

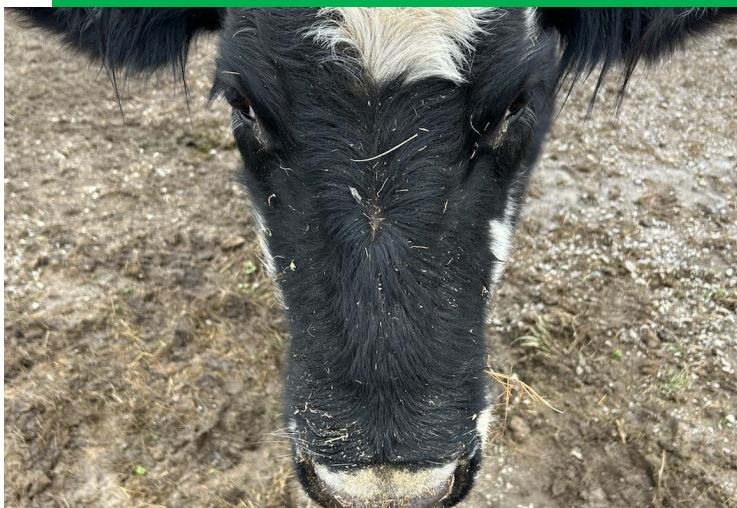


University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Edmonson County Ag News

Cooperative Extension Service

Edmonson County
116 Mohawk Street
Brownsville, KY 42210-9006
(270) 597-3628
Fax: (270) 597-2948
Edmonson.ext@uky.edu



Greetings from the Edmonson County Extension Office. We are still here on Mohawk Street with all your agricultural information and services, such as soil testing, plant and disease identification, hay sampling, etc. Lots of exciting things are happening with Extension and the county. For more information on all we offer, please call, e-mail, or come on by our office from 8am-4pm Monday –Friday. Winter has given us a peak at what we might expect, so remember to check livestock as often as possible. Remember those repairs and updates on equipment and keep safety in mind at all times.



David Embrey

David Embrey

Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources/4-H Youth Development Education Edmonson County

**Cooperative
Extension Service**

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Cow-calf producers must decide between bulls and steers

Source: Kenny Burdine, UK livestock marketing specialist

Cow-calf operators often wrestle with the decision of selling their bull calves in-tact or castrating them to sell as steers. The important management choice has financial implications either way. As producers, you need to weigh the costs and decide what's best for your operation.

You need to look at more than economics when trying to decide to castrate bull calves. Castration may seem very inexpensive, but you should also consider the time and facilities involved as well as the stress it puts on calves.

Historically speaking, steer calves bring higher prices per pound than bull calves. There may be times when bulls outsell steers, but that is usually the exception, not the norm. Exceptions may be due to quality or lot size differences. Sometimes it may just be that buyers need to fill out a load of bulls, and they bid on the group beyond the expected price.

If you go back as far as January 2010, there hasn't been a single month when the Kentucky average price of 550-pound bulls exceeded that of 550-pound steers. The bull discount actually got very wide at times during 2014 and 2015, but otherwise has been running in a range of \$7 to \$14 per hundredweight.

The current market is unique as feed costs are relatively high. High feed prices generally result in smaller price slides as operators shift towards placing heavier feeder cattle into feedlots. This results in greater value of gain and makes additional weaning weight more valuable. Seasonality also impacts the value of gain. Price slides for calves typically increase in the spring when grass demand supports lighter calf prices.

Even considering historical prices, current feed costs and other factors, cow-calf operators ultimately must decide what is best for their unique enterprise. Some producers may decide that the additional costs for working calves don't make sense for them due to facility or time constraints. Other producers may be able to make money by purchasing bulls, castrating them, backgrounding for a time and then selling them.

This is a common way of adding value in the cattle market. Producers who typically sell bulls may want to consider the potential value they can add to their calves as they look for ways to increase profitability.

Producers should weigh all the advantages and costs of both situations. There is consistent evidence that bulls will sell at a discount to steers in the marketplace and the additional pounds bulls need to offset that can be significant. Ultimately, producers need to determine if they can capture this potential for added value.

Horse hoof care 101

Source: Bob Coleman, UK equine extension specialist

Hoof care is important to keeping your horses comfortable and healthy. Proper hoof care can help ensure that you enjoy your horse for a long time.

Farriers and veterinarians are the experts when it comes to horse hoof care. It is important for you to have a good working relationship with both. They can help you maintain a regular maintenance schedule and quickly address any hoof-related problems.

