Cooperative Extension Service
LaRue County
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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2025

AGENT NOTES

Summer is in full swing we have been blessed with rainfall and warm weather the past 30 days. However, with prosperity often challenges arise as well. Crops are in good condition throughout the county, but it is still imperative that scouting for disease and insects still occur. Management of disease will help to maintain crop health and protect yields. On the livestock heat stress has effected performance the past few weeks, but managing shade and providing fresh clean water will help to combat those issues. With summer starting off with signs of drought combated with the late summer rainfall, summer annual forage species have responded with added growth and performance. In this instance producers need to be aware of nitrate concentrations in those forages, through testing we can mange those situations were there are concerns. As always I hope this finds everyone in a good place for fall harvest and reach out to the Extension Service for any needs that may arise.

Sincerely,

Adam Thomas
LaRue County Extension Agent
for Agriculture & Natural Resources Education
adam.thomas@uky.edu

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **August 9th - Agstravaganza- on the Square in Hodgenville**
- **Aug. 12th - LaRue County Cattleman's Meeting - 7pm EDT**
- **Aug. 14th-24th - KY State Fair, Louisville**
- **August 26th - Rinse and Return- Southern States, Hodgenville**
- **August 29th - Field Crop Pest Management & Spray Clinic, Princeton**
- **Sept 9th - LaRue County Cattleman's Field Day, Voyager Angus Farm- Buffalo**

Timely Tips

Cooperative Extension Service

FORAGE

- Do NOT graze cool-season pastures closer than 3 to 4 inches. This will help to conserve soil moisture and prevent overheating of the crowns.
- If drought conditions limit pasture growth, close off pastures and feed hay in a sacrifice area.
- Graze warm season annuals or perennials to allow cool season grasses to recover and to avoid endophyte -infected fescue.
- After first good rain in August, seed winter annuals (such as small grains, ryegrass, crimson clover, and brassicas) for late fall and early spring grazing.
- Plant alfalfa after first good rain in August to allow sufficient size going into winter and reduce potential for sclerotinia damage.
- Consider renovation of cool-season grass pastures that have thinned.
- In mid-August to early September, exclude livestock from pastures to be stockpiled and apply 60 lb N/A and any needed lime, P and K.

UK Forage News

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

Lexington, KY 40506

FARMERS MARKET

LaRUE COUNTY
Farmers Market

AUGUST 7TH
AUGUST 14TH
AUGUST 21ST
9 AM-1 PM
*UNTIL SELL OUT

EXTENDED August

MARKET at the EXTENSION OFFICE

LaRue County Extension Service
807 Old Elizabethtown Rd., Hodgenville - (270) 358-3401

MARKET THURSDAYS

See you at the market!

BEEF BASH

Save the dates!

