THE SCOOP

AGRICULTURE | GARDENING | COMMUNITY

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE BEND!

The Scoop is a quarterly newsletter that is mailed out to inform you about all things agriculture, gardening, and community. The information in this newsletter will be relevant to our producers and reliable through research of the University of Arkansas Extension Services. Please feel free to call the office at (870) 895-3301, or email me at abarnett@uada.edu if you have any questions.
This edition focuses on tips and tricks for producing beef, forages, and gardens from March until May.

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

TRI-COUNTY FORAGE PRODUCERS MEETING

March 11, 2025 | 6:00 PM | Fulton County Fairgrounds

Fulton, Izard, and Sharp County producers are invited to attend the Tri-County Forage Producers Meeting on Tuesday, March 11th at 6:00PM at the Fulton County Fairgrounds. Extension Forage Specialist, Dr. Jonathan Kubesch will be discussing native warm season grasses. He will cover stand planning, establishment, grazing/haying, and renovation of native warm season grass pastures.
There will be a meal provided and the cost to enter is $10. You must pre-register to the extension office. Call 870-895-3301 to reserve your spot!

18 USC 707

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

MASTER GARDENER

Private Pesticide Applicator Training

Due to weather, we are will have our rescheduled private pesticide applicator training on March 6th, 2025 at 6 PM in the Hickinbotham-Miller Building at the Fulton County Fairgrounds. If you want to be licensed or renew your license, please call our office at (870) 895-3301 to register for the course. The private pesticide applicator training is a two-hour course to license and/or recertify Arkansas agriculture producers who wish to purchase and apply Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP's).This training is NOT for recertification or commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators. This course is $20 per person which can be paid the night of the training. We will only accept cash and checks. The course fee is not related to the licensing fees charged by the State Plant Board. The additional fee for the license is $10 for one (1) year or $45 for five (5) years, which you will mail to the State Plant Board after the training.

Fulton County 4-H Poultry Chain

4-H Poultry Chain sign ups are now available! This is a project open to any Fulton County 4-H member, and is designed for the 4-Her to raise chickens from chick to production age. The child must be registered in Z-Suite to participate. This year, poultry chain participants will receive 15 Lohmann White pullets for $30 and have the option to order roosters. **Deadline to register is March 12th**. Birds will tentatively be delivered on April 24th. Call our office today to sign your 4-H member up for poultry chain! 870-895-3301.

Fulton County 4-H Rabies Clinic

The Fulton County 4-H will be hosting the annual Rabies Vaccination Clinic on April 5th. We will be traveling around the county. There will be more information out soon. Please tune in to local radio stations, check the local newspaper, refer to our Facebook page, or call our office for more information.

Fulton County 4-H Garden Project

It's is about that time to start planting seeds for a summer gardens! Fulton County 4-H Members can compete in the county garden project. This project is to showcase 4-H members growth of crops and growth of knowledge as they learn how to grow their own food. 4-Hers grow a garden and are judged by our Master Gardeners on their knowledge of working their garden, general garden appearance (weed, disease, and insect control, and overall appearance), varieties of crops grown, and growth in plantings and knowledge from year to year. The gardens are judged around the middle to end of July. Call our office if you have a 4-Her interested in competing!

Salem Home and Garden Show

The Salem Home and Garden Show will be at the Fulton County Fairgrounds on April 11th and 12th. For more information, please contact Mustard Seed Nursery and Landscape at 870-656-7724. Hope you see you there!

BEEF

Spring Calving Herds:

- Assessing body condition scores is essential in maximizing cow herd efficiency.
- The processes of fetal development, delivering a calf, milk production and repair of the reproductive tract are all stresses that require large quantities of energy.
  - Calving difficulty (dystocia) is a very important economic problem in the U.S. beef cattle industry. Approximately 3% of calves born in the U.S. will be lost due to calving difficulty. Several factors play a role in calving difficulty including heavy birth weights, abnormal fetal position, limited pelvic area and the female's age.

Bulls:

- Have bulls tested for breeding soundness before spring breeding season begins. 20% of bulls fail a breeding soundness examination. The breeding soundness evaluation (BSE) is a practical method to identify bulls with less than satisfactory breeding potential. This evaluation should be conducted on every bull at least 30 to 60 days before each breeding season to allow enough time for replacement of deferred or unsatisfactory bulls.
- During the breeding season monitor the activity of each bull. Be sure all bulls are walking properly and checking cows for estrus activity. Sometimes bulls can become lame or injured which could affect their ability to locate and breed cows. Feet, legs, penis, front shoulder, hip and eyes are few areas that can get injured affecting a bull's ability to breed cows.

Lactating Cows:

- Switch to a high magnesium mineral to help prevent grass tetany for lactating cows on spring pastures (Fact Sheet 3035).

