

AGRICULTURE NEWS



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Chris Ammerman
Grant County
Cooperative Extension Agent for Agriculture

Cooperative Extension Service

Grant County
105 Baton Rouge Road
Williamstown KY 41097-1210
(859) 824-3355
Fax: (859) 824-3391
<https://grant.ca.uky.edu/>

February 12, 2024

TOP 10 ROUTINE TRACTOR MAINTENANCE TASKS

Source: Tim Stombaugh, extension agricultural engineer

Tractor maintenance tends to fall by the wayside when you get busy. Don't put these tasks off until spring and summer. Performing a simple front-to-back routine every week can help you remember key maintenance points. The manufacturer will have suggested intervals for most of the maintenance tasks, so you won't have to do everything every week. But the routine will prompt you to ask if it is time to do specific tasks.

Be ready for the growing season before it starts with these 10 routine maintenance tasks.

- Inspect the front axles and steering. Is it time to grease the bearings and steering components? Make sure nothing is loose.
- Check the coolant system. Make sure the coolant levels are adequate. Ensure the radiator is not plugged up with debris.
- Look at those belts. Check to see they have the right tension and that they are not cracked. This will prompt you to have a spare on hand.
- The air filter is next. Make sure it is not clogged and robbing power from your engine by not allowing air to get through.
- Check engine oil. You should check this daily, but if you haven't, a good time to do it is during your weekly inspection. Also, check the fluid itself to ensure it doesn't have any contaminants or water in it.
- Pay attention to the battery. If your battery is not a maintenance-free battery, check the liquid levels. Examine the cables for corrosion and make sure they aren't rubbing against the frame components.
- Check clutch and brake linkages. With everyday use, you may not notice linkage getting out of adjustment. Specifically check for free play and other linkage adjustments.
- Look at the hydraulic reservoir. Make sure the fluid is at the correct level and change the fluid when needed. The system provides fluids for remote cylinders, and it the critical lubricating force in your tractor's transmission.
- Test those tires Make sure they are properly inflated.
- Check the back of the tractor. Is it clean? Make sure the hydraulic hose connections are clean to keep dirt out of the system.

These simple procedures can extend the life of your tractors and protect your critical investment. For more information on equipment maintenance, contact the Grant Cooperative Extension Service.

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

AGRIBUSINESSES/FARMER APPRECIATION

BREAKFAST

Where: Grant County Farm Bureau Office
486 Helton Road
Williamstown, KY 41097

When: Saturday, March 23rd
9:00-11:00am

The GCHS FFA would like to invite our hard working folks within our wonderful Agriculture Industry to a complementary appreciation breakfast.

Please RSVP by Friday, March 15th to Erin Butler at 859-322-4745 (text or call) or email erin.butler@grant.kyschools.us.



HARD SURFACES CAN HELP REDUCE MUD

Source: Steve Higgins, director of environmental compliance for the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station

If you have been farming in Kentucky for any length of time, you know the winter weather can make your farm quite muddy. Feeding livestock during the winter or moving equipment over unfrozen, wet ground can exacerbate the amount of mud on the farm.



Mud is not good for several reasons. It can cause topsoil erosion and increase soil compaction. Livestock that have to walk through mud require more feed for energy but actually eat and drink less because they expel so much energy getting to feed and water. Therefore, mud reduces daily average gains. Mud on animal's coats makes it harder for them to regulate their body temperature—increasing the amount of energy they need to generate heat for warmth in the winter and cool themselves in the summer. For horses, mud can increase the risk of slipping and falling and can make walking or standing difficult.

Fortunately, you can reduce the amount of mud on your farm by installing hard traffic pads on areas of your farm that tend to get the most traffic.

You have many choices for materials to use for heavy-use pads. Some of these include concrete, plastic traffic grid and geotextile fabric and rock. The material you use depends on many factors, including material availability, installation costs and the size of your operation. Except for horses which require softer surfaces, concrete pads are by far the strongest, easiest to clean and lowest maintenance material for most livestock producers to use. Concrete pads should be placed in areas that receive heavy animal traffic, such as around waterers, adjacent to feed bunks, in holding areas and near gates. While the installation costs of concrete pads may be higher than other materials, you are going to save money in the long term, because you reduce the amount of wasted feed and get better gains on your livestock.

