory Estimates

	2018	2019	2019 as % of 2018
	(1,000 hd)	(1,000 hd)	
All Cattle and Calves	94,298.0	94,759.7	100
Cows and Heifers That Have Calved	40,898.3	41,119.1	101
Beef Cows	31,466.2	31,765.7	101
Milk Cows	9,432.1	9,353.4	99
Heifers 500 Pounds and Over	20,217.8	20,230.0	100
For Beef Cow Replacement	6,108.2	5,924.9	97
For Milk Cow Replacement	4,768.3	4,701.5	99
Other Heifers	9,341.3	9,603.6	103
Steers 500 Pounds and Over	16,528.2	16,632.7	101
Bulls 500 Pounds and Over	2,252.3	2,263.0	100
Calves Under 500 Pounds	14,401.4	14,514.9	101
Cattle on Feed	14,146.0	14,370.9	102
	2017	2018	2018 as % of 2017
	(1,000 hd)	(1,000 hd)	
Calf Crop	35,758.2	36,402.7	102

Source: NASS, USDA

Weed Management Considerations Following a Wet Winter

Dr. J. D. Green, Extension Weed Scientist, University of Kentucky

Extensive wet weather conditions during the past fall and winter have resulted in pasture fields that have bare soil and thin vegetative cover, particularly in areas that have been used for winter feeding. Fields with thin stands of desirable pasture species are more likely to contain winter annual weeds such as chickweed, henbit, purple deadnettle, and mustard species. As these cool-season weeds die back, warm-season weeds such as common cocklebur and common ragweed will likely emerge this summer and take their place.



The first step in determining weed management options is to do a critical evaluation of pasture fields in the late winter/early spring. Scout fields looking for any developing weed problems. The primary question then becomes – does the existing stand of desirable forages appear to be healthy and potentially competitive against any emerging weed problems? If the forage stand is acceptable and weed pressure is light, then the best course of action may be to wait before making any herbicide applications this spring, but focus on other routine pasture management practices to promote the growth of desirable forage species. However, if you do see developing weed problems then you may want to take action in early spring to begin to correct these problems. In some cases, there may not be any good solutions that will correct all weed problems observed. Highlighted below are some points to consider as you make those decisions.

After evaluating the field, you must decide whether or not to 1) overseed or drill more forages into an existing pasture to improve the stand of desirable forage grasses or 2) spray to control emerging broadleaf weeds. *In most cases you will not be able to do both practices in the spring since most broadleaf herbicides have the potential to injure newly emerging forage grasses and legumes.* For pasture herbicides containing only 2,4-D it is generally recommended to wait 4 to 6 weeks after spraying before reseeding forage crops. Other broadleaf herbicide products may require a 6 month waiting period between application and seeding forage legumes and grasses (consult the label of specific herbicide products used). As a rule of thumb, if you decide to spray this spring you will need to wait until late summer or fall before seeding additional forages. If you reseed first, then it is recommended that you wait until the new seedlings have become well established before making a herbicide application this summer. **It is important to also note that broadleaf type herbicides cannot be used in fields where clovers or other legumes have been seeded.**

Another alternative to consider is the use of a partial pasture renovation technique to control or suppress growth of the weedy vegetation followed by interseeding more forage grasses or legumes. This assumes that the field is not needed for grazing animals until the newly seeded forages become well established. In this approach a herbicide product containing paraquat (eg. Gramoxone) can be applied to kill back winter annual weeds. Leaves of actively growing forage grasses will also be “burned back” by the paraquat application, but established plants are not likely to be killed. Desirable forage grasses and legumes which have a good root system should regrow and resume active growth within a few days after treatment. Since paraquat has no soil-residual activity, desirable forages can be interseeded into the soil immediately after herbicide application. Paraquat is a “Restricted Use” pesticide, whereby only licensed and certified applicators who have completed training are allowed to purchase and apply it. Weedy plants such as curly dock, chicory, or Canada thistle with perennial roots or other weeds with established taproots (such as musk thistle) will likely survive this treatment.

If your course of action is a “wait and see” approach, keep in mind that smaller weeds are easier to control than after they increase in size. Specific details on herbicides labeled for use on grazed pastures and hay fields and their effectiveness on target weed species can be obtained from your local county Extension office.



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Carter County
94 Fairground Dr
Grayson, KY 41143-9520

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