

# Todd County Extension Agriculture Newsletter

## Perilla Mint - Toxic to Livestock

A farmer asked about perilla mint a few weeks ago. After our conversation, **I have seen this poisonous plant on several farms in our area** and even in my own backyard. This summer annual plant is also known as the beefsteak plant. It can grow up to 2 feet tall. Foliage color can vary from green to purplish-green. It is a member of the mint family and has square stems. When mature, plants will give off a minty smell when crushed. It is extremely toxic to all livestock, including horses.

**“Perilla mint causes more cattle deaths in Tennessee than any other toxic plant, according to UT Weed Specialist Larry Steckel.** All plant parts are toxic, especially the flowering structures. Dried plants in hay can be toxic, but the greatest risk is associated with consumption of fresh plant material, especially if flowers and fruit are present.” Most livestock tend to avoid toxic plants when they have enough good forage and feed available. This plant is best controlled from May-July. Contact us for UK’s Weed Management Guide. More photos are available at <https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/profile/238>.



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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

## EMAILS, TEXTS, LETTERS ABOUT PAST DUE BIENNIAL UPDATES FOR TRUCK DOT NUMBERS – AVOID SCAMS

A few folks have received emails and texts from private companies offering to complete the Biennial Update for your DOT number for a fee. Some of the notices may use terms like ‘Past Due’ or ‘Penalties’. **Third-party help to complete your biennial update is not needed – you can do this yourself at no cost.**

You are required to update your DOT number information with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration every two years. Visit this website to check your status: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/fmcsa-registration-website-updates> or call FMCSA at (800) 832-5660.



## EVENTS

**Todd County Ag Development Council**  
**October 22 at 6:00 pm**  
Todd County Extension

**CPH Advantage Cattle Sale**  
**December 10**  
Kentucky-Tennessee Livestock Market  
Guthrie, KY

**Private Pesticide Applicator Certification**  
**January 23 at 9:00 am**  
Todd County Extension

**Private Pesticide Applicator Certification**  
**February 6 at 6:00 pm**  
Todd County Extension

**KY-TN Grain Day**  
**February 7**  
Logan County Extension

**CPH Advantage Cattle Sale**  
**February 11**  
Kentucky-Tennessee Livestock Market  
Guthrie, KY

**Pasture Seeding & Reclaiming**  
**Winter Feeding Areas**  
**February 20 at 6:00 pm**  
Todd County Extension

## HIGHLIGHTING RESOURCES FOR FARMERS

View or sign up for the **UK Ag Economic & Policy Update Monthly Newsletter** at <https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/econ-policy-updates>

**What You Missed In September - Wheat Planting Decision Aid**

View or sign up for news from the **Kentucky Center for Agriculture & Rural Development** at <https://www.kcard.info/>

**What You're Missing - Funding Opportunities** <https://www.kcard.info/active-grants>

**Protecting Your Family Farm - Resources** at <https://www.kyfarmlandtransition.com/>

## Forage Timely Tips for October

- Feed hay to allow cool-season pastures to accumulate forage growth for winter grazing.
- Do NOT harvest or graze alfalfa fields until after killing frost or early November.
- Inventory and test each hay lot for nutritive value and consult a nutritionist to design a supplementation program as needed.
- Remove ruminants from pastures that contain sorghum species (forage sorghums, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, sudangrass, and johnsongrass) **when frost is expected**. Even small patches of johnsongrass that have been frosted can cause prussic acid (cyanide) poisoning.
- Begin strip grazing early planted small grain and brassicas (turnips and rape) mixes by the end of this month.
- Late October/early November is a good time to control weeds like poison hemlock, plantain (broadleaf or buck-horn), and biennial thistles (bull, musk, plumeless). AGR-172, Weed Management in Grass Pastures & Hayfields is available at the Extension Office and lists chemical control options.

# BEEF MANAGEMENT WEBINAR SERIES

If you are interested and would like to be registered send an email to [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto: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. You will receive an invitation and password the morning of the presentation.

