

# Spencer County Agriculture & Horticulture Newsletter



University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

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December 2024

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving a few days ago. It's always good to gather with our loved ones and catch up with them.

This time of year, I'm really reflective on all of our holidays past and it takes me back as a young child while we were still milking cows on our farm.

One of the new toys that had come out was "Milky the Cow" and she would drink water and then produce "milk." That was one of the best gifts I ever received and I still have her! Wishing you the best this Holiday Season.

As always, feel free to call or email me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bryce Roberts,  
Spencer County Extension Agent for  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

## More Information

As always, if you need more information, feel free to **call me** at 477-2217.

You can also **email me** at broberts@uky.edu or you can **visit my website** to view archived newsletters and news articles. The web address is: [www.spencerextension.com](http://www.spencerextension.com)



## Beginning Producer Session

We had to postpone our November Beginning Producer Session on Water Quality until January 30 beginning at 6 p.m. and it will be held at the Spencer Co. Extension Office.

Dr. Amanda Gumbert will discuss how to care for the water on your farm and the water that flows by your farm. We will talk about how to use soil and water conservation practices that protect your resources and your bottom line.

We do request that you RSVP as a light meal will be served. Please call our office at 477-2217 to pre-register.

## State Apiarist Office Hours

I received this message from Dr. Skidmore and thought I'd pass it along to you.

Starting in January, Dr. Amanda Skidmore – the Kentucky Department of Agriculture State Apiarist, will be hosting a monthly zoom meeting open to anyone that would like to participate. *This will be a way for her to communicate important beekeeping related information and an opportunity for you to ask her questions!* The first meeting will be Thursday, January 23, 2025 from 12pm EST/11am CT. If you would like to participate, please fill out the google form linked here or scan the QR code and she will add you to her email list where you will be able to sign up for the meetings! Sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/hwpyX1giH1Wd2Gmv9>



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## Soil Sample Now

As we are now into fall, this is the best time to sample your fields, gardens, or lawns to see what type and how much fertilizer you need to make the soil as productive as possible. For each sample you want to submit, we need at least one pint (sandwich bag) of dry soil 4-8 inches below the soil surface. Please put your name and sample ID (north lawn, hayfield 2, etc.) on each bag.

Bring those in now so that you can get the results more quickly and in some cases go ahead and apply the fertilizer now so that the soil will be ready for your yard or crops. **Please bring in your samples by December 12 so they will be processed before the Soil Lab Closes until January 2025. Any brought in after this date will be processed in early January.**

This is a free service provided by the Spencer Co. Conservation District. Thanks to them for sponsoring the soil sampling program.

Our office is open normal business hours, but you have the option to drop off your samples anytime you like.

As you pull into our parking lot, please go to the right to the back of our building. You will then see our pavilion and on the pavilion, you will see a black tub with a yellow top to the right of the double doors. Inside the tub, you will find some paperwork that you will need to fill out so that we can properly test your soil. Place the paperwork and samples back into the tub.

I'll review the results and mail them back to you in 2-3 weeks.

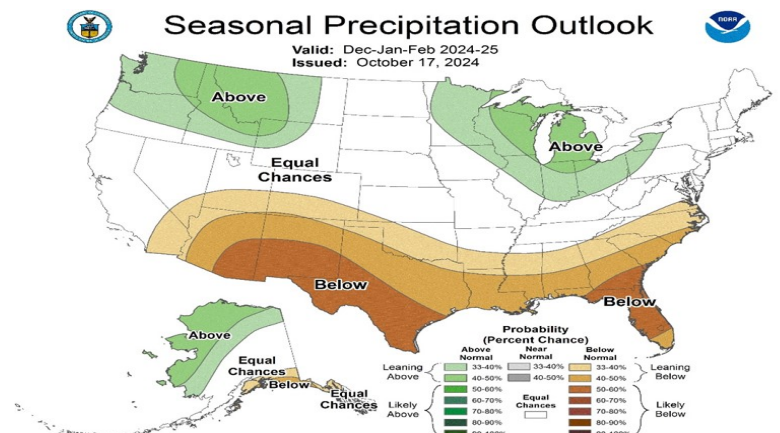
## NWS Winter Outlook

This information is provided by Derrick Snyder – National Weather Service, Paducah, KY.