As a responsible horse owner, you should clean your horse's feet daily. This practice gets them comfortable with having their feet handled and helps ensure they will stand for the farrier. This will make the experience safer for both the horse and the farrier. Have your horse's hooves trim or shod as needed to protect your horse from developing hoof infections and lameness.

Horses' hooves grow at different rates, depending on the horse and its intended purpose. For example, hooves of performance horses may grow quicker than those used for pleasure riding. Generally, hooves grow quicker during the summertime compared to the winter. In the summer, trim or shod horses every six to eight weeks. In the winter, you might be able to stretch maintenance to every six to 12 weeks, but again, it depends on the horse.

Horses should have balanced hooves. They put less strain on the horse's bones, tendons and ligaments and allow for easier and more fluid movements. When hooves are balanced, they have the following characteristics:

- A straight line from the pastern through the front of the hoof wall.
- Toes that are not too long, square trimmed or rounded and rolled.
- The shoe reaches to the back of the hoof wall and supports the entire leg.

If you wait too long between trimmings, a horse's hooves can crack. This can lead to serious health problems including lameness. Their hooves can also become dry and crack during dry weather, wintertime or frequent changes between dry and wet conditions. If your horse's hooves become dry, brittle or start developing cracks, apply a hoof moisturizer to the hoof wall and sole.

Wintertime calls for specific hoof care. Horses should be left barefoot if they are not normally shod. Bare feet can help them grip surfaces and prevent slipping. However, you may need keep shoes on your horse during the winter if it is prone to bruising.

Keep areas where horses frequent clean and dry. Wet, dirty conditions can cause thrush, which is a smelly, black fluid that leaks from the hooves. It can invade the horse's tissues and cause lameness.

Proper nutrition goes a long way to reducing hoof cracks and ensuring optimum horse health. Generally, horses need high quality hay, the appropriate amount of vitamin and mineral supplements and fresh, clean water. You can also purchase a supplement containing biotin, zinc or methionine to improve hoof health.

Alternative storage systems could help farmers in times of higher yields

Source: Sam McNeill, professor of biosystems and agriculture engineering

Alternative grain storage options are becoming increasingly valuable as agricultural production intensifies, offering farmers flexible and cost-effective solutions. While traditional grain bins are widely used, alternatives such as grain bags, flat storage and temporary structures provide practical choices for producers looking to manage harvests and mitigate risks. These systems offer benefits in terms of cost, accessibility and adaptability, allowing farmers to address specific needs without the heavy investment in permanent infrastructure.

Grain storage plays a key role in managing risk by reducing harvest delays, avoiding price lows during peak harvest times and allowing for earlier harvesting at higher moisture levels if drying systems are available. Traditional grain bins offer long-term storage but require significant initial investment and construction time. In contrast, alternative storage options can be quickly deployed and used for both short- and long-term needs, depending on the operation's scale and requirements.

One of the most popular alternatives is the use of grain bags. These commercial-grade plastic bags can hold 10,000 bushels of grain or more and provide a temporary but weather-tight storage solution. Grain bags are ideal for producers who need on-site storage without the infrastructure costs of permanent bins. However, because they are not reusable, regular monitoring is necessary to avoid spoilage from tears or punctures by wildlife. Despite these challenges, grain bags are a flexible and accessible option for short-term storage, particularly when paired with modern sensors to monitor moisture and temperature levels.

Flat storage systems are another alternative, utilizing open areas or machine storage buildings. These systems are versatile and capable of holding substantial amounts of grain but require careful management to maintain grain quality. Moisture protection, aeration and pest control are critical factors in maintaining the integrity of grain stored in flat structures. While they are a cost-effective solution, flat storage systems pose a higher risk of spoilage than more controlled environments, such as traditional bins.

Temporary storage structures, including bin rings and upright silos, can also provide a quick and scalable storage option where available. Bin rings can be set up rapidly and are often used when immediate storage is needed. However, they come with risks such as inadequate aeration and moisture control, making them less suitable for long-term storage. Protection from the elements and pests is a top priority with temporary storage structures, as they are more exposed than grain bags or permanent bins.

Alternative grain storage systems offer flexible solutions for farmers seeking to manage their harvests efficiently. These options can provide cost-effective, short-term storage solutions that, when properly monitored, help maintain grain value and reduce risks associated with spoilage and pests. A spreadsheet is available to easily calculate the holding capacity of various storage structures at <https://bae.ca.uky.edu/extension/grain-storage-systems>.

Managing horses in winter

Source: Bob Coleman, extension equine specialist

When winter arrives, horses feel it. You can lessen the blow and help your animals thrive in cold weather. Ultimately, the ideal time to prepare for winter is in the fall, but there are still things you can do now.

