

Ag and Natural Resources News

March 2025

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar now!

- ▶ **Ohio River Valley Invasive Species Conference**
March 19th & 20th
Details on page 3
- ▶ **Drone Sprayer Testing**
March 20th, 8:30 AM - Noon CST
Details on page 2
- ▶ **Bull Soundness Exam**
April 12th, Beginning at 9 AM
Details on page 4
- ▶ **Birding Like A Pro: Why eBird is Your Secret Weapon**
April 19, 10 - 11:30 AM
Boone County Enrichment Center—
Lower level
- ▶ **KY Master Naturalist Program**
Begins May 16th
Details on page 5

It's Tax Season. Be Prepared With These Tips.

This is the time of year when we start thinking about filing our income taxes. Even though it's an annual event, it can cause anxiety for many. By preparing now, you can ease the process for yourself or your tax preparer.

Begin by gathering the necessary forms including your social security number and that of your spouse if filing jointly, plus the numbers of any dependents. In addition to W-2 forms, you want to include information about any taxable interest you earned from savings accounts, stocks, mutual funds and virtual currency transactions. You will need to gather other 1099 forms from any earned compensation, including unemployment compensation, pension distributions, annuity or retirement plans, or contract employment.

Additionally, have a copy of last year's federal and state tax returns accessible, and your bank account and routing number to receive any refunds by direct deposit.

Depending on your circumstances, you may need to include Form 1095-A, Health Insurance Marketplace Statement, if anyone in your household enrolled in a Marketplace plan in 2024.

One of the largest deductions many people can claim is mortgage interest. If you have a mortgage, you should have a 1098 form from your lender specifying how much interest you paid in the last year. Mortgage interest and points may be tax deductible if you itemize. Learn more at <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc505>.



(Continued on next page)

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**Cooperative
Extension Service**

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

If you expect a refund, different factors may impact when you receive your return. The IRS issues most direct deposit refunds within 21 days, however, certain factors may affect refund timing. Returns that require additional review can take longer, as well as paper returns (i.e., a mailed check). Claims involving tax credits that need verification may delay processing times. Further, incomplete information, errors, or missing documentation, like W-2 and 1099 forms, may cause delays.

To receive your refund quickly, electronically file your taxes as early as possible and choose the direct deposit option.

If you owe the IRS money this year, you may want to consider changing your withholding status with your employer moving forward. This will allow the employer to withhold more money from your check throughout the year, so you're not hit with a big payment next year. For general information on filing taxes this year, visit <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-ready-to-file-your-taxes>.

If you have questions about whether certain tax laws apply to your individual circumstances, consider using the IRS Interactive Tax Assistant tool at <https://www.irs.gov/help/ita>. This free online tool can help you determine if you need to file a tax return, your filing status, if you can claim a dependent, if your income is taxable, tax credit eligibility, or if you can deduct certain expenses.

Source: Nichole Huff, Extension Specialist for Family Resource Management

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| <h2>Drone Sprayer Training</h2> | | |
| <p><i>This program is designed for agricultural professionals and producers to learn about the latest information on drone spray application, efficiency, and safety in a classroom setting.</i></p> | | |
| March 20, 2025 8:30 am – noon | Lyon County Extension Office 231 W. Main Street Eddyville, KY 42038 | |
| <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results of Drone Sprayer Applications• Application Accuracy with Drones• UK Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) Overview & Updates• Category 11 Aerial Applicator | | |
| https://2025dronesprayertraining.eventbrite.com | |  |
| Cost: \$65 | CCA and Pesticide Credits pending | |
| <p>If you have questions, please contact: Lori Rogers (lori.rogers@uky.edu 270-625-7541 ext 21317)</p> | | |



Ohio River Valley Invasive Species Conference!

March 19 & 20, 2025

Join us!

This conference will bring together professionals and concerned individuals who work on, and care about, the issue of invasive species in the lower Midwest.

The conference will include one day of presentations with multiple session tracks, as well as an optional half day of field trips.

The Boone County Extension Enrichment Center in Burlington, KY is in a prime location, just 20 minutes from downtown Cincinnati and within a 2 hour drive of Dayton, Lexington, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Louisville.

