

AG NOTES
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FARMERS MARKET

It's growing. The season finally has worked with our vendors, and the garden 'stuff' is coming in. It's been an up-hill battle, with the early cold weather on into spring, the extremely wet conditions during all of that, and we have had some battles with plant diseases along with having to replant over a few times.

But the produce this past week was good and it's really coming in. We expect it to increase in volume and quality. And there'll be more selections, too. The talk is that tomatoes and corn will be here shortly.

Let me make a point here. This market is a locally grown market. Most of our growers do not have structures for early starting, they depend on the normal season. So it is not possible for them to have corn or melons or some of the other vegetables in May or early June.

When you see those varieties really early in the season, it is very possible that those food items have been grown out of state in the southern regions, unless the growers have greenhouses to help avoid the early cold climate. While that is not necessarily a bad thing, it is not our goal.

Our purpose in having this market is for our local growers to have an outlet and for the community to have a place to purchase locally grown vegetables and other products. With that in mind, we ask that you be patient and support the market.

USDA PROGRAM

I want to re-announce the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program that the Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture is delivering to eligible farmers across the country. The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19.

USDA is accepting applications now through August 28, 2020. Producers should apply through the Farm Service Agency at their local USDA Service Center. Ours is the Lewisburg office. In view of the coronavirus, they are operating by phone and mail/email. Call them at 931-359-6268 for assistance. This program applies to some livestock farmers and crop farmers. I'll try to explain. The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP, provides vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional significant market costs.

Eligible commodities include non-specialty crops, such as corn and soybeans and other crops that are listed in the information on the program. The program also included dairy and livestock such as cattle, hogs and sheep as described in the program details. Other farm commodities covered are wool and specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and other foods, all which are specifically listed in the program materials.

The process is simple and does not take an extreme matter of time. The benefits are substantial and I strongly recommend that any farmer who is eligible and is in any of these eligible farm enterprises contact Farm Service Agency for more information. The funds are on a first-come basis nation-wide, so it is important to apply as soon as is possible. Many of the Bedford County farmers that have applied to date since the opening of the program on May 26 have received their benefits.

If I can be of help, contact me at 931-684-5971 or email me at jteague1@utk.edu

WEED CONTROL

I get a lot of weed questions. What is it? Sometimes the descriptions are not very good. If I can't see it, I'm not sure what it is. I know a lot of 'em, and a lot of 'em that I don't know. Then there's a lot of 'em that have more than one common name, so that confuses the question some, too.

This is the season that I'll have a lot of questions. Now it may not be a good time to spray, but it may be a god time to identify it and make plans on using the correct material at the best time in the plant's life stage for best control. Usually, this in the germination or growing stages, not in the adult stage when it has already produced seeds.

Granted the adult stage is the usually the easiest stage to identify a plant. A fresh specimen is a good reference. Good photos taken of different parts of the plant and a whole plant shot is good. Something to help distinguish size, such as an ink pen or ruler to help make comparison, are very useful.

We have an excellent Weed Control Manual for crops, pasture and hay, and ponds online. It is on the website utcrops.com. Recommendations are based on extensive field testing and we have a top group of weed control specialists that make them.

Send me your weed questions to jteague1@utk.edu, along with photos if you have 'em or specimens to drop by the office at 2105 Midland Road in Shelbyville.

We also have an excellent set of resources for lawn weeds as well, and I can provide the links to the turfgrass weed identification site and also the control recommendations. Contact me by email or give me a call and I'll be glad to help.