

AG NOTES
By John Teague
UT/TSU Extension
April 5, 2022

SCHOLARSHIP

The Middle Tennessee Beef Producers, our local cattlemen and cattlemen association, sponsors a scholarship for county seniors who are going to college with a major in agriculture or a related field, or those who will attend a trade school with the same connection to agriculture.

The scholarship applications are available at all of the county high schools, either with the guidance counselors or with the agriculture science teachers. These applications are due April 15, and they can be dropped off here at the Extension office at 2105 Midland Road, Shelbyville. If you have any questions, contact me at 931-684-5971 or jteague1@utk.edu

MASTER BEE KEEPING SERIES

Registration is now open - the link is on Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda's website: <https://epp.tennessee.edu/masterbee> There will also be a post on the webpage for Entomology and Plant Pathology at [EPP's FB page](#)

Dr. Tsuruda is fairly new to our state, but has been a bee expert for some time in other states. We are glad to have her here in Tennessee.

All of the scheduled classes are the Basic class due to overwhelming demand. Advanced classes may be scheduled in the future but we need to make sure those starting out receive research-based information so they will be successful and ready for the Advanced class. Please note that the Basic class is a Master Beekeeping course and counts for Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program.

This is a direct registration process, so all questions and details should be directed to Dr. Tsuruda.

GRASS TETANY

Some times I feel that this name is misleading. It is not a tetanus related issue, but a condition in some cattle when they are grazing lush grass like we have coming on now. The cows are filling up with high moisture grass that is low on dry matter intake (DMI), kinda like we humans do on eating salads when we try to lose weight.

As a result, these cows that are stressed with increased milk production, lack of sufficient DMI, weather stress with drops in temperatures, cold rain, etc. It does not affect all cattle, but it can cause a cow to get down and even die.

The problem is that there can be a sudden drop in magnesium levels, and in simple terms this causes severe interruption of the cow's metabolism. Treatment if caught early is by IV with a calcium/magnesium solution.

Management to prevent this is rather simple, and much more effective than any treatment. Use a cattle mineral containing magnesium oxide to help keep the critical blood levels up during this grazing period. And be sure to feed it like it is recommended. Diluting it with salt or other products will dilute the magnesium intake. Use it like the manufacturer instructs.

IT'S GARDENING TIME!

It is getting time to start gardening, keeping in mind that we could still have some damaging frosts. But some cold-hardy plants could be set out, as long as an effort is made to protect them.

We have an excellent publication on gardening. It is a great reference, especially for the new or recently started gardener. And even for some older experienced gardeners, too!

This publication is titled Growing Vegetables in Home Gardens, PB 901. In fact, I have a list of most if not all of our UT publications that I can share. If you want this list of links, contact me and I'll be glad to email them to you.

FOOD WASTE AWARENESS

The focus for this week is the amount of food that we waste practically everywhere we grow food, process it, ship it, cook it, or serve it, and when we eat it. We do waste a lot of edible food.

This week our office will be collecting canned food for our local Good Samaritan facility to be distributed to those in need. Items needed are soups for eating, but not cream soups for cooking.

Canned proteins like chicken, stew, beans with hot dogs, ravioli, spaghetti and meatballs, spaghetti O's, beefaroni, etc. Remember, these all have to be in the canned form.

Jars of peanut butter and canned fruits are welcomed. Not needed are boxed items, tuna, and canned vegetables.

For more information, call the Extension office at 931-684-5971. Bring your donations to our office a 2105 Midland Road. And thanks in advance for your help.

MULE DAY

Last week I had the honor of being one of four judges at the 2022 Mule Day Auctioneers Contest, which is a lead-up to the World Champion contest. I had heard of it, but never saw it before.

I have worked as a ringman with several auctioneers in my lifetime, and I enjoyed it. Purebred cattle sales, hog sales, horse sales, sheep and goat sales, benefit auctions, regular livestock market sales, I've heard some good ones and not so good ones. But I really enjoy a good sale.

We listened to twenty-three competitors each sell three items they donated to the Rotary Club in Columbia, which raised a lot of money for their charities and scholarships, and these guys were all good. The comments from the other judges were that this was the strongest contest any of them had ever heard, and on any given day any one of them could be the winner. These judges included one who had won it before and two professional auctioneers from across the state.

After scores were tabulated, we then listened to the top ten each sell five items donated for the sale. The judges' cards were then tabulated and the top ten were ranked from the Champion and Reserve Champion to tenth place. The scores ended up in fractions of a point in differences between them.

Bedford County had two great auctioneers in the final round. Our own Josh Houston won the contest, and Adam Johnson was fourth out of the twenty-three contestants. Both are active auctioneers and good at it.

I'm proud of these young guys. And they were two of our good 4-H members!