## November

### 12

### **Shooting the Bull: Answering all your Beef Related Questions!**

Updates and Roundtable discussion with UK Specialists

## December

### 10

### **Winter Feeding Strategies to Extend Short Hay Supplies**

Dr. Lawton Stewart, Professor, University of Georgia

## January

### 14

### **Important Traits for Bull Selection in Kentucky**

Dr. Matt Spangler, Professor, University of Nebraska

## February

### 11

### **Marketing Opportunities for the Spring**

Dr. Kenny Burdine, Professor, and Kevin Laurent, Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

## March

### 11

### **Preparing for a Successful Spring Breeding Season**

Dr. Les Anderson, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

## April

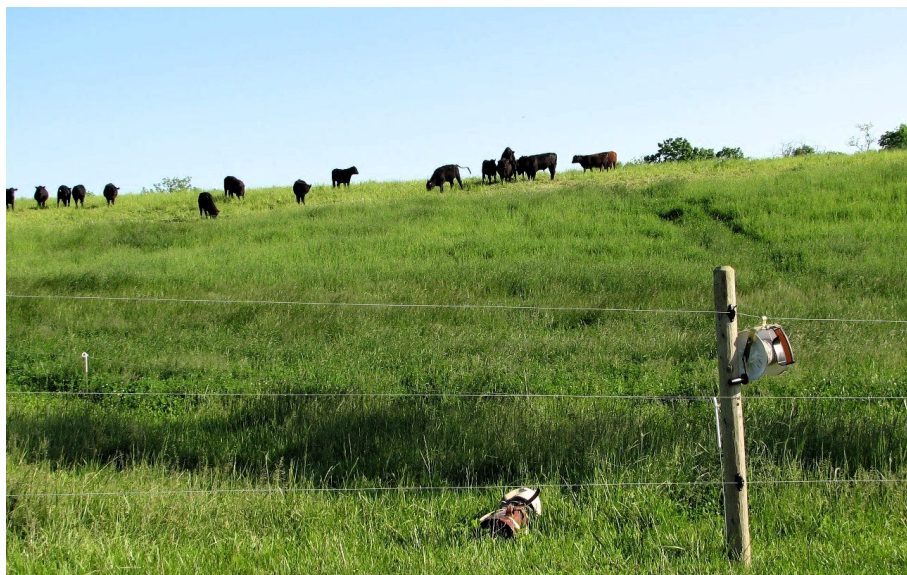
### 8

### **Health Update and Internal Parasite Field Study Results**

Dr. Michelle Arnold, Extension Veterinarian, and Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

If you have any questions or need additional information please email [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto:dbullock@uky.edu). If you are already registered you will get a Zoom invitation the morning of each session with the link and password.

**All Beef Management Webinars begin at 7:00 pm CST**



# 2024 Fall Crop Protection Webinar Series scheduled for October and November

Sign up now for a popular webinar series that addresses timely topics regarding integrated pest management for field crops. University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment extension specialists have once again organized the Fall Crop Protection Webinar Series, hosted through the Southern Integrated Pest Management Center. Each webinar will begin at 10 a.m. ET/9 a.m. CT, and will be one hour in length. Continuing education credits for Certified Crop Advisors include 4 CEUs for IPM (1 CEU for each webinar). Kentucky pesticide applicators will receive 4 CEUs (1 CEU for each webinar) for Category 1a (Agricultural Plant).



## **2024 Fall Crop Protection Webinar Series**

This year the webinars will be held Oct. 15, Oct. 29, Nov. 12, and Nov. 26. Pre-registration is required to attend each webinar. The webinars are open to agriculture and natural resource county extension agents, crop consultants, farmers, industry professionals, and others, whether they reside or work in Kentucky or outside the state. Pre-registration links and schedules follow:



**Webinar #1: Oct. 15** — Dr. Raul Villanueva, Extension Entomologist

**Title:** Dealing with stink bugs and other insect pests in 2023-24

**Webinar link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_MAppWNeZR5yCSoTGMGUj\\_Q](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MAppWNeZR5yCSoTGMGUj_Q)



**Webinar #2: Oct. 29** — Dr. Kiersten A. Wise, Extension Plant Pathologist

**Title:** Maximizing disease control AND return on investment for corn fungicides

**Webinar link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_irdgz-OATPy3hCKsOVxyGQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_irdgz-OATPy3hCKsOVxyGQ)



**Webinar #3: Nov. 12** — Dr. Travis Legleiter, Extension Weeds Specialist

**Title:** Spray Application Parameters – The Offensive Line of Herbicide Applications

**Webinar link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_rxH9TOW4T4a3HZRFAqGA1w](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rxH9TOW4T4a3HZRFAqGA1w)



**Webinar #4: Nov. 26** — Dr. Carl Bradley, Extension Plant Pathologist

**Title:** Management of important wheat diseases in Kentucky

**Webinar link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_NUrPmPdGQICwWGHR-qOCEw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NUrPmPdGQICwWGHR-qOCEw)

**Registration for Fall Crop Protection Webinars is available at**  
<https://weedscience.ca.uky.edu/graincrops>

# DISEASE MANAGEMENT ROADMAP FOR SMALL ACREAGE GROWERS

## Planning

- Treat saved seed with hot water or chlorine (bleach) to kill disease-causing pathogens.
- Select cultivars with tolerance or resistance to plant diseases.
- Intercrop or succession plant with crops that are not susceptible to the same disease.

