

THE SCOOP

AGRICULTURE | GARDENING | COMMUNITY



IN WINTER, WE PLAN. IN SPRING, WE MOVE.

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 January through March.

Upcoming Events

- January 1 - Office Closed
- January 19 - Office Closed
- February 18 - Hands On Homesteading, 10:00 AM, Fulton County Fairgrounds
- March 4 - Private Pesticide Applicator Training, 2:00 PM, Fulton County Fairgrounds
- March 12 - Crape Myrtle Pruning Demo, 10:00 AM, Salem City Park
- March 17 - Area 8 Cattlemen's Meeting, Mountain Home, AR
- March 27 - Office Closed
- April 8 - 4-H Poultry Chain Distribution
- April 10 - North Central Arkansas Hay Day, Melbourne, AR

Check out our Facebook page UADA - Fulton County, for details on upcoming events.



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January Beef Tips:

Fall Calving Herds

- January is the middle of the fall breeding season. Check bulls to be sure they are maintaining body condition and are still sound (feet, legs, eyes, etc). If bulls seem to be disinterested, perhaps rotating bulls would be helpful.
- If the heifer breeding season began 30 days prior to the cow breeding season, the heifer breeding season should be coming to an end.
- Check body condition to determine if supplement feed needs to be adjusted.
- Provide free-choice mineral and fresh water.

Spring Calving Herds

- Calving season will begin soon. Being prepared for calving is very important: OB gloves, OB lubricant, esophageal feeder, bottle and nipple, chain straps/chains, calf puller, sterile syringes and needles, batteries for flashlight or spotlight, old rags or blankets, toolbox to keep calving equipment, colostrum replacement, electrolytes, etc. Make sure all items are in good working order, haven't expired, etc.
- Be prepared to make feed adjustments for nursing cows. Lactating cows require a 10-11% crude protein and 58-60% TDN diet (MP391).
- Switch to a high magnesium mineral to help prevent grass tetany for lactating cows on spring pastures (Fact Sheet 3035).
- 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.
- Vaccinate replacement heifers 30 to 60 days before breeding season.
- Now is a good time to evaluate and select sires for the spring breeding season for both mature cows and replacement heifers. Easy calving bulls are very important for breeding replacement heifers.
- Provide free-choice mineral and fresh water.

Forage Tips:

- Winter is a good time to correct imbalances in pH
 - Correcting pH will take several months so it is wise to check lime requirements before next year's growing season.
- Winter annual weeds such as buttercup, thistle, and henbit have germinated.
- Late fall and winter spraying is very effective.

February Beef Tips:

Spring Calving Herds

- Don't forget to collect calving records.
- Make sure adjustments to winter feeding are made for nursing cows. Lactating cows require a 10-11% crude protein and 58-60% TDN diet (MP391).
- Switch to a high magnesium mineral to help prevent grass tetany when calving cows are grazing spring pastures (FSA3035 and FSA3084).
- Grass tetany occurs most commonly in the months of February, March, and April.
 - Normally occurs when cool season forages begin to regrow.
 - Grass tetany is due to an abnormally low level of magnesium in the cow's body.
 - Older lactating cows are more susceptible.
 - Watch closely for calf scours (FSA3083)
 - Calf scours can be a very costly problem for many producers.
 - Calves suffering from scours can become critically ill in a short period of time.

Forage Tips:

- Limited grazing of winter annuals will improve animal nutrition, extend hay supplies, and allow use of limited high quality forage.
- Clover and lespedeza can be overseeded during February into short-grazed fescue pastures. Inoculate seed. Consider strip or stripe seeding in difficult areas. Make sure soil test is good enough for clover.
- Implement a winter annual weed control program.
- To promote earlier green up and grazing of fescue and winter annuals, fertilize specific pastures in February for grazing in March. Other pastures can be fertilized in March for spring. But don't apply N fertilizer where clovers are overseeded or where good clover stands exist.
- Start rotationally grazing 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.
- Soil sampling of pastures.
 - If you were not able to test soil fertility in fall, do so now to avoid fertility shortfalls once temperatures rise and forage begin to grow at a faster rate. Soil testing is free.
- Apply burn-down herbicide to dormant bermudagrass.
 - This is very important for keeping bermudagrass pastures clean of broadleaf weeds. Always read and follow the herbicide label.
 - Use rates according to the label; do not skimp with rates, the bermudagrass will not be affected if it is still dormant but weeds will be killed reliably.
 - Reapply herbicide if needed. Bermudagrass should not be mowed/graed for 60 days after glyphosate application, so time herbicide application accordingly.

March Beef Tips:

Spring Calving Herds:

- Have bulls tested for breeding soundness before spring breeding season begins (Fact Sheet 3046). 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.
- Assessing body condition scores is essential in maximizing cow herd efficiency.
- Calving difficulty (dystocia) is a very important economic problem in the U.S. beef cattle industry.
- Several factors play a role in calving difficulty including heavy birth weights, abnormal fetal position, limited pelvic area and the female's age. (Fact Sheet 3105)
- Calf scours is a very costly problem for many producers.

Forage Tips:

- 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 green up 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.

Winter Feeding of Sheep and Goats

- Since females are typically in late gestation and/or lactating during the winter months, when their nutritional needs are the highest, it is even more important to ensure the females are obtaining the proper roughages and/or grains in their diets.
- Sheep and goats should consume 2-4% of their body weight on a dry matter (DM) basis to meet their nutritional requirements.
- During the winter months, producers rely heavily on feeding hay as a roughage source in order to meet nutritional requirements of sheep or goats. It is important to know and understand the nutritional composition of the roughage. Hay can be tested through the Extension service.
- When feeding vitamins and minerals, a loose, free choice premix is preferred to blocks. The ratio of calcium to phosphorus should be 2:1 and vitamins A, D, and E should be available.
- If soil is selenium deficient, seek out a premix fortified with selenium to prevent white muscle disease in offspring.
- During late gestation ensure females are obtaining the proper amounts of calcium.
- If you are a sheep producer, purchase mixes that are formulated for sheep in order to prevent copper toxicity.