8/12
9/9 *field day
10/14
11/11
12/9
1/13
2/10
3/10
4/14
5/12

7 pm

LaRue County Extension Service

LaRUE COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

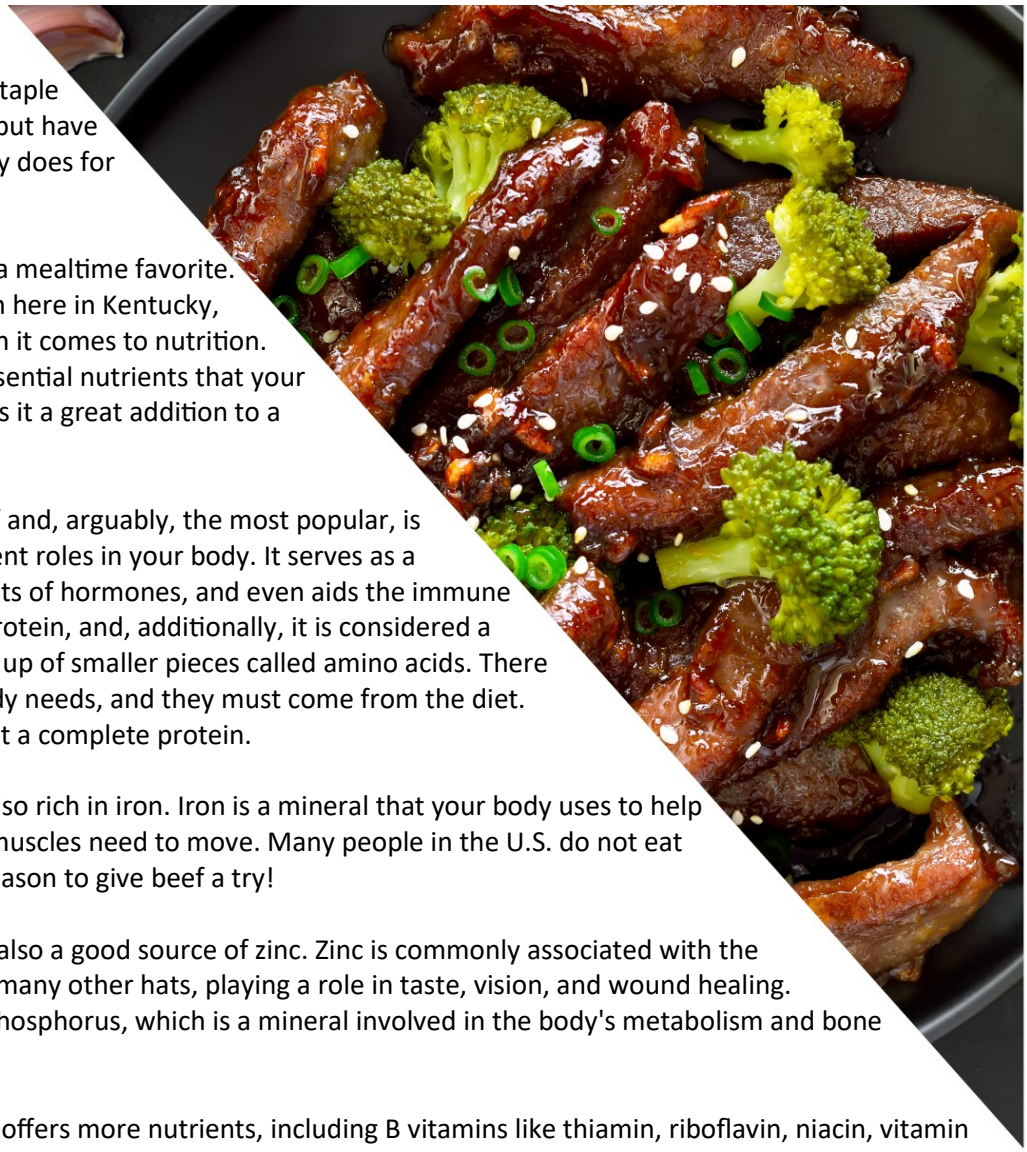
2025-2026 meeting schedule

- SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH -

NUTRITIOUS & DELICIOUS:

Why Beef Deserves a Spot on Your Plate

Breanna Vessels



We all know beef as a household staple found on countless dinner plates, but have you ever wondered what it actually does for your body?

As it turns out, it's more than just a mealtime favorite. Beef is commonly raised and eaten here in Kentucky, but it often gets undervalued when it comes to nutrition. However, it contains lots of the essential nutrients that your body needs to function. This makes it a great addition to a balanced diet!

One important component of beef and, arguably, the most popular, is protein. Protein plays many different roles in your body. It serves as a building block for muscles, elements of hormones, and even aids the immune system. Beef is a good source of protein, and, additionally, it is considered a complete protein. Protein is made up of smaller pieces called amino acids. There are nine amino acids that your body needs, and they must come from the diet. Beef has all nine of these, making it a complete protein.