Calves:

- Castrate male calves at birth or at 3 months processing. Castration early in life is less stressful on the calf. Research with calves castrated at birth grow at similar rates of gain compared to their intact male pasture mates
- Don't forget to collect calving records. Valuable records for selection and management include body condition at calving, calving difficulty score, calf gender, calf birth weight, and don't forget to tag calves - records are less valuable when they cannot be linked to animals and herds.
- Calf scours is a very costly problem for many producers.
  - Calves that suffer from scours can become critically ill in a short period of time.

General Herd:

- April is the time of year to deworm cows and calves. The need to control internal parasites will exist as long as cattle are grazing pastures. Young cattle will typically have more internal parasites than older cattle. The effects of internal parasites on cattle will vary with the severity of infection as well as age and stress level of the animal. Therefore, the methods of controlling internal parasites should be developed to fit individual production situations
- Provide free-choice mineral and fresh water.
- Assessing body condition scores is essential in maximizing cow herd efficiency.

FORAGES:

Bermudagrass

- March
  - Apply burn-down herbicide to dormant bermudagrass. Reapply herbicide if needed.
  - This is very important for keeping bermudagrass pastures clean of broadleaf weeds as much as possible.
  - Herbicide of choice is glyphosate before bermuda greenup occurs. Adding a broadleaf herbicide such as metsulfuron, Grazon P plus D or GrazonNext will improve control on some weeds such as henbit.
  - Use rates according to the label.
  - Bermudagrass should not be mowed or grazed for 60 days after glyphosate application, so time herbicide application accordingly.
- April
  - Scout for winter damage in bermudagrass
  - Assessing cold injury can't be done in the field until the bermudagrass begins breaking dormancy. Very cold-sensitive varieties may suffer complete winterkill whereas others may exhibit slower and later greenup than normal.
  - Some practices that may improve recovery include proper fertility, judicious weed control, and proper grazing or hay harvest.
  - To promote earlier greenup and grazing of bermudagrass, fertilize specific pastures when night time temperatures reach 60°F for a week. Don't apply N fertilizer where clovers are overseeded or where good clover stands exist already to avoid grass competition.
- May
  - Establish bermudagrass for forage from sprigs:
    - Sprig from now til June 1.
    - Sprig 20 to 40 bushels per acre.
    - Some of the recommended varieties are Midland 99, Ozark, Vaughn's, Greenfield, Hardie and Tifton 44.
    - Place sprigs less than two inches deep.
    - Do not sprig when the seedbed is dry.
    - Apply pre-emerge herbicide after sprigging.
      - For more information refer to FSA19, Establishing Bermudagrass
  - Establish bermudagrass for forage from seed:
    - Plant between May 1 and June 15.
    - Seeding rates are 4 to 8 pounds of pure live seed per acre.
    - Seed can be drilled or broadcast on a conventional tilled firm seedbed or planted with a no-till drill on killed grass sod.
    - Planting depth of 1/4 inch or less is recommended
    - Variety blends provide faster sod cover and higher seeding year yield.
    - At least 1 variety in the blend should be winter-hardy
    - Winter hardy varieties in AR include; Wrangler, Cheyenne and KF 194.
    - For more information refer to FSA19, Establishing Bermudagrass

FORAGES:

Other Forages

- March
  - Fertilize winter annual and fescue pastures and hayfields. Typical rates are 50-60 units N per acre along with P and K according to soil test recommendation.
- April
  - Overseed bare spots around hay feeding areas with a desirable grass or legume.
    - The hay feeding area generally is higher in organic matter and soil test P & K than the field. Therefore, providing a good growing media for establishing grasses or legumes.
    - Start rotationally grazing pastures at green-up. Don't let cows chase green grass over the entire farm since that will delay significant growth and sustained grazing even longer.
- May
  - Begin grazing perennial warm season grasses:
    - Start rotationally grazing pastures at green-up.
    - Rotational grazing improves forage utilization over continuous grazing.
      - Begin grazing at 6"-8", stop grazing at 3"-4".

GENERAL THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Start repairing haying equipment for spring harvest.
- Cedar trees – this is one tree that we seem to have an abundance of and they can be a problem in fence rows and pastures. The good thing about cedar trees is you can cut them off near the soil line and, as long as you cut cedars off below any green needles, the stump won't sprout back and will die.
- Implement a summer annual/perennial weed control program

COMMON WEED ID

BUTTERCUP

Spray buttercup in late February or early March before it flowers. This weed is easily controlled with 2,4-D amine at 1 to 2 pt/A. Metsulfuron 60 DF, Cimarron Plus, Grazon P+D, GrazonNext HL and dicamba + 2,4-D also control buttercup. In dormant bermudagrass, either glyphosate or paraquat will control buttercup at normal use rates.

BULL THISTLE:

The key to effective thistle control is **spraying while the thistles are in the rosette stage of growth** (before the flower stalk appears). Biennial thistles in Arkansas are readily controlled with a properly timed application of 2,4-D amine at 1.5 qt/A. Spring applications should be made from late February to early March. Fall applications from late October through November will enhance a thistle control program. Grazon P+D, GrazonNext HL and dicamba + 2,4-D also provide excellent control of thistles at 1 qt/A.

