

AG NOTES
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UT/TSU Extension
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WE'RE HERE.

I've been asked how we are doing here at the office, and how we've handled the pandemic and the issues associated. It's been a big adjustment.

As a part of the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University, we're bound by their regulations concerning health and social distancing. We've had to take steps that are not our favorites, but we've always been able to talk with folks who needed us.

We use our masks when it's appropriate, we keep a distance even from others here at the office, we control office traffic, and we spray a lot (a lot!) of sanitizers and wash our hands.

We've been able to keep folks certified in some of the areas that require certifications for various reasons, we've helped hold competitions for our 4-Hers, even though some of the events were virtual or reduced attendance. We've had Family and Consumer education club meetings here, and we've had office visits in all areas. We've made some farm and home visits.

We've kept pace with our phone calls, and we've been working on mass emails and social media to get our educational messages out. We've had bugs and plants dropped by or pictures sent to us for diagnostics.

We've worked on recipes and 4-H records, had state winners in 4-H and judging teams to place third and fourth in dairy and livestock in the state contests, and we are waiting on word about our strong consumer decision team's state contest.

We're here, just like we've been serving this county since 1917. We have to do things a little bit differently, but we're here.

If you need us, contact us at 931-684-5971 or email me at jteague1@utk.edu and I'll direct you to the correct staff person.

WEED CONTROL



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This is an odd topic to discuss with farmers. It's not the typical growing season. Note I said typical.

But for folks in the livestock business, who depend on forages that are in the growing season, it is. This is a good time to discuss this past year's weed problems and take advantage of some of the controls that will work on fall germinated weeds.

These weeds are typically (there's that word again) easy to kill with appropriate weed control products. The key is three consecutive days of 60 degrees or above for good chemical action and absorption by the plants.

One of these weeds is the wild buttercup. It's germinated and up and growing. For those who don't know the seedling form, I've attached a photo taken this past weekend. You'll see it in various stages of growth. This one was in an area that was disturbed by dozier work, so the sunlight opportunity was greater than the stuff in grass stubble. But look for it. It's vulnerable to 2,4-D.

Another one is seedling pigweed. It, too, is vulnerable at this stage to the same product. This specimen was in the same area, full sunlight. But it might be much smaller in competing stubble. But look for it, too.

Another weed that is good to work on now is thistle. This one is germinated in the fall, and the rosettes are fairly easy to kill now with the same product. This plant actually grows over a two-year period, but the seedling stage is a good time to attack it.

There are other weeds that need to be treated but these will be better in the late spring or early summer. And the chemistry needed will be different from this one. There are good products out there, so it comes down to timing the application at the plants vulnerable stage.

We'll share more later.

THE KIDS

They're doing great. Ford is back in school in person. The virtual thing was hard on him. He can do it, but some of his skills set needed more personal teacher time. He loves school, but he needs in-person contact. He's a 'people' person. That's a good thing. We'll get him taken care of. And as for his baseball, he hit three (count 'em!) home runs. Well, one of them was on errors, but he batted once and made it home, so who cares how?

Hank will start in-person school in another couple of weeks. He's making it good, and once he figured out that if he failed to turn in all of his work his mother would be notified, he's not letting his work slip. And having to set out two innings for not completing his work on time was probably the best lesson he's learned all year.

Now he's all smiles, was starting pitcher in two games last week, striking out two batters each inning for four innings, got others out by throwing them out, and then he played catcher the rest of the games. Got hits in each of the games, and I figure we'll watch him play in the World Series someday! But the good news is he's getting all of his work turned in on time and doing it well!

And Piper. Well, what can I say? She's in charge! She has learned how to mount and dismount with her little miniature (30 inches) horse, Marshmallow. And she works her with a lead line and exercises her before she rides. She is full of energy, has a hearty laugh, smiles 99% of the time and loves life. Piper brightens up her corner, and we all could learn from her.