Beef, and red meat in general, is also rich in iron. Iron is a mineral that your body uses to help carry oxygen around, which your muscles need to move. Many people in the U.S. do not eat enough iron, giving you another reason to give beef a try!

More surprisingly, though, beef is also a good source of zinc. Zinc is commonly associated with the immune system, but it also wears many other hats, playing a role in taste, vision, and wound healing. In addition, beef contains lots of phosphorus, which is a mineral involved in the body's metabolism and bone and teeth health.

In case that isn't enough, beef still offers more nutrients, including B vitamins like thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12. B vitamins are involved in many different jobs in the body. Most importantly, though, they are used for energy production, skin and eye health, red blood cell formation, and nervous system maintenance.

Last, but certainly not least, beef contains two more nutrients: selenium and choline. Selenium is a trace mineral, meaning you need it in small amounts, and is an antioxidant. An antioxidant is a substance that protects the body from damage, making selenium crucial in your diet. Choline, on the other hand, is another nutrient that is responsible for keeping your brain and nerves functioning.

With all that being said, adding beef to your plate isn't just delicious- it's nutritious, too! Ready to bring the benefits of beef to your table? Visit the Kentucky Beef Council website for smart cuts guides, helpful tips, cooking tricks, and recipes that will make you say, "Holy Cow!". You've *herd* the facts— now go and beef up your meals!

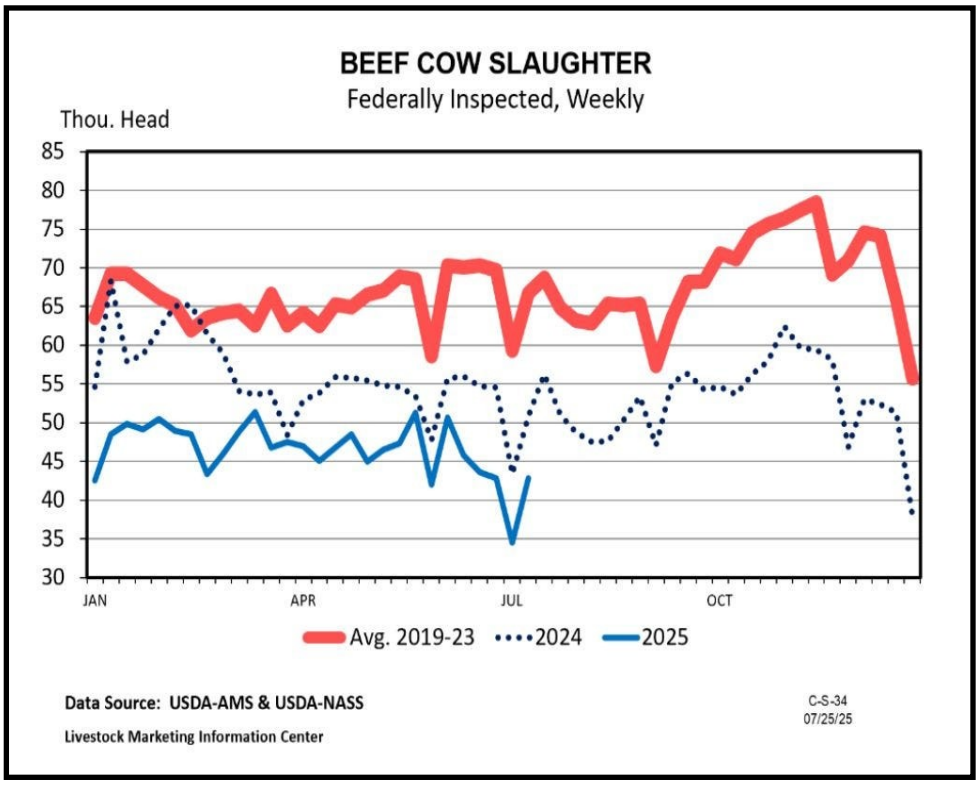
References

Bastin, S. (2022, February). Nutritional Value of Beef. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.
Beef's Nutrients. (2025). Kentucky Beef Council - Beef's Nutrients. Kentucky Beef Council. https://www.kybeef.com/health-wellness/beefs-nutrients