Boone County Extension
Enrichment Center
Burlington, Kentucky



Conference goals

- Strengthen awareness of invasive species issues, prevention, and management
- Facilitate innovative and practical solutions among resource managers, researchers, green industry professionals, landowners, government agencies, and concerned individuals to improve invasive species management in the Ohio River Valley and beyond.

Conference Partners

- Boone County Arboretum
- Boone County Extension
- Indiana County SWCDs
- Indiana Invasive Species Council
- JLW CISMA
- Kentucky Invasive Plant Council
- Kentucky State University
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
- Ohio Invasive Plant Council
- University of Illinois Extension
- University of Kentucky Extension
- Yew Dell Gardens

Conference offerings:

- Keynote Address by Dr. Daniel Simberloff, University of Tennessee
- More than 40 engaging presenters
- Field trips highlighting work to detect and manage invasives, and restoration success stories
- Workshops on herbicide application, invasive grass ID, and reporting and tracking invasive species
- Poster presentations
- Networking opportunities

Hosted by the Midwest Invasive Plant Network
mipnconference.weebly.com



Excerpt from Cattle Market Notes Weekly....

Price Risk Always Exists, even in a Bull Market

By: Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

I doubt many would take issue with me calling the last couple of years a “bull market” for cattle. The combination of tight supplies and strong demand has resulted in cattle markets tracing an upward trajectory over the last couple of years. As an illustration, the chart below tracks the daily nearby CME® feeder cattle futures price over the last 26 months. In January of 2023, the nearby feeder cattle futures price was in the \$180’s. As I write this article in February of 2025, the nearby futures price is in the \$260’s.

While it is hard to dispute the overall strength of the recent cattle market, it is also important to note that during the last 26 months there have been multiple times when markets saw significant downward swings. The most recent of these occurred since the end of January and was likely sparked by the resumption of live cattle imports from Mexico, continued talk of trade disruptions, Avian Influenza, and any number of other factors. The market also fell by more than \$40 per cwt from September to December of 2023 and more than \$30 per cwt from late May to early September of 2024. For producers who sold cattle during those pullbacks, the impact on returns was significant.

There are a lot of potential strategies to manage price risk and the simplest may be a forward contract. By forward contracting cattle, price risk is largely eliminated as the seller and buyer agree on a purchase price prior to delivery of the cattle. A similar strategy would be selling cattle through an internet auction and specifying delivery at a later time. In both cases, the seller entering the forward contract still has production risk as they must meet the specifications of the contract (weight, quality, etc.), but market swings are no longer a concern.

Futures and options markets are also common tools for price risk management. Short futures positions allow producers to capitalize on the expectation of cattle prices in the future through CME® futures prices. When utilizing a short futures position to offset potential decreases in cattle prices, farmers are essentially exchanging price risk for basis risk. Producers utilizing short futures positions also need to plan for potential margin calls if markets move substantially higher. Put options give producers the right to sell a future contract if they choose and they pay a premium for this flexibility. This effectively sets a price floor for cattle as the strike price on the put option and the premium paid sets a minimum price for the cattle being sold.

Finally, I have talked more about Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) insurance than any other risk management strategy recently. It works almost exactly like a put option but has the advantage of flexibility on scale. Unlike several of the other price risk management tools, LRP insurance can be purchased on any number of head, which is much easier for smaller operations to utilize. LRP has

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BULL SOUNDNESS EXAM
Kenton County Fairgrounds
SATURDAY APRIL 12, 2025, STARTING 9:00 AM

NORTHERN KENTUCKY CATTLE ASSOCIATION

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

Please register by calling Boone County
Extension office at 859-586-6101 for your time

\$25.00/bull for NKY Cattle Association members
\$50.00/bull for non members

been made more attractive over the last several years through increased premium subsidies and allowing producers to pay premiums after the ending date of the policy.

The specific tool or strategy that cattle producers utilize to manage price risk is less important than their overall risk management plan. I encourage producers to know what risk management tools are available to them, understand how changes in sale price impact their profits, and plan to cover themselves from downside price risk. I still feel good about the fundamentals of the cattle market, but I think the first couple weeks of February have been a good reminder that price risk always exists, even in a bull market!