Think about preparing for two scenarios – acute cold and chronic cold. Acute cold is when we experience cold snaps that last for short periods of time. Chronic cold stays for a much longer time. Sometimes acute cold is actually more dangerous for animals because they aren't used to the cold and owners may not be as prepared as in regions where intense cold is more common and longer lasting.

Be it acute or chronic, horse owners should make sure animals have adequate shelter, fresh water, dry bedding and enough feed.

One way horses keep warm is through digestion; it helps generate heat. The average horse, with a low activity level, should eat between 1.5 and 2 percent of its body weight in feed per day to maintain weight.

As temperatures drop, feed needs rise because horses use up more calories to stay warm. Mature horses can adapt to and handle temperatures as low as 5 degrees Fahrenheit, but that is the lower critical temperature. When conditions fall below that, horses need to increase heat production or reduce heat loss to maintain core body temperature. One way to do that is to eat more. A drop in temperature to 5 degrees below zero will require 15 percent more feed to supply needed calories. That means the horse would need to eat 2-3 more pounds of hay each day.

Make sure you have extra hay available to help your horses get through short-term cold snaps. For longer, more chronic cold exposure, you'll need to make some other management changes to meet your horses' calorie needs. Mature horses can maintain on a good quality legume-grass mixed hay, but young, growing horses or broodmares late in gestation may need a concentrate to meet their increased calorie needs.

One of the most time-consuming, but most critical tasks in winter is to make sure horses have access to clean, unfrozen water. Adequate water intake is essential to preventing colic due to impaction.

You need to provide some kind of shelter from wind and precipitation. If you choose to use blankets, make sure they are wind and waterproof. A wet blanket equals a wet horse and that disrupts the coat's ability to insulate the animal and can quickly lead to cold stress.

Make sure to keep an eye on your horses during cold snaps to make sure they are handling the effects of the cold. That will mean daily checks and quick action if the animals need extra attention. If possible, keep horses out of pastures and paddocks with ponds or open water sources to guard against them falling through ice into the water.

Ag Classes for CAIP Credit January & February 2025

Subject to change without notice, call office to register 270-597-3628

Held at Edmonson County Extension Office unless otherwise stated

- Monday, January 13 @ 6:00 pm – Managing Body Condition Score in Beef Cattle LA B
- Tuesday, January 14 @ 5:30 pm – Dealing with Fescue Toxicosis LA & FG IMP
- Thursday, January 16 @ 6:00 pm – Beef Cattle Feeding & Nutrition LA B
- Tuesday, January 21 @ 5:30 am – How Good is Your Hay FG IMP
- Thursday, January 23 @ 1:30 pm – Farm Infrastructure & Hay Storage FI
- Thursday, January 23 @ 6:00 pm – Pasture & Hayfield Renovation & Maintenance FG IMP
- Monday, January 27 @ 6:00 pm – Fertilizer Decisions for Hay & Pasture FG IMP
- Tuesday, January 28 @ 5:30 pm – [Sheep Basics](#) SA
- Thursday, January 30 @ 6:00 pm – Weed Control in Pastures & Hayfields FG IMP
- Monday, February 3 @ 6:00 pm – Horse Pasture Renovation & Maintenance FG IMP & LA H
- Thursday, February 6 @ 5:30 pm – Digestive Physiology of Farm Animals LA & SA
- Monday, February 10 @ 6:00 pm – Strategic Mineral Supplementation LA B
- Tuesday, February 11 @ 5:30 pm – Beef Cattle Feeding & Nutrition LA B
- Monday, February 17 @ 6:00 pm – Warm Season Forages FG IMP
- Tuesday, February 18 @ 5:30 pm - Dealing with Fescue Toxicosis LA & FG IMP
- Monday, February 24 @ 5:30 pm - Farm Infrastructure & Hay Storage FI
- Tuesday, February 25 @ 5:30 pm - Sheep Basics SA
- Thursday, February 27 @ 9:00 am – Fencing & On Farm Water Improvement FOFW
- Thursday, February 27 @ 6:00 pm – Fencing & On Farm Water Improvement FOFW

LA = Large Animal, B = Beef, H = Horse, FG IMP = Forage & Grain Improvement, FI = Farm Infrastructure, SA = Small Animal, FOFW = Fencing & On Farm Water Improvement

A Private Pesticide Applicator Certification Class for those who need it will be held on Thursday, February 20th at 5:30 pm at the Extension Office. This class does not qualify for CAIP.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.