WITH LIMITED HEIFER RETENTION, BEEF COW SLAUGHTER WILL BE THE INVENTORY DRIVER FOR THE REST OF 2025

By: Kenny Burdine, University of Kentucky

Last week's two USDA reports were much anticipated as they provided further information about the level of beef heifer retention at the national level. Heifers, as a percentage of on-feed inventory, were estimated at 38.1% in the July Cattle-on-Feed report. This is not a number that suggests widespread retention. And the number of heifers held for beef cow replacement in the mid-year inventory report was estimated at 3.7 million head, a decrease of 100,000 heifers from July 1, 2023. I wanted to dig into that number a little deeper this week and frame it a bit with the ongoing discussion of beef cow slaughter.



I prefer to think about beef heifer retention as a percentage of beef cow inventory. A higher percentage suggests expansion of beef cow numbers is likely in the future and a smaller percentage suggests the opposite. As a percentage of estimated July 1 beef cow inventory, heifers held for beef cow replacement came in at 12.9%. That was down slightly from two years ago and is the smallest percentage in the mid-year dataset, which goes back to 1973 (see figure below). This was yet another sign that heifer retention has been very slow to develop during this cycle.

It is also important to recognize that there is some fluidity with respect to heifer development. All those heifers intended for replacement will not become cows and some heifers in the system that are not currently intended for replacement will end up getting bred. On the other hand, cow slaughter is much more definitive. Cows that have been slaughtered are gone and all that can change is the pace of beef cow slaughter going forward. Through the first six months of 2025, beef cow slaughter was down by more than 17% from the first six months of 2024. If that trend continues through the end of this year, nearly 500,000 fewer beef cows would be slaughtered in 2025.

As I write this in early August, there is still a lot of time left in 2025 and potential still exists for the pace of beef cow slaughter to increase. Up to this point, data suggests that cow-calf operators have generally been holding on to cows longer and selling heifers calves. However, cull cow prices continue to be strong and are attempting to pull more cows into the beef system. Since the majority of cow-calf operations calve in the spring and wean calves in the fall, the rest of this year will be interesting to watch for beef cow harvest patterns. I continue to expect a slight increase in beef cow inventory to start 2026, but how significant that increase is, will be determined by the pace of beef cow slaughter for the balance of 2025.

Cooperative Extension Service

SURVIVING HIGH PRICE$

WEBINAR SERIES

WEDNESDAYS: 2-3 P.M. ET | 1-2 P.M. CT | 12-2 P.M. MT | 11-12 P.M. PT

Join us for a 6-week series to learn about & discuss the uniqueness of the current cattle cycle so we can better understand how to help our producers manage their operations through record-high prices!

Speakers will include Extension economists and specialists from across the United States.

DATES	TOPICS
September 10	Industry Margins & Beef Demand
September 17	Differences in this Cattle Cycle & Import Dynamics
October 1	Risk Management & What To Do With Profits
October 8	Operation Resiliency & Contract Grazing
October 22	Integrated Crop-Livestock Systems & How Not to Need a Hay Baler
October 29	Defining "Better Genetics" & Economics of Reproduction Strategies

Visit this link or scan the QR Code to register: bit.ly/register-for-SHPwebinar

UF IFAS Extension University of Florida · Mississippi State University Extension · OSU Extension · Clemson Cooperative Extension · UTIA Institute of Agriculture · University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment · eXtension · University of Arkansas · Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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STOCKPILE FORAGES TO EXTEND THE GRAZING SEASON

Source: Ray Smith, UK plant and soil sciences professor

Good pasture management can help extend the grazing season further into the fall and early winter. Take advantage of good growing conditions to obtain high-quality pasture for late fall and early winter grazing. Stockpiling helps broaden the pasture season for the cow herd, reduces feed and labor costs by lowering the amount of hay needed and provides an ideal location for the beef cow herd to winter and calve.