La Niña conditions are favored to emerge and persist during the winter months, with a 75% chance of La Niña by November to January. La Niña, which is defined by much cooler ocean temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, will likely affect temperature and precipitation through the winter season. A typical La Niña pattern will bring disturbances through the Ohio Valley more frequently than usual, but whether this means Kentucky will see more snow than usual remains unclear. During the last few winters, the most impactful winter storms have occurred when a sudden, sharp transition from above normal to below normal temperatures is forecast, so that will be one item to pay close attention to during the day-to-day forecast.

The long-range winter outlook slightly favors increased chances for warmer than normal conditions across the Commonwealth. The outlook favors equal chances for above, below, or near normal seasonal precipitation (including all rain, snow, and ice) across much of Kentucky, with the exception of far northern Kentucky, where above normal precipitation is slightly favored. Much of the fall months have been marked by persistent drier and warmer than normal conditions across the state, with persistent areas of widespread drought. The winter precipitation outlook suggests some drought improvement is possible through the winter.

# Happy Holidays





# 2025 KENTUCKY FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONFERENCE

Jan. 6th-7th, 2025

Pre-conference events Jan. 5th

Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate  
Lexington, Kentucky

For more information on the Fruit and Vegetable Conference and to download the program and register, please go to: <https://bit.ly/2025FruitVegConf> or scan the QR code:



## Caring for Poinsettias

Poinsettias, with their vibrant red and green foliage, have become synonymous with the holiday season. To ensure these festive plants thrive throughout the season and beyond, it's essential to provide them with proper care. Here are some tips to keep your poinsettias looking healthy and vibrant.

**Location Matters:** Place your poinsettia in a bright, indirect light location. Avoid direct sunlight and drafty areas. Poinsettias prefer temperatures between 60-70°F (15-21°C). Keep them away from cold windows or heat sources, such as radiators, which can cause stress to the plant.

**Watering Wisdom:** Overwatering is a common mistake. Allow the top inch of soil to dry out before watering. When watering, ensure that excess water drains away to prevent root rot. Poinsettias are sensitive to waterlogged soil, so a well-draining potting mix is crucial.

**Maintain Humidity:** Poinsettias thrive in a humid environment. Place a tray filled with water and pebbles near the plant or use a humidifier to maintain the necessary moisture levels. Dry indoor air can lead to leaf drop and diminished vibrancy in the bracts.

**Beware of Cold Drafts:** Poinsettias are native to warm climates, and exposure to cold drafts can harm them. Avoid placing them near doors or windows that may be opened frequently. Sudden temperature drops can cause the leaves to wilt and drop prematurely.

**Fertilize with Care:** During the active growth period, feed your poinsettia with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer every 2-4 weeks. However, avoid over-fertilizing, as excessive nutrients can damage the plant.

**Prune Wisely:** If your poinsettia becomes leggy, prune it after the blooming season. Cut back the stems to encourage bushier growth. Remember to wear gloves, as the milky sap may cause skin irritation for some individuals.

By following these care tips, you can extend the beauty of your poinsettias well beyond the holiday season. With a little attention to their specific needs, these iconic plants can continue to bring joy and color to your home for months to come.





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## Country Ham and Broccoli Grits

**1 tablespoon** olive oil  
**1 pound** fresh broccoli florets  
**½ cup** minced onion  
**¾ teaspoon** crushed red pepper flakes

**2 cloves** minced garlic  
**4 cups** 1% milk  
**1 cup** uncooked quick grits  
**1 cup** 2%, shredded cheddar cheese

**6 ounces** country ham, cut into ½ inch pieces  
**1 large** egg, beaten  
Salt and pepper to taste

**1. Preheat oven** to 375°F. **Coat** 13x9x2 inch baking dish with cooking spray. **Heat** olive oil in a frying pan. **Sauté** broccoli, onion, garlic and red pepper flakes until vegetables are tender. About 5 minutes. **Set aside.**

**2. Heat** milk to a boil in a large saucepan. Slowly, **whisk** in grits. **Reduce heat** and stir continuously until thickened. **Reserve** 2 tablespoons of the cheese.

**3. Remove** from heat, stir in

ham, broccoli mixture, cheese, egg, salt and pepper. **Mix** until well blended. **Pour** into prepared baking dish.

**4. Sprinkle** with reserved cheese. **Bake**, uncovered for 30 minutes, or until top is set and lightly puffed.

**Yield:** 16, ½ cup servings.

**Nutritional Analysis:** 120 calories, 3.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 25 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium, 13 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 9 g protein.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