The thickness of the pad will depend on the type of livestock you have, stocking density and whether the area also gets a lot of equipment traffic. Areas with livestock traffic require a pad that is at least 4 inches thick placed on several inches of gravel. Trucks, tractors and other heavy equipment need concrete pads at least 5 to 6 inches thick.

A hilltop or sloped surface is often the best location for a hard surface pad, as they tend to be away from most waterways and will allow nearby vegetation to filter stormwater runoff. Make sure the location also drains away from feed bunkers, waterers and roads.

Concrete pads need to have a solid foundation to be successful. Prepare the site by removing topsoil until you reach soil that is easily compacted and make sure the area is level. Use at least 6 inches of compacted dense grade aggregate to provide a solid base for a concrete pad. Inadequate foundation preparation can cause a concrete pad to fail or freeze or damage water pipes.

Horse owners should similarly prepare their sites but should construct their pads using geotextile fabrics followed by 6-inch layer of crushed limestone and finished with 2-to-3 inches of dense grade aggregate. Create a more durable surface by compacting the dense grade aggregate using a small, smooth-drum roller like those used for asphalt projects.

Next Meeting

- **March 11, 2024***
 - **Meeting at 7 PM**
 - **Meal at 7:30**
 - **Speaker at 8**

Dr. Kinman from Bluegrass Vet, the new veterinarian in Grant County, will be with us at 8pm to talk about vaccinations and bull testing.

Please Register

Due to planning for the meal, we ask you call to register for the meeting.



859-824-3355

Location



Kentucky Farm Bureau,
Lower Level
486 Helton Road
Williamstown, KY 41097

*Please notice that Cattlemen will be meeting on the **SECOND** Monday of March instead of the regular first Monday.

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.
University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

TIPS FOR BUYING LOCAL MEAT

Source: Gregg Rentfrow, meat science extension specialist

Many people are interested in purchasing local meat, because they want to support local farmers and give a boost to their local economy. This year, some may be interested in buying local simply because they cannot find the types of meat or the cuts they want at the grocery stores due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Kentucky, you can find producers selling local beef, pork, lamb and poultry at farmers markets, roadside stands, directly off the farm and online. In some cases, you may personally know the producer you are buying from, but that's not always possible. As with purchasing from any unknown seller or entity for the first time, some people may feel a little uneasy. Here is some information to help you feel confident in your local meat purchases.

By law, all meat must be inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture prior to it being sold. All registered farmers markets and roadside stands require their producers to have USDA certification. If you are purchasing from another venue or want reassurance that the meat has been inspected by the USDA, it is fine to look for the USDA inspection legend or ask to see it. If they are selling meat directly from their farm, producers should have informed the local health department. The health department should have inspected the operation to make sure they are practicing safe food storage and handling practices in addition to the USDA product inspection. As a customer, you can ask to see their health department score. You can also ask the producer questions about the farm or even ask to see their animals.

People look for different characteristics in meat when they look for quality, but probably the easiest indicator of freshness is the "sniff test". If the meat smells "off" or pungent, it may not be a good idea to buy it. Since we are very visual creatures, color can be an important indicator of quality, but realize that meat colors can change with packaging. For example, fresh beef tends to be red in color, but when it is vacuumed sealed in packaging, it can turn purple. Both are safe to eat. With that said, green is not a good color for any type of meat, and you should avoid it.

Once you have made a meat purchase, it is important to continue to take proper food safety precautions to ensure the meat stays fresh. For this reason, your meat should be one of the last purchases you make while out running errands. It is important for you to get it home and in the refrigerator or freezer to prevent bacteria that can cause food-borne illnesses from forming. Different types of meat have different storage times. If refrigerated, ground beef, ground lamb and chicken should be used within one to two days. Refrigerated pork and lamb chops, lamb roasts and lamb steaks should be used within three to five days. If frozen in an airtight container, meat can last indefinitely, but the quality will diminish the longer it is frozen. To find optimum quality times for a particular frozen meat, visit the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service's website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home>.



PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING



2 TRAININGS
AVAILABLE:

Thursday,
March 7
10am and 7pm

Please call 859-824-3355
to register.

Classes will be at our
temporary office space,
1212 N. Main Street,
Williamstown, in
Midway Plaza

MARCH AND APRIL

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please call (859) 824-3355 and register your attendance in classes.

Feb 22	OSU Rancher's Lunchtime Series	Successful Timed AI	1:00 pm
	https://okstate-edu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wtA11Y26QWORT8N9emDkQ#/registration		
Feb 22	Grant County Farmer's Market	GCFB Helton Street	7:00 pm
Feb 22	Forages for Equine	Owen Co Extension	6:00 pm
	Call 502-732-7030 to register		
Mar 7	Pesticide Applicator Training	Temp 1212 N Main	10:00 am
Mar 7	Pesticide Applicator Training	Temp 1212 N Main	7:00 pm
Mar 11	KY Backyard Beekeepers	Open Door Baptist, Dry Ridge Rd.	6:30 pm
Mar 11	Grant County Cattlemen's	GCFB Helton Street	7:00 pm
Mar 11	Vaccinations and Bull Testing	GCFB Helton Street	8:00 pm
	Featuring Bluegrass Veterinarian, Dr. Jessie Kinman		
Mar 22	Farmer Appreciation Breakfast	GCFB Helton Street	9-11 am
	Sponsored by GCHS FFA		
Mar 26	Weed Management for Pastures	Temp 1212 N. Main	7:00 pm
Mar 28	Grant County Farmer's Market	GCFB Helton Street	7:00 pm
Apr 1	Grant County Cattlemen's Association	GCFB Helton Street	7:00 pm
Apr 9	Lawn Care Basics	Temp 1212 N. Main	7:00 pm
Apr 11	KY Backyard Beekeepers	Open Door Church, Dry Ridge Rd	6:30 pm
Apr 15	Market Outlook and BQCA	Temp 1212 N. Main	7:00 pm
Apr 25	Grant County Farmer's Market	GCFB Helton Street	7:00 pm
Apr 29	Managing Diseases in the Garden	Temp 1212 N. Main	7:00 pm

Non-Discrimination Policy:

The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and other related matter should be directed to

Equal Opportunity Office, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Kentucky, Room S-105, Agriculture Science Building, North Lexington, Kentucky 40546,

the UK Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity, 13 Main Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0032 or

US Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

Grant County
 105 Baton Rouge Road
 Williamstown, KY 41097

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED
 STANDARD
 US POSTAGE PAID
 WILLIAMSTOWN, KY
 PERMIT # 082

Ratatouille Soup

- 1 small eggplant, peeled and cubed
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 pound lean ground chuck
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 medium zucchini, chopped
- 1 medium bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely minced garden style pasta sauce
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 cup uncooked whole grain pasta
- 1 medium bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely minced garden style pasta sauce
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 cup uncooked whole grain pasta
- 1 14.5 ounce can low sodium beef broth

minutes. **Add** the beef broth, pasta sauce, water and basil. Bring to a **boil**, then reduce heat to medium-low, **cover** and **simmer** for 10 minutes. **Add** the pasta. Raise heat to medium. Bring to a slow **boil** and **cook**, stirring occasionally for 10-12 minutes, or until the pasta is tender.
Yield: 12, 1 cup servings
Nutritional Analysis: 210 calories, 10 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 680 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 13 g protein

Place the cubed eggplant in a colander. **Toss** with the salt and let set for 20-25 minutes. Thoroughly **rinse** in cold water and press as much water out of the eggplant as possible. Set aside. In a large heavy pot, **brown** the ground beef over medium heat until crumbly and no longer pink. **Drain.** Raise the heat to medium-high. **Add** the canola oil to the same pot. **Return** the beef to the pot. **Add** the zucchini, bell pepper, onion and garlic. **Cook** together for 5-7 minutes, until onion is translucent. **Add** the eggplant to the mixture and continue to **cook** for 5



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