It's easy to begin to stockpile. Simply take cattle off pastures in late summer, apply nitrogen fertilizer and allow grass to accumulate growth through late fall. Then, put cattle on the pasture one section at a time until they've finished grazing the whole field.

Take soil samples for analyses to determine pasture requirements for phosphorus, potassium and lime. You'll need this information to renovate with clover in the spring.

Tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass are the best grasses to stockpile in Kentucky. Both retain green color and forage quality late into winter, are somewhat resistant to low temperatures and form a good sod. Tall fescue produces more fall and winter growth than Kentucky bluegrass.

Nitrogen and moisture are critical to successfully stockpiling grasses.

Apply nitrogen in mid-August. Topdress at the rate of 40 to 60 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre for Kentucky bluegrass. Use 40 to 100 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre on tall fescue.

Numerous studies show wise fertilizer use and timing results in high yields during fall and early winter. Tall fescue crude protein and digestibility are better during fall and early winter than at any other time of the year.

Yields can be very good when water is available during the stockpiling period. Tall fescue can produce two tons of dry matter up to late November. With adequate water, producers can achieve 25 pounds of dry matter for each pound of nitrogen used.

After frost, let cattle graze grass-legume fields quickly before plants deteriorate. Then, put animals on the stockpiled grass fields. For the most efficient use of stockpiled fields, establish a strip grazing system by using a temporary electric fence to section off areas of the field. The first grazing area should have water and mineral sources. When animals have grazed this area, move the fence to open a new strip. Repeat this process until the entire field has been grazed.

Stockpiled grass is an excellent choice for fall-calving cows because it can be used to meet high nutritional needs after calving and during the breeding season. Grazing stockpiled grasses may offer the most benefit to spring-calving cows in thin body condition during the fall. Growing, weaned cattle can be grazed on stockpiled fescue. Using stockpiled grasses helps lower feed costs when backgrounding cattle.

For more information about pasture management and other topics, contact the Extension office.

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

HAY TESTING DAYS

We will again be offering free hay (dry and high moisture) testing this year. If you'd like to get on the list we will need to know by September 30th. We will do the testing within the first couple weeks of October. Contact the LaRue County Extension Office at 270-358-3401 or email adam.thomas@uky.edu to get on the list.

"FARM BILL" COMPONENTS FINALLY REACH THE FINISH LINE

By Will Snell | Extension Professor

After more than three years of debate and two annual extensions, earlier this month, several components of the traditional farm bill that address commodity and risk management programs finally became law as part of a budget reconciliation bill better known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. By rule, this legislation included only parts of the farm bill that impact the federal budget (i.e., U.S. government revenues and expenses.) Other proposed non-budget issues that have been a part of discussions related to the farm bill, such as reauthorization of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), addressing animal housing issues, hemp regulations, modifications to USDA loan programs, rural broadband assistance, enabling permanent price-support status for certain ag commodities, among other issues may be considered later this year in a separate piece of legislation.

The timing of the commodity provisions within the budget reconciliation legislation is critical with anticipated financial losses in grain farming this year given depressed grain prices and relatively high input prices. However, government payments for eligible farm bill crops planted this year will not occur until fall of 2026, following the completion of the 2025-2026 marketing year.

The two primary crop safety net programs, the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs along with the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program. are retained in this legislation through 2031. Farmers have two options within the ARC program – a county revenue-based program (ARC-CO) and an individual farm revenue program (ARC-IC). Historically most farmers selecting the ARC program have chosen the county-based revenue program. ARC-CO program payments are triggered when the actual county crop revenue of a covered commodity is less than the ARC-CO revenue guarantee for the crop. PLC program payments are triggered when the average U.S. market price for the covered crop in any given year falls below the established effective reference price for that crop. (Click here for an explanation of ARC/PLC payment calculations.) The budget reconciliation bill which became law on July 4th allows farmers to receive the higher payment between PLC or ARC for the 2025 crop, irrespective of their program selection chosen earlier this year. For 2026 to 2031, farmers will be required to make an annual choice between PLC and ARC.

