

**AG NOTES**  
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March 9, 2021

**BUDGETS**

The 2021 version of the livestock and crop budgets are available at the UT Extension website on the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. I have the link to the department site where the budgets can be found. Contact me at 684-5971 and I'll be glad to send it to you. Here is the link to all of the different crop and animal budgets. <https://arec.tennessee.edu/extension/budgets/>

While they feature averages as indicated by the market, these are used as a guide for farmers to insert their actual input costs and expected production and prices. It is a good tool.

**GARDEN TIPS**

The UT Gardens department provides tips based on the month of the year. Here is the link for that. I'm sharing the March tips. They are things that you might want to try.

Evaluate your vegetable garden plans. Often a smaller garden with fewer weeds and insects will give you more produce. Broccoli, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, lettuce, chard, onions and potatoes should be planted this month.

When night temps get above 40 degrees, feed your pansies with a water-soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20. Now is a great time to remove weeds from your garden beds. Doing so now will make the plant beds look better and prevent them from going to seed; therefore, making fewer weeds next year.

Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to your lawn, if you had crabgrass and other summer weeds in the past. The timing of application is important, and a good indicator is to do it just as forsythia begins to show some color.

Sow nasturtiums this month. Soak seed overnight in water. Cover with three-quarter inches of soil. March is a good time to shop for and add lungwort (Pulmonaria) and Lenten rose (Helleborus) to your garden.

Lungwort is an early flowering shade perennial that often struggles in the heat and humidity of our Tennessee climate, so be aware that *Pulmonaria longifolia* cultivars and hybrids are much more durable. Good selections are 'Roy Davidson,' 'E.B. Anderson,' 'Trevi Fountain' and for its vigor and heat tolerance, 'Diana Claire.'

Climbing roses should not be pruned until after their first flush of growth. Now is a good time to tie the canes to a support before they flush out with spring growth.

**TAX TIPS**

Alan Galloway is one of our farm management specialists and he helps teach tax schools for preparers. He has a few tips to pass on and I'll share them here.

The IRS began accepting 2020 income tax returns February 12, 2021. The IRS highly recommends electronic filing of returns to speed up processing especially if expecting a refund. A paper return mailed to the IRS is likely to be processed very slowly as they are still dealing with returns from the 2019 tax year. Filing early is also recommended to avoid being a victim of fraud.

The two rounds of stimulus checks received by most tax payers are actually advance payments of a special refundable tax credit. In the first payment, most tax payers received \$1200 each plus \$500 for each dependent (a family of four should have received \$3400). The second stimulus payment was for \$600 for each individual and dependent (a family of four receiving \$2400).

On their 2020 income tax return tax payers will report how much was received to reconcile the amount with the IRS. The main purpose is to ensure everyone got all of the stimulus and to provide the stimulus to those who did not receive the full amount. For example: if a child was born (or adopted) after the 2019 taxes were filed the IRS likely did not include another \$500 or \$600 in the stimulus payments. The payment can still be received as a credit on a 2020 tax return. Do not list stimulus payments as income. They are not taxable.

On the 2020 income tax return individuals and couples can deduct up to \$300 in charitable giving. Generally, most tax payers use the standard deduction and do not itemize deductions which prevents getting any deduction for charitable giving. The stimulus bill passed last year allows for nonitemizers to include up to \$300 on their 2020 return. The amount is per return, not per person, on the 2020 return. The deduction in 2020 could save \$30 to \$36 in taxes for tax payers in the 10% to 12% tax brackets. Taxpayers who itemize should keep receipts of donations as the IRS will be watching, especially for higher than average donations.

The standard deductions for 2020 to be reported on the returns due April 15, 2021 are: Single or Married filing separately: \$12,400, Married filing jointly or Qualifying Widow(er): \$24,800, Head of household: \$18,650

These tips are just a part of the first newsletter that Galloway wrote and it can be found on the website at the UT Agricultural and Resource Economics Department at <https://arec.tennessee.edu/2323-2/>

## **THE KIDS**

Hank and Ford are back at baseball. Ford hit a homerun and scored on three times at bat, and his little team won. He's playing second base and does good at that. He's not kicking up the dust near as much as has in the past, actually paying attention and putting effort into it. Ford is fast as lightening and he can get around the bases in a hurry, beating throws to get him out.

Hank is playing with some older boys and that's good, since many of them are all-stars and good at what they do. He's catching some, playing second some, pitching some, and playing the outfield some. He sees this as a chance to learn all the positions and he likes it. He's fast and can catch the ball, and he can throw the ball in from the field, so he's helping on defense. He's getting better at bat, and that's good.

Piper is growing fast. She is in a little people's school and she's learning. Loves to go, and wants to stay. She's learning from her little dance class and her mother is teaching her how to ride horseback. She loves to go to the barn and help feed. She's got personality plus, a big smile, an infectious laugh, and a lot of energy. She's a handful!

Love 'em all!