Backyard Poultry: Winter Preparation

- As we enter into a season of colder weather, it is crucial to plan and take action to protect the flock.
 - Inspect the coop for any drafts and make repairs if necessary.
 - Adequate roosting space. Roosting bars should be made of wood. Stay away from materials like metal and plastic because they retain the cold and can cause frostbite.
 - Consider insulating coop walls.
 - Have wood shavings 4-8 inches deep will provide some insulation.
 - Ensure coop is well ventilated.
 - Air exchange helps remove moisture from the coop and prevent a build up of ammonia in the air.
 - An option might be having vents in the roof or partially opened windows. Cover those openings with burlap so the air can flow, but the heat can be retained.



WINTER HOME FLOWERS - PLANTING GUIDE

January:

- Pansies (early Jan.)

February

- Sweet Peas



March:

- English Primrose
- Calendula
- Ranunculus
- Dianthus
- Snapdragons
- Roses (bareroot and container grown)
- Start annuals seeds indoors in mid-March



Spring is near! Are you ready?

WINTER HOME GARDEN VEGETABLES - PLANTING GUIDE

January:

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- English peas
- Salad greens (protected)

February:

- Strawberries
- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Collards
- Swiss Chard
- Beets
- Radishes
- Lettuce
- Brussels Sprouts
- Blueberry Bushes
- Kale
- Mustard
- Turnips
- Irish Potatoes
- Onions
- Spinach
- Peas
- Fruit Trees

March:

- Broccoli Transplants
- Cabbage Transplants
- Carrots
- Sweet Corn
- Beets
- Radishes
- Cauliflower Transplants
- Kohlrabi Transplants
- Swiss Chard Transplants
- Lettuce
- Mustard
- Turnips
- Asparagus
- Irish Potatoes
- Onions Plants
- Spinach
- English Peas

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- In case of freezing temps, ice, or snow, protect vegetables and other plants with an overturned box, flower pot, or other type of protection. For prolonged days of low temps, be sure to remove the covering during the day so your plants can get some sunlight.
- Be sure not to mess with frozen plants as they are brittle and can break easily. Assess frost damage when the weather warms back up. Avoid any cosmetic pruning until later as this can expose more of the plant to the cold.
- Shallow-rooted vegetables and winter annuals will need supplemental water if dry, particularly before a hard freeze.
- Run your garden beds east-west to allow the most sun exposure to all your plants. Be sure when deciding where to plant your vegetables and flowers that you plant the things that are supposed to grow the tallest on the north side of your bed to avoid overshadowing the shorter plants.
- Are your fall-blooming perennials getting a little too crowded? Take some time to dig and divide hostas, chrysanthemums, sedums, ornamental grasses, shasta daisies, black-eyed susans, daylilies, asters, and garden phlox, to name a few!
- Pruning tips: plants that bloom in the spring should be pruned immediately following blooming, and plants that bloom in the summer should be pruned in late February to early March before growth begins. There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as gardenias and some hydrangeas.



HOMESTEADING

February 18, 2026 - 10AM to 2PM
Fulton County Fairgrounds



← REGISTER HERE!

Register by February 11th

Cost: \$10 - Lunch Provided

Hosted By: Fulton County Extension

TOPICS INCLUDE:

Basic Sourdough Starter Care

Anna Harlan, Stone County Extension

Beekeeping Basics

James Rhein, North Central Arkansas Beekeepers

Building a Rain Barrel

Anna Barnett, Fulton County Extension

Canning 101

MaLinda Coffman, Fulton County Extension

Culinary & Medicinal Herb Garden

Robin Moore, Walking Stick Herbalist

Trapping & Fur

Lauren Cannon, Arkansas Game and Fish

Pasture Management & Fencing

Michael Paskewitz, Izard County Extension



CRAPE MYRTLE PRUNING DEMO

PRESENTED BY: ANNA BARNETT

FULTON COUNTY EXTENSION

EVENT DETAILS:

- ✓ Salem City Park (Hwy 62 pavilion)
- ✓ March 12, 2026
- ✓ 10:00 AM

HAVE QUESTIONS?
CALL THE EXTENSION
OFFICE AT 870-895-3301.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- ✓ Tool Sanitation Guide
- ✓ Pruning Tips and Tricks
- ✓ Pruning Demo

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PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING:

We will be having a pesticide applicator license course on **March 4th, 2026 at 2:00 PM** at the Hickinbotham-Miller Building at the Fulton County Fairgrounds. If you want to be licensed or renew your license, please call our office. (870) 895-3301. The Pesticide Applicator Training is a two-hour course to license and/or recertify Arkansas agricultural producers who wish to purchase and apply Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP's). This training is NOT for recertification of commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators. The class is \$20 per person which can be paid the night of the training. We will accept only checks or exact cash. 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.

BRUCELLOSIS (BANG'S) VACCINATIONS:

Spring Bang's vaccinations will be scheduled shortly. Please call our office at 870-895-3301 to get on our list. Include your name, address of where the heifers will be, and a head count for vaccinations. Vaccinations are free of charge. Heifers must be at least 4 months old, but not older than 12 months old to be eligible for vaccination.

We will use the same procedure as in the past and notify you by letter or phone call when you are scheduled for vaccinations. You will need handling facilities to confine and work the calves. Also, a representative must be present at the time of vaccination or the heifers will not be vaccinated.

THAT'S THE SCOOP!

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

Sincerely,

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