## Site Preparation

- Rotate crops from different families for 2 to 3 years.
- Fertilize according to soil test results; do not overfertilize.

## Planting

- Avoid planting too early; wait until soil and air temperatures are suitable for the crop.
- Space plants to allow for increased air flow and reduced humidity.
- Use mulch to preserve soil moisture and reduce movement of pathogens; cover crops can also serve as a mulch layer.

## Identifying Problems

- Scout regularly for abnormal plants or growth patterns.
- Remove dead, dying, and diseased tissue as soon as possible.
- Contact a county Extension agent for disease identification, management recommendations, or assistance submitting samples to the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.
- Fungicides and biologicals are best used as preventatives, especially when disease was a problem the previous year.

## Sanitation

- Avoid tracking soil from infested areas to clean fields.
- Remove infected plant parts throughout the growing season.
- Harvest marketable produce in one container and damaged/diseased produce in another.
- Do NOT compost diseased plants or produce.

## End of Season

- Remove all leaves, stems, roots, and produce from fields or structures.
- Clean and sanitize all tools and harvest equipment.
- Save seeds from the best produce.
- Plant a cover crop that provides disease management benefits.



Connect with Plant  
Pathology Extension



@KYPlantDisease



@KYPlantDisease



@NicoleGauthier



Martin-Gatton  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

# Putting Your Garden to Rest

By Frank Amaro, Kentucky Extension Master Gardener & Naturalist

Autumn brings shorter days and signals that the growing season is winding down. Use this transition time to begin closing your garden for the season. **Putting your garden to rest helps safeguard your favorite plants and prepare them for good spring growth.** A well-closed garden acts as a sanctuary, protecting your hard work from harsh elements while promoting a rich ecosystem beneath the surface.

Autumn is also the perfect time to start planning for spring. By taking stock of what worked this season and what didn't, you can devise strategies to overcome problems and improve your garden's beauty. This time of year also allows you to choose new plant varieties, improve your soil health, and even sketch out your ideal garden layout.



This proactive approach satisfies your gardening passion during the quieter months and ensures that you're ready to hit the ground running when spring arrives. Here are some essential steps to consider as you close your garden in late fall.

**Clean Up Debris:** Cleaning up debris in your garden is essential in preparing for winter and ensuring a healthy, vibrant garden come spring. This task involves more than just tidying; it lays the groundwork for a thriving ecosystem in your outdoor space.

**Aesthetic Improvement:** Removing dead plants, fallen leaves, and other garden debris significantly enhances the overall appearance of your garden. A clean garden looks more inviting and creates a pleasant environment to enjoy during cooler months. Whether you enjoy looking at your garden from indoors or strolling through it on a crisp autumn day, a tidy landscape can lift your spirits and provide a sense of accomplishment.

**Pest and Disease Prevention:** Perhaps more importantly, cleaning up debris plays a crucial role in pest and disease management. **Dead plant matter and fallen leaves can harbor overwintering pests, pathogens, and fungi that may lay dormant until spring, when they can emerge and wreak havoc on your plants.** For instance, aphids, spider mites, and certain types of beetles can find refuge in this debris, planning their return to your healthy plants as soon as conditions become favorable.

By removing these potential hiding spots, you reduce the likelihood of infestations and disease outbreaks. Moreover, **many fungal diseases, such as powdery mildew and botrytis blight, can survive the winter in decaying plant materials. Clearing out these remnants helps disrupt their life cycles and minimizes the chances of their reappearance in your garden.**

**Composting Healthy Plant Materials:** As you collect debris, it's essential to sort through the plant

material. Healthy plant matter, such as wilted flowers, spent vegetable plants, and non-diseased foliage, can be composted. **Composting recycles nutrients back into your garden and promotes soil health as it breaks down and enriches the earth.**

**When you compost, you create rich organic matter that improves soil structure, water retention, and nutrient availability,** setting the stage for robust growth in the coming season. Aim to balance carbon-rich (browns) and nitrogen-rich (greens) materials in your compost pile for optimal conditions.