A few of the major changes in this Act related to the farm bill are the following:

- Increases statutory reference (safety net) prices beginning with the 2025 crop for program commodities (primarily corn, soybeans and wheat in Kentucky).
  - Corn -- $4.10/bu (+$0.40/bu or +11%)
  - Soybeans -- $10.00/bu (+$1.60/bu or +19%)
  - Wheat – ($6.35/bu (+$0.85/bu or +15%)

- Beginning with the 2031 crop, the reference price for all covered commodities will increase 0.5% annually and cannot exceed 113% of the statutory reference price (down from 115% under the previous farm bill).

- Increases the ARC-CO coverage guarantee from 86% to 90% of benchmark revenue and caps the ARC-CO payments at 12% of benchmark revenue (up from a 10% cap under the previous farm bill) for the 2025-2031 crops.

- Increases the effective price calculation of the PLC program to 88% of the Olympic average of market prices for the five previous marketing years, excluding the high and low prices (versus 85% under the previous farm bill).

Allows for an increase of up to 30 million base (payment) acres in the U.S. under the ARC/PLC programs beginning with the 2026 crop year. This one-time, voluntary adjustment will be reduced on a pro rata basis if requested new base acres across the U.S. exceeds 30 million acres. A University of Illinois Farm Doc base acre analysis provides an "indicator" that this could add nearly 700,000 base acres (+22%) to Kentucky's existing base acres for covered crops. Another evaluation by the University of Missouri's Rural and Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center indicates that Kentucky could add well over 1,000,000 base acres (+37% to +44%) under a couple of different scenarios depending on how USDA implements this provision. Of course, there are many complications surrounding this policy change for which USDA will have to address in deciding the future allocation of base acre expansion.

- Allows for an update of dairy production history under the DMC program to the highest annual milk marketings during any one of the 2021, 2022 or 2023 calendar years with coverage under Tier 1 expanded to the first 6 million pounds (up from 5 million pounds in the previous farm bill).

- Increases payment limits to $155,000 (up from $125,000 under the previous farm bill), adjusted annually for inflation. The Act allows eligible farmers to be exempt from the current $900,000 adjusted gross income (AGI) limit if one derives more than 75% of their average gross income from farming.
Increases USDA crop insurance premium subsidies and coverage levels, along with increasing premium assistance available to beginning farmers extending their time to qualify as a beginning farmer from five years to ten years.

- Creates a pilot insurance program for contract poultry growers to receive index-based insurance to cover higher utility cost caused by extreme weather.
Extends existing USDA conservation programs to 2031 and provides for annual funding increases. However, overall funding for conservation programs will be affected by the cancellation of conservation projects under the Inflation Reduction Act, and implementation may be challenged due to ongoing staffing issues.

- Effectively doubles USDA trade promotion programs designed to promote and expand U.S. ag and food exports.

- Provides additional funds to fight animal diseases and feral swine, while expanding coverage under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

- Increases funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and provides additional funds to support organic agriculture.

In addition to addressing commodity and risk management programs, the One Big Beautiful Act also address other non-farm bill components of interest to agriculture, including permanently increasing the federal estate and gift tax exemption to $15 million per individual (indexed for inflation), capital gains benefits for farmland owners who sell the land to an active farmer committing to keep the land in active production for ten years, and expanding business expensing limits and depreciation allowances. Future issues of the Economic & Policy Update newsletter will address these issues.

Snell, W. "'Farm Bill' Components Finally Reach the Finish Line." *Economic and Policy Update* (25):7, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, July 30, 2025.