Kentucky-Tennessee Cowmans Kind Bull Sale

Saturday, March 15, 2025 - Sale Starts at Noon CST

KY-TN Livestock Market
9169 Russellville Rd,
Guthrie, KY 4223

To Consign Bulls Contact:

David Fourqurean (270) 350-3210 or Matt Futrell (270) 839-6651

Bull Sale Rules:

- Bulls should be no older than 26 months old at the time of sale.
- Bulls should be a minimum of 12 months old at the time of sale.
- Bulls must be vaccinated with IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV, Leptospirosis and Vibriosis with a booster within 60 days of the sale.
- Bulls are to be dewormed and treated for external parasites within 60 days of the sale.
- Bulls must have a valid BSE within 30 days of sale date.
- Bulls must be genomic tested to have the genetically enhanced EPD's.
- Bulls must meet EPD requirements for TN & KY through CAIP and TAEP.
- Bulls that are not guaranteed virgin bulls must have a negative TRICH test within 30 days of sale and it must be a PCR test.
- Unruly bulls will not be allowed to sell at the discretion of the sale committee.
- Bulls will be on site sale day, however bulls will sell via video in the sale ring.
- Bulls must be a minimum muscle score of 2.

KY Master Naturalist Program

Program begins Friday, May 16 - Boone County Extension

This 10-12 week program will teach participants a wide range of topics about their environment including wilderness safety, water quality, wildlife, plants, geology, and more.

Applications are due by April 18th.

For more information contact Lacey Kessell:
Lacey.laudick@uky.edu 859-586-6101



Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service - The Need for a Plan

Land ownership of any kind is a large responsibility, and forest ownership in particular comes with its own joys and challenges. Whether enjoying a crisp fall morning while the leaves are ablaze or the deep shade by a creek on a hot summer day, there are many small moments that can make wonderful memories for any landowner. Forests also need periodic management to ensure you and future generations can continue to enjoy the benefits forest ownership provides, regardless of your personal reasons for owning forestland. Perhaps you desire a forest that can provide future income from harvesting valuable and high-quality timber or to have the best wildlife habitat for a whole host of species. Maybe you enjoy your forestland as a getaway from the daily grind, a place to bring family and friends to surround yourselves with nature, or even as a future place to retire. Your reasons could be these, many more, or even all the above.

A forest management plan is a way to begin to understand the condition of your forest, how your forest grew into that condition, and what conservation activities you can do over the short and long term to reach your ownership goals. Being a steward to the forest is often a lifelong endeavor; having a plan in place that is prepared by a forestry professional and that organizes and prioritizes the actions to take in your forest will make a lasting positive impact.

A forest management plan is organized into three parts. The first section is the most critical, in that it lays out your current and future goals and objectives. This should reflect your vision and the values you place on your property. Individual goals are important, but creating a goal that incorporates input from family or other important users of the property and the future stewards of your forest can make a very powerful statement of purpose.

The second section is a brief history of the property, which is important to document so any legacy issues can be identified. Was the forest harvested heavily and certain important species of trees did not grow back? Was the property affected by an ice storm or windstorm? Maybe there was a disease outbreak, coal mining, or a forest fire. These are all disturbances that could shape the forest as it grows today.

This section will also document where roads and trails are located, any issues with access, and identify features that are important to note such as a picnic area, a favorite fishing pond, or a rock outcrop that offers a great view of the surrounding land. A forestry professional also will inventory the forest itself. This inventory will tell you what kinds of trees you have and in what abundance, the sizes and the ages of the trees, and any specific issues such as disease outbreaks or invasive species that may be present. By having a detailed inventory and a snapshot of the state of the forest, management recommendations can then be made in the third section of the plan.



What's a forest management plan?

- Considers your ownership goals and capacity of the land
- A first step in managing your land
- An opportunity to connect with natural resource professionals

Connect with a Forester



- Forest management plans are developed by qualified foresters
- The forester will work to incorporate your goals for the land in the plan
- Allows you to become aware of programs and organizations who can help you on your land

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The final section will detail exactly what actions to take and when to best meet the management goals and vision for your forest you stated up front. Perhaps you wish to grow the best and highest value timber that you can. By using the inventory information as well as looking at what soil types are present, the forestry professional may recommend that some trees be removed or killed to promote the best trees to thrive. They will tell you exactly how to do this, what trees to remove, and when to do this work.

