

AG NOTES
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UT/TSU Extension
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BEEKEEPER SCHOOL

The Duck River Beekeepers Association will be having their annual beekeeper school for beginners again this spring. The dates are March 9, 10, 12, and 13.

The school will be held at the Bedford County Farm Bureau on 323 Bethany Lane, Shelbyville. The topics covered include starting a hive and the care of the bees. At the end of the four-night session, five people who attend all of the sessions will be drawn to receive starter hive equipment.

This school has been successful due to the expert beekeepers who have been members over the years and who have lots of experience. These folks teach and share with those who want to learn.

With the concern about bee losses and the effect on pollination of crops and flowers, this is a good chance to get started with bees and not only enjoy the honey but to help with the pollination of food crops.

Contact Debra McKill at 931-581-5415 for more information and to register.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Cold days are ending soon! (Well, we hope so!) As you begin preparing for warmer temperatures in the coming months, it is good to keep in mind that pests will be doing the same.

Spring cleaning is a great practice, being proactive about pests and preventing them before they occur! Pest management is not an additional thing on your to-do list. Just do what you do, but think “pests”.

Think of it as cleaning to remove potential food from pests. And repairing leaks is actually removing watering sites from pests.

A big item is decluttering, which will remove hiding places and shelters from pests. (That’s a big one for me. I collect things, but my family is after me to declutter. We’ll see.)

Weather-proofing, usually done in the fall to avoid the cold, should be done before insects emerge this spring. This will help prevent them from entering the home.

Safer Choice. What is Safer Choice? Safer Choice is the US EPA’s label for safer chemical-based products. Every chemical, regardless of percentage, in a Safer Choice-labeled product is evaluated through EPA’s rigorous scientific process and only the safest ingredients are allowed.

For over 15 years, the program has labeled products that are safer families, pets, workplaces, neighborhoods, and the environment. Read more about Safer Choice at <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>.

Safer Choice has a number of factsheets that provide information and guidance on the Safer Choice program for consumers, as well as resources for schools, communities and municipalities, and manufacturers. You can also download shareable infographics from Safer Choice.

Thanks to Dr. Karen Vail, UT Extension entomologist, for sharing this information.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

I was contacted last week by the Farm Service Agency in Lewisburg asking me to remind farmers that USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 15, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested.

Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

Farmers will want to take care of this. Some of our farmers deal with other FSA offices and the dates are same everywhere. This sign-up is nation-wide.

ANOTHER SCHOOL

Lincoln County Extension will host a commercial vegetable production training on Thursday, March 5 at 6:30 PM in the Lincoln County Extension in the Ralph Hastings Building Auditorium, 208 Davidson Street East, Fayetteville.

Speakers will include Dr. Zach Hansen, UT Plant Pathologist for commercial vegetables, Dr. Annette Wszelaki, UT Extension Commercial Vegetable Production Specialist, and Dr. Frank Hale, UT Extension Entomologist. Southeastern Vegetable Production Guides will be available at this program.

A meal will be provided sponsored by Chris O'Connor, Farm Bureau Insurance. Please call in to the Extension office there at 931-433-1582 by March 3 if you would like to attend. This meeting is open to everyone.

SPEAKING OF SPRING

Temperatures dropped like a lead ball. It was 20 degrees last week, with windchills down in the single digits. There was rain and snow. The ground was frozen hard. Water tanks were iced over. Water faucets outside were frozen.

Baby animals were shivering, and adult livestock ate hay constantly so that their bodies could convert it into carbohydrates so that they could produce body heat. It took a lot of hay.

For those of you who love cold weather, we are proud to have suffered it so you could enjoy it. Now some of us are ready for spring to get here and change things. I've have had all of the cold I need, thank you!

THE KIDS

The boys had their try-outs at baseball a couple of weeks ago, and the league had its draft, just like the pros. Hank went in the top five in the first round of eleven picks! There's over a hundred kids in the league. And his baseball travel team has started, and he's playing soccer.

Ford was picked in his league of coach-pitch teams. And he's playing soccer. And school is going great. He gets bragged on by his teacher for being helpful to others and to her.

So we get to talk to Beth and Jason and the boys when she or he is taking them to practice, which is about every day. And weekends are full of games.

I'm going over to cheer on Beth and Jason in a marathon race in a few days, and I hope to see a ballgame. I think I've got a good chance!

Piper is having fun caring for a new litter of Jack Russell puppies. She's excited about them! I can see her now getting into stuff with four little puppies following her! And she's getting to be quite a cook, helping out in the kitchen with her own step stool, watching and helping with everything.