RINSE & RETURN

FOLIAR FUNGICIDE COSIDERATIONS FOR SOYBEAN

By Carl Bradley

As full-season soybean fields in Kentucky approach the R3 (beginning pod) developmental stage, it generally is time to consider an application of a foliar fungicide to protect against foliar diseases. Rainfall is an important factor to consider when making a foliar fungicide application decision, as high rainfall accumulation is one of the main drivers that can increase the risk of foliar diseases. Besides rainfall, the risk of foliar diseases also is affected by other factors such as the soybean variety planted and the cropping history in a field.

Figure 1. *Symptoms of frogeye leaf spot on soybean leaves (Photo: Carl Bradley, UK).*

Frog-eye leaf spot & target spot

The primary foliar diseases of concern that have shown the ability to cause economic yield losses in Kentucky recently are frogeye leaf spot (Figure 1) and target spot (Figure 2). Both diseases are influenced greatly by the soybean variety that is being grown. Some varieties are highly resistant to frogeye leaf spot, while others may be susceptible; therefore, it is important to be aware of the disease ratings of the varieties planted in your fields. Target spot is a relatively new disease to Kentucky and had a large impact on soybean yields in a few limited fields on very susceptible varieties a few years ago. More recently, it appears that fewer varieties have high susceptibility to this disease, which helps reduce the risk of target spot. Regardless, it is still important to continue scouting for this disease, as information on specific varieties' susceptibility to target spot is limited.

Figure 2. *Symptoms of target spot affecting a soybean leaflet (Photo: Carl Bradley, UK).*

Septoria brown spot & Cercospora leaf blight

Other foliar diseases that generally do not have an economic impact on soybean but can in certain years are Septoria brown spot (Figure 3) and Cercospora leaf blight (Figure 4). In general, symptoms of Septoria brown spot are often only on leaves in the lower canopy, which has little impact on yield. However, in years with frequent rainfall throughout the season, spores of the Septoria brown spot pathogen may splash up to the upper canopy and cause some upper leaves to prematurely defoliate. When this happens, some yield loss can be attributed to Septoria brown spot. Although Cercospora leaf blight may occur in Kentucky, the appearance of this disease generally has been later in the season, which has often been too late to cause yield reductions.

Septoria brown spot & Cercospora leaf blight

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Figure 3. *Brown lesions and yellowing on the leaf edges caused by the Septoria brown spot pathogen of soybean (Photo: Carl Bradley, UK).*

Determining risk

A soybean disease "score card" is available in the resources section of the Take Action website, which is titled, "Know Your Disease Risk in Soybeans: What's Your Score?" This scorecard can be used on a field-by-field basis to help determine what the risk is for foliar disease development and can help make fungicide application decisions. In addition to the "score card," a new frogeye leaf spot risk model has been developed that will determine the risk of frogeye leaf spot based on weather data. This new tool is available as part of the Crop Disease Forecasting Tool on the Crop Protection Network.

Figure 4. *"Purpling" of soybean leaf caused by the Cercospora leaf blight pathogen (Photo: Carl Bradley, UK).*

Fungicide selection

If the decision is made to apply a foliar fungicide, it is important to choose a product that has efficacy against the spectrum of diseases that might affect your field. It is also important to choose a product that contains multiple modes of action to help manage the potential of fungicide resistance. Isolates of the frogeye leaf spot, Septoria brown spot, target spot, and Cercospora leaf blight pathogens that are resistant to strobilurin (quinone outside inhibitors, "QoI", FRAC Group 11) fungicides are present in Kentucky, so fungicide resistance is an important consideration. To help make a decision on which fungicide products might work best for the diseases you intend to manage, the "Fungicide Efficacy for Control of Soybean Foliar Disease" publication on the Crop Protection Network can provide information that will help with that decision.

Cooperative Extension Service | Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Extension Office will be *Closed* Labor Day, 9/1/25

Cooperative Extension Service