In a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) approved forest management plan, there will be a schedule of actions to take and there will be NRCS conservation practices listed. Recommendations in this schedule can be used to apply for NRCS financial assistance, and a forest management plan is a requirement for any forest landowner to receive funding from NRCS to practice conservation in their forest.

In Kentucky, there are multiple ways a landowner can obtain a forest management plan or have an older forest management plan updated to current standards. Perhaps you purchased or inherited your property from someone who had a plan, but your goals are different, or the property has never had a plan prepared of any kind.

NRCS financial assistance is available to help pay for the preparation of a plan by a private consulting forester who is registered with the agency as a Technical Service Provider. These fantastic men and women work directly with you as the landowner and the local NRCS office to write a plan that is technically sound, but also easy to follow and implement.

Kentucky NRCS also has a critical relationship with the Kentucky Division of Forestry. KDF foresters, at the request of the landowner and the local NRCS field office, can write a forest management plan that meets the NRCS requirements. The final option is to arrange for an NRCS forester to work directly with you to craft a management plan.

There are some locations in the state that do not have coverage by an NRCS forester, however, so some options may be limited. Regardless, if you wish to know what condition your forest is in, how it got to that state, and what you need to do to improve and conserve this amazing natural resource, NRCS will assist you in any way to get a plan prepared. To start the process of getting a new plan, updating an older plan, or to answer general questions about NRCS and forestland conservation, please stop by or contact your local NRCS field office to speak with any one of our great conservationists. To find your local NRCS field office or USDA service center, please visit [offices.usda.gov](https://www.offices.usda.gov).

We look forward to visiting with you and helping you start your journey to woodland conservation!

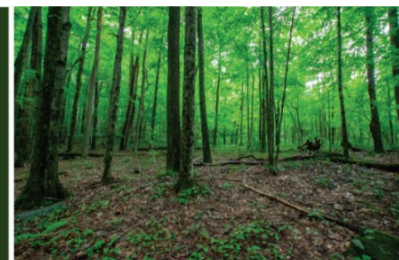
By Jon Shultz, NRCS Kentucky Forester, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service; from "Kentucky Woodlands Magazine", Vol 17 Issue 1.



Your forest management plan

- Consists of three main parts, starting with your goals for the land
- Plans contain inventory information as well as natural resource concerns to be addressed
- Plans also contain detailed instructions on conservation practices to improve your land

Manage your land



- With a plan and a forester connection, you are on track to manage your land
- Your forester will show you how to implement conservation practices
- Your land will be healthier, more productive, and more resilient

Squirrel Pot Pie

Servings: 6 Serving Size: 1/6 of pie

Ingredients:

- 2 squirrels, cut in half
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms, about 2 ounces
- 1/2 cup chopped celery, about 1 rib
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 cup frozen mixed vegetables
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 refrigerated pie crust
- 1 tablespoon milk



Directions:

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.
2. Place squirrels in large stockpot. Add chicken stock and cover. Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer 1 hour.
3. Wash mushrooms, celery, and onion; with a vegetable brush under running water before preparing.
4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
5. Remove pot with squirrels from heat and let sit 10 to 15 minutes or until meat is cool enough to handle. Use tongs to remove meat and bones from broth. Separate and discard all bones and cartilage. Chop any large pieces of meat.
6. Place a colander over a large bowl and strain broth to remove any additional bones. In a small bowl, stir cooled broth, 1 tablespoon at a time, into flour until a smooth liquid is achieved.
7. Return remaining broth to pot. Stir flour mixture into broth and heat, stirring, until broth comes to a boil and has thickened.
8. Add meat, all vegetables, and seasonings to broth, and stir to mix.
9. Pour mixture into a deep-dish pie plate or baking dish.
10. Cover squirrel mixture with premade pie crust. Slit crust to vent.
11. Brush top of crust with milk.
12. Bake 40 minutes or until golden brown.
13. Serve immediately. Store leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Source: Cook Wild Kentucky Project

Nutrition Facts: 390 calories; 18g total fat; 3.5g saturated fat; 2.5g trans fat; 65mg cholesterol; 580mg sodium; 32g total carbohydrate; 1g dietary fiber; 4g sugars; 0g added sugars; 23g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 2% Daily Value of calcium; 30% Daily Value of iron; 8% Daily Value of potassium.