**Disposing of Diseased or Pest-Infested Plants:** In stark contrast, diseased or infested plants should be disposed of responsibly. Composting these materials can inadvertently spread pests and diseases throughout your garden, creating larger problems down the line. Instead, consider bagging these plants and disposing of them according to local waste management guidelines, which might include taking them to a yard waste drop-off facility or burning them if permissible.

**Soil Preparation:** Fall is an ideal time to enrich your soil, so take the opportunity to amend it with compost or well-rotted manure. This adds essential nutrients and helps improve soil structure. You may want to consider having soil tested to determine its nutrient content and pH level, giving you time to make adjustments before planting if needed.

**Test your soil – NOW:** Testing your garden soil now is a smart move to ensure optimal growth in the spring. Knowing soil's nutrient levels and pH can help you make informed decisions about amendments needed for healthy plants. The Todd County Extension Office offers an affordable soil testing program for just \$8, providing you with comprehensive instructions and insights on how to improve your soil health.

**Mulch for Insulation:** Applying a layer of mulch is an excellent way to protect your garden during the winter months. A 2- to 4-inch layer of organic mulch, such as straw, shredded leaves, or wood chips, will help insulate the soil, retain moisture, and suppress weeds. This also enriches soil as mulch breaks down, adding nutrients for your spring planting.

**Plant Cover Crops:** If your garden space allows, consider planting cover crops such as clover, rye, or vetch. These crops help prevent erosion, improve soil fertility, and reduce weed growth over the winter. In the spring, simply cut them down and incorporate them into the soil before planting vegetables and flowers.

**In closing... Consider adding native perennials to your garden as you plant bulbs this season.**

These perennials enhance the beauty of your landscape. And they play a crucial role in attracting pollinators by providing a reliable food source for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects in the spring, you help ensure a thriving ecosystem that ultimately supports the growth and health of your plants. Embrace this opportunity to create a vibrant garden that is both visually stunning and ecologically beneficial.



## Farm Safety – Not Just for Farmers

National Farm Safety and Health Week was just a few weeks ago. Some folks probably glossed over this, and some probably didn't pay much attention because they don't farm. But farm safety isn't just for farmers – it's for everyone.

**One of the hazards of harvest season is increased traffic on our roads.** This includes grain trucks, combines, tractors, horses, and buggies. Pay extra attention when sharing the road.

- ◆ **Allow extra time to get where you're going.** Slow down for farm equipment and buggies.
- ◆ **Don't follow too closely** – when you're too close, it may be impossible for you to be seen in rearview mirrors, especially from larger tractors and grain trucks.
- ◆ **Watch for turn signals** to avoid trying to pass when big equipment is trying to turn.
- ◆ **Grain trucks and big tractors have a bigger turning radius** than cars and pickup trucks – they need more room to turn.
- ◆ **Pass with care and only when it's safe to do so.**

It's easy to get impatient. But these farmers are my family, neighbors, co-workers, customers, and fellow community members. And they're yours, too. Everyone has places to go and time schedules to meet – let's all do our part to get there safely.

I recently spoke with Sam McNeill, a University of Kentucky Ag Engineering professor about grain bin safety. Dr. McNeill said **it's important to remember the 3 C's when it comes to monitoring grain condition.**

- ◆ **Core the bin after harvest.** Don't fill to the peak of the bin. Unload grain out of the bin so that the peak of grain at the top falls and leaves the grain surface M-shaped. This improves air flow and helps improve storage quality.
- ◆ **Cool the grain as quickly as you can.** Cooling is important to help balance relative humidity in the bin and keep grain from molding. It also helps control insect pests.
- ◆ **Check the grain safely.** Check grain from the ladder. If you must go in the bin, use a harness and tie to a secure anchor. Have someone there with you if possible.

These 3 C's of monitoring grain bins will help avoid situations that create safety hazards.

My grandpap lost part of two fingers in a corn picker, so I learned early that farm equipment can be dangerous. **When something gets stuck in running equipment, resist that urge to quickly free up the jam. Stop, disengage PTO's, and turn everything off before trying to fix the problem.**

Farm safety is a big topic that covers many activities, from livestock to vegetables to grain. It's easy to forget when you're in a hurry to finish the job. But take that extra time to keep yourself safe. Your family and friends will thank you for it.



Traci Johnson

Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

