

**AG NOTES**  
By John Teague  
UT/TSU Extension  
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**GRASS MEETING**

This is the last call on what I consider an important meeting on growing grass. I have said before that we don't farm forage grasses like we do row crops. We tend not to pay attention to soil fertility, growth phases, harvest techniques, grazing management, weed control, and such.

The Alliance for Grassland Renewal was formed in 2012 by partners from the university, government, industry (including producers, seed companies, testing labs) and nonprofit groups. The goal of the non-profit Alliance is to work together in replacing toxic tall fescue grass with a tall fescue that hosts a nontoxic endophyte, sometimes called a "novel" endophyte.

The Alliance provides educational schools to assist producers with successfully converting Kentucky 31 tall fescue to novel endophyte varieties. Schools begin with understanding fescue toxicosis, then walk producers through the conversion process. Conversion topics include establishment practices, fertility needs, smother crops, weed control, stand maintenance, and variety selection with pasture walks to observe different novel endophyte varieties.

The Tennessee workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 18, at the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center at 1000 Main Entrance Drive, Spring Hill. Pre-registration is required. For more information go to our UT Bedford County website, use the links [TN Flyer and Schedule \(PDF\)](#) or [TN Online Registration](#) or contact me at 684-5971 or [jteague1@utk.edu](mailto:jteague1@utk.edu)

**SHEEP AND GOATS**

I will be helping teach a Master Small Ruminant school in April. The original Master Goat Producer series has been revamped to a new Small Ruminant school with goats and sheep both included.

We discuss marketing, management, reproduction, forages, nutrition, animal health, economics, selection, carcass merit, facilities and other topics that will serve both sheep and goat producers. We will have industry speakers as well.

The dates are April 14, 16, 21, 23, 28 and 30. These dates are Tuesdays and Thursdays, times will be 6-9 pm each night. The meetings will be held at the Rutherford County Extension Office complex at 315 John Rice Boulevard, Murfreesboro.

Pre-registration is required by April 7. Forms are posted on our UT Extension Bedford website at <https://extension.tennessee.edu/bedford/Pages/default.aspx> You may contact me at 684-5971 or [jteague1@utk.edu](mailto:jteague1@utk.edu) to discuss the class.

**SOIL FERTILITY**

I'm getting questions on soil fertility on lawns and crops and pastures or hay alike. These crops need nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium as their main nutrients. The other minor minerals are just that, minor and not of great concern in my opinion.

Tied in with these is lime to help with soil acidity. To promote the development of fine hair roots that take up moisture and plant nutrients, the pH level should be in the mid-six range on a scale of 1-14. If soil is too acidic, it literally burns off these fine hair roots and the plants can't prosper. Most of our soils are acidic, the question is how much so and how much finely ground agricultural lime to apply.

Soil testing will give us these answers. It's simple. Samples should be taken from across the field or lawn at several sites and a sample of the samples sent to the lab for analysis and recommendations for the crop or lawn type.

Now is a good time to get this information. We are at the start of crop season or lawn season, the time to apply fertilizers for the new crop. We have sample kits and information sheets at the Extension office at 2105 Midland Road, and we'll get the samples to our lab in Nashville. We are not in the business of selling the nutrients, our job is to tell you what the samples test and how to best feed your plants in an economical way. The tests are \$15 each but the value of the tests is much more.

## **WISDOM**

There are several quotes in this month's Cornerstones issue of Progressive Farmer. They are on planting, very timely since this is the time of planting. Most refer to planting as a life process, not just growing plants. Here are a few for thought.

Dorothy Day said "We plant seeds that will flower as results in our lives, so best to remove the weeks of anger, avarice, envy and doubt, that peace and abundance may manifest for all." Thomas Fuller said "He that plants trees, loves others besides himself."

Og Mandino said "Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later." Stephen Covey said "You always reap what you sow; there is no shortcut." Ben Vereen said "If we plant the right seeds, tomorrow will be better. If you put out good things, then you'll get good things back."

Think about it.

## **THE KIDS**

Piper has been cooking a bunch. Different stuff. She even helped her mother make doughnuts. I wasn't around, but I saw the pictures. The reports I got was that they were really good. I can't wait to try 'em!

Well, I couldn't stand it. Season openers for both boys in baseball was last Saturday. We had to go watch 'em! Both games started at the same time on adjoining fields, and actually both of them batted at the same time once! It was a struggle but we watched both of them!

Ford batted first in the order and hit a double, and then scored later. He played shortstop and left field, stopped the ball a couple of times and had some really cool dance moves to the music on the loudspeaker at times. He kicked the dirt and had a great time. They won 11-7, but who's counting?

A bit more serious, Hank played catcher and his team started in the field first. His team fell behind 7-1 but then started scoring each inning and held the other team to their 7 runs. He batted second in the order and walked first time up, stole second, and then scored on a hit. Second time up he got a hit, stole his way to second, made it to third on an error, and stole home to score again.

His team stayed in the game and ended up tying it in the last inning, and one of his little buddies got the winning run at the last minute! It ended up 8-7, but who's counting?

I am!