

AG NEWS

Fall 2024

Hay Testing

The Cooperative Extension Service offers forage quality testing for producers in Arkansas. Forage testing is important for feeding as well as selling hay. Producers can use the results from their forage tests to designate the high-quality hay for the cattle with more nutritional needs, and the lower-quality hay for the cattle with the least nutritional needs. Cattle producers may also use these results to see if they need any supplemental feed along with the hay.

Hay, silage, or crop residue is normally fed during the winter months but can be fed at any time to supplement low pasture availability. Some producers may have started feeding earlier due to damage from armyworms. Good quality hay can be made from almost every forage species grown in Arkansas. The main influence of forage quality is the maturity of the grass at harvest time. Soil fertility also plays a part in the quality of forage. Hay should be stored under cover if possible. Barns or tarps will work well. If you cannot cover your hay, stack in rows at least 3 feet apart in the open, high on a well-drained slope. It is preferred that hay stored in the open is placed on poles, crushed rock, or pallets.

The sooner you get your hay tested, the more time you will have for winter feed planning. Contact the Howard County Extension Office at 870-845-7517 to set up a time to have your hay sampled. If you are not aware, the cost for hay samples has gone up this year.

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Bangs Vaccination

There is a free on-farm Bangs vaccination taking place for cattle producers in Howard County on October 21. All heifers ages 4-12 months are eligible for the free program. The heifers must be pinned, and the producer must have working facilities. To register for this free program, please call Dawson Bailey CEA – AG, at 870-845-7517.



UofA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

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PAT

There will be a fall Pesticide Applicator Training for anyone needing their pesticide license. It will be held on November 8th from 9:00 to 11:30 at the EH House. Please call our office (870-845-7517) to register for this event.



Fall and Winter Health Problems in Cow/Calf Herds

As the cow/calf herd enters the fall season, the entire herd may be stressed from excessive heat, short grass, and lack of water availability. Being stressed makes cattle more susceptible to diseases. When cattle are stressed, they become thin, and their immune systems are weakened. Germs that are dormant in the tissues and organs can then break out of dormancy and cause outbreaks. Clostridiosis, Leptospirosis, Anaplasmosis, pneumonia, and gastroenteritis are just a few examples of some diseases that they can encounter. Producers can prevent or minimize health problems in the fall and winter by reducing stresses from inadequate nutrition, feed changes, and poor sanitation.

As the acorns start falling, producers with hungry cattle need to watch out for acorn poisoning. The poisoning is caused by tannins in the acorns. Generally, this will occur when acorns fall off in the green stage and cattle consume too many of them. Cattle affected by acorn poisoning have a poor appetite, become constipated followed by profuse diarrhea, and suffer weight loss. They also may pass blood in the manure and/or bleed from the nostrils. Affected animals drink large amounts of water. An easy prevention is to remove the cattle from areas that have oak trees when acorns begin falling.

Grass tetany is another condition to watch out for. Cattle affected by grass tetany are normally thin, grazing on lush green pastures high in nitrogen and potassium, and are likely stressed by calving or nursing. Some symptoms of grass tetany include staggers, tossing the head, and convulsions. A vet will be needed to treat the cattle and raise blood magnesium.

Soil-borne diseases may become a problem during the hay feeding season. When feeding round bales, the ground can become wet and contaminated with coccidia from cow manure. We have all seen the calves laying in the hay on the ground and when they do, they can ingest many coccidial cysts leading to coccidiosis. There are several other health problems associated with round bale feeding of cows and nursing calves including gastroenteritis, and infection of the naval in calves, and bacterial mastitis, and foot rot in cows. To reduce the occurrence of these and other soil-borne diseases, move the hay feeding areas around periodically to maintain good sanitation.



Winterizing the Garden

Growing season is winding down, but that doesn't mean the garden work is over with. You still need to clean up and prepare for next year's garden. Some of the chores left to do are continue to compost, submit soil samples and apply lime and fertilizer if needed, control winter weeds, plant winter annuals and bulbs, protect plants from frost damage, clean tools, and create a plan for next year. You may be wondering why you need to do these chores or "winterize" your garden. Winterizing will help protect any remaining plants or fruit trees from frosts or freezes, reduce diseases and pests, and help protect against wildlife.

As you begin cleaning up the landscape, you need to completely remove any diseased plants. The healthy plants can go into your compost pile. Rake any fallen leaves out of the garden and lawn. These can also be composted. To preserve your more tender bulbs, dig them up and store them in a cool, frost-free area. If you want some spring blooms, garden centers should start selling some of the hardier bulbs. Plant these in October and November to have blooms in the spring. The fall is also the time to plant garlic bulbs.

Soil tests are free through the Extension Office. They are the only true way to know the nutrient content of your soil and what you need to add to it. We have information on our website to help you correctly take a soil sample. After the results come back, We can help you figure how much fertilizer you need for your garden. Compost is a great resource for improving the physical condition, soil fertility, and organic matter in the soil, but you shouldn't rely solely on compost for your fertilizer needs.

Cleaning garden tools will help prevent the spread of diseases through the garden. Ideally, they should be cleaned after every use, but for some growers that is not practical. Fall and winter are a perfect time to schedule a tool cleaning. Start by brushing off any dirt or debris. Follow that by dipping them in soapy water and scrub them thoroughly. You will need to dry them completely after this. Next you will dip them into a bleach water solution and then dry them again. Oil the metal parts of the tool with mineral oil or WD-40. If you have wooden handles, treat them with linseed oil.



Dawson Bailey

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