

Johnson County Fence Lines

January 2025

 Cooperative
Extension Service

Cooperative Extension Service
Johnson County
826 F.M. Stafford Avenue
Paintsville, KY 41240
(606) 789-8108
Fax: (606) 789-8113
Johnsonextension.com

Cold Weather Tips

These harsh winter days make things tough for our livestock. To help your farm animals get through cold, snowy days, follow these helpful suggestions from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

FEED PREP

Deliver extra feed and check mechanical feeders for outages. Plan for emergency feeding.

WATER FLOW

Clear ice buildup on waterers, use tank heaters, and be ready to haul water if pipes freeze.

SHELTER UP

Move animals indoors if possible, especially the young. Build wind barriers and add bedding for dryness and insulation.

AIRFLOW CHECK

Clear vents of ice and snow. Open vents to ensure airflow and prevent suffocation if systems fail



Brian Jeffers

Brian Jeffers
Johnson Co. Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources



Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

2025 Horses & Horsemen:

Join us for the 18th annual

PASTURES PLEASE!!

Thursday, February 27



Schedule:

5:30—Meal

6:00—Aerial Applications: Does a Drone Fit
– Brett Reese

6:30—Weeds to Watch Out For
– Dr. Bill Witt

7:00—Cost Share Opportunities for Horse Owners
– Krista Lea

RSVP to 859-257-5582

Fayette County

Extension Office

1140 Harry Sykes Way
Lexington, KY 40504

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Four Questions the 2025 Cattle Market Will Need to Answer

By Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

Trends are always difficult to ascertain coming out of holiday periods as many markets are closed and volumes tend to be pretty light, but cattle prices have started 2025 very strong. While questions exist on the demand side, tight cattle supplies will remain the primary driver in the new year and should continue to support prices. And as always, weather will have a significant impact on feed and forage availability and cattle marketing patterns. As I write the first Cattle Market Notes Weekly article of the year, I wanted to discuss four questions that I think will be important for the 2025 cattle market to answer.

Will we start to see significant heifer retention? – This question has been circulating for the better part of the last two years. There are a lot of reasons why retention has been delayed including weather, production costs and interest rates. But market conditions should be very favorable again and I do think heifer retention could be seen in 2025 if weather cooperates. When heifer retention does pick up, it will further tighten supplies of cattle as those females are held out of the marketing system. This will be the first stage of growing this cowherd, which is currently at a 60+ year low.

Can slaughter weights keep increasing? – Most analysts are forecasting beef production to be lower in 2025. These forecasts are based on continued decreases in cattle numbers and the potential for decreased female harvest in response to high prices. In truth, I could have written this exact same thing last year. But with cattle supplies tight, beef prices high and feed prices relatively low, cattle were fed longer and taken to higher weights. This increase in pounds largely offset the decrease in female slaughter and resulted in steady beef production levels for 2024. I will readily admit that I don't know how much further weights can be pushed, if at all, but those same factors are largely at play again this year. So, I will be watching harvest weight trends very closely.

Will we see greater than expected growth in pork and poultry production? – Holding everything else constant, lower feed prices increase returns across all livestock species and lead to greater production levels. And production levels of competing meats do impact beef and cattle prices. Recent increases in pork production have been driven almost entirely by productivity, rather than increases in breeding inventory, and increases in broiler production have been running around the long run trend rate. I just point this out because production increases can occur much faster in the hog sector than the cattle sector, and faster still in the poultry sector. While there aren't many indications of expansion in other species currently, this was a factor in 2015, and I think it bears watching in 2025. It is important to remember that beef supplies are not the only factor that impacts beef prices. All proteins compete in the meat case.

What will be the impact of any changes in trade policy? – Trade has been a major topic of discussion recently and I doubt that will change in 2025. Beef exports have been lower in recent years due to tight domestic supplies and high prices, but the US still exported the equivalent of roughly 11% of production last year. In the past, retaliatory tariffs have impacted beef and cattle prices, so it bears watching going forward. It is also important to remember that the nature of beef trade very much depends on the trading partner. For example, we export a lot of beef to Mexico and Canada, but we are also a significant import market for those two countries. And while trade discussions typically focus on beef, a significant number of live cattle enter the US from Mexico and Canada each year. Conversely, over half of US beef exports go to Japan, South Korea and China, but those are almost exclusively export markets. The uniqueness of each of these trading relationships makes discussion of trade impacts very complex and something that will be interesting to follow this year.

January Forage Tips

- Continue strip-grazing of stockpiled tall fescue for maximum utilization.
- Remove animals from waterlogged pastures to limit pugging and soil compaction.
- Feed best hay to animals with highest nutritional needs.
- Supplement poor quality hay as indicated by forage testing.
- Feed hay in poor pastures to increase soil fertility and enhance organic matter.
- Consider “bale grazing” – set out hay throughout field when the ground is dry or frozen. Then use temporary fencing to allocate bales as needed after that.
- Use variety trial results to select seed for spring renovation.

Prepare for pasture renovation by purchasing seeds, inoculant, etc. and getting equipment ready.

Buy Red and White Clover Seed Now

Just as last year, improved varieties of red and white clover are currently in short supply, both in the U.S. and worldwide. This means that if you want to frost seed clover in February you are advised to purchase or line up your seed now. If you wait you may only be able to find unimproved common clover seed that just does not persist well in Kentucky.

NUISANCE WEED SPRAYING PROGRAM

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is once again operating its nuisance weed spraying program this year. Applications for this free assistance are open during the month of February.

This program consists of weed spraying demonstration plots. KDA will provide the sprayer and enough chemical for the treatment of 10 acres of agricultural land/or 100 gallons of spot spraying mix to be used on agricultural land. The KDA representative will demonstrate proper mixing and application techniques. A number of nuisance weeds can be treated under this program depending on the needs of the participant. This program is limited to broadleaf weeds.

Broadcast Spraying demonstration plots consist of:

- 10 acres of agricultural land will be treated with chemical provided by the department
- Application is performed with a two-wheeled trailer type sprayer equipped with boomless nozzles
- If additional chemical is provided by the participant, an additional 10 acres can be treated

Spot Spraying demonstration plots consist of:

- 100 gallons of broadleaf chemical mix which is applied until sprayer is empty
- Application is performed with a two-wheeled trailer type sprayer equipped with a handheld spray wand used by the tractor operator
- If additional chemical is provided by the participant, an additional 100 gallons can be sprayed

For each demonstration:

- The participant must provide water source
- The participant must provide tractor and operator
- All chemical products must be labeled and the product label will be strictly followed
- A maximum of 7 participants per county

This program is designed to help target weeds that have a negative impact on the participant's agricultural production. There will be an annual online application period to participate in this program. You may submit an application using KDA's online services from February 1 through February 28 of each year.



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