PRUNING GUIDE

- March
  - Finish pruning grapes. Bleeding causes no injury to the vines. Tie vines to the trellis before the buds swell to prevent bud injury and crop loss.
  - Prune summer blooming shrubs if needed including crape myrtle, vitex, althea, buddleia, and summer blooming spirea.
  - Do not trim spring blooming hydrangeas. Their stems may look dead but they contain this spring's flower buds. Tidy them up by removing small twiggy growth. It's too early to tell if the flower buds survived the winter.
  - Prune repeat-blooming roses such as floribunda, hybrid tea roses, and knock out roses just as the buds break dormancy.
  - Do not prune once-flowering roses now, prune after they bloom. Seal the open cuts by applying a drop or two of Elmer's glue to cover the cut. Don't smear on the glue.
  - Prune climbing roses by thinning out the older canes leaving the long, young branches, which produce the best blossoms.
- April
  - Prune spring-flowering shrubs like forsythia, bridal wreath spirea, weigela, Japanese quince, and lilac within 2 to 3 weeks after the last petals have dropped. Prune at the base, near the ground, to help rejuvenate growth and promote heavy flowering.
  - Prune semi-woody perennials like butterfly bush salvia greggii, lavender, sage, artemisia, and careopteris removing all the twiggy growth and cut out any winter-damaged wood.
- May
  - Prune azaleas when blooms are finished. Overgrown, older azaleas respond well to severe pruning. This rejuvenation results in denser plants with more blooms. Fertilize them after pruning as well.

A common and devastating mistake made while pruning crape myrtles is the practice of "topping" off the beautiful plant.

- Watch a crape myrtle pruning demonstration. Check out our Facebook page for a video on how to properly prune these trees. Please don't commit "crape murder!"

This is an example of a properly pruned crape myrtle. Use selective and renewal pruning methods when pruning this spring.

SPRING HOME FLOWERS

March:
- English Primrose
- Calendula
- Ranunculus
- Dianthus
- Snapdragons
- Roses
- Start annuals seeds indoors

April:
- Calibrachoa
- Verbena
- Petunias
- Begonias
- Clematis
- Canna
- Dahlia
- Gladiolus
- Tuberrose
- Hyacinth Vine
- Cypress Vine

May:
- Cuphea
- Coleus
- Celosia
- Torenia
- Calibrachoa
- Peonies
- Lantana
- Pentas

Summer bulbs to plant:
- Caladium
- Elephant Ear
- Canna
- Gladiolus
- Dahlias
- Lilies

Direct sow seeds of:
- Marigold
- Zinnia
- Sunflower
- Cosmos

SPRING HOME GARDEN VEGETABLES

March: (T) stands for transplants
- Broccoli (T)
- Cabbage (T)
- Swiss Chard (T)
- Cauliflower (T)
- Carrots
- Sweet Corn
- Beets
- Radishes
- Lettuce
- Mustard
- Turnips
- Asparagus
- Irish Potatoes
- Onions
- Spinach
- English Peas

April:
- Asparagus
- Sweet Corn
- Summer Squash
- Okra
- Peppers
- Cucumbers
- Sweet Potatoes
- Eggplants
- Tomatoes
- Beans (snap, lima)
- Swiss Chard
- Lettuce
- Radish
- Beets
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe

May:
- Asparagus (Perennial)
- Pumpkins
- Tomatoes
- Squash (Summer)
- Southern Peas
- Sweet Potatoes
- Peppers
- Okra
- Eggplants
- Cucumbers
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe
- Beans (Snap, Lima)
- Collards
- Radish

SPRING PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

- Root rots are preventable by decreasing the length of time garden soil is saturated. Root rots are not curable once your garden plants exhibit decline.
- Identify garden pests before you attempt to control them. If you decide to use chemical control, read the label carefully.
- Reduce mosquito problems by turning over any pots, lids or saucers that might collect water and create a breeding site. Use Bt dunks in ponds that have no fish in them. The Bt dunks are safe with fish; but when fish are present, they will take care of mosquito larvae.
- Wear light-colored clothing, apply repellent, and get in the habit of checking yourself, your children and pets closely for ticks after spending time outdoors.
- Monitor houseplants kept indoors for mealybugs, spider mites, aphids, whitefly, and scale. If spider mites are a problem consider spraying with a labeled horticultural oil or soap and pyrethrum mix. If possible, move the plants outside before spraying and when dry, move them back indoors.

THE SCOOP

AGRICULTURE | GARDENING | COMMUNITY

THAT'S THE SCOOP!

Feel free to call or drop by the office for any questions or additional information!

Sincerely,

Anna Barnett
Agriculture Extension Agent, Fulton County
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
P.O. Box 308, 118 W. Locust, Ste 107
Salem, AR 72576
870-895-3301
870-895-3372 (fax)

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System