

Calendar of Events

- Feb 11 Navigating Our Beef Industry Program by Farm Credit, Dinner and Program 5 to 8:30 PM, Alphin-Stuart Center, VA Tech. No charge but must RSVP to Smyth County Farm Bureau by February 7th.
- Feb 12-13 VA State Feed Association Meeting, Roanoke VA please contact Mr. Bob Threewitts at (540) 908-7767, email: vsfa@hotmail.com, or Dr. Gonzalo Ferreira at (540) 231-1965, email: gonf@vt.edu.
- Feb 12-15 National Farm Machinery Show, Louisville KY
- Feb 13 Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association Annual Meeting, Washington County Fairgrounds, 6:30 pm
- Feb 17 Farm Management Meeting, Farm Bureau Building, Marion Topic: Woodland Management
- Feb 21 Deadline to consign calves to the March 25 VQA Calf Sale
- Feb 22 Women in Ag Conference, Lebanon, VA
- Mar 16 Farm Management Meeting, Farm Bureau Building, Marion
- Mar 25 VQA Calf Sale, Tri State Market, Abingdon 7 PM
- Mar 28 VA BCIA Bull Sale, Wytheville
- Mar 30 VQA Steer Take-Up, Tri State Livestock Market
- April 1 VQA Heifer Take-Up, Tri State Livestock Market
- April 24 Watershed Field Day for 6th Graders, Chilhowie High School



Just Look at Everything That's Going On!

A great way to stay current is to pick up a Saturday edition of the **Smyth County News**. In it, you will find an "Upcoming Events" section at the end of all of Andy's weekly articles!



If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Andy Overbay or Pam Testerman at (276) 783-5175/TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

Serving You by Reporting and Listening!

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Smyth County Agriculture Extension Newsletter! My goal is to continue to provide you with a newsletter packed with information at least once each quarter. Let us know what you think. If you have ideas for articles or topics of interest, please contact us at (276) 783-5175.



Got Trees? Woodland Owner Program set for Monday, February 17

Very few property boundaries in our part of the world are lacking of any trees. Many times woodlands comprise a significant amount of the acreage of our fields and farms. That said, very few people actually know how to manage their timber to optimize its value to the landowner.

In response to these facts, our next farm management meeting will focus on the basics of woodland ownership. We will be holding this meeting at the Smyth County Farm Bureau Building (354 South Main Street, Marion) on Monday, February 17, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Bill Worrell, Extension Forestry Agent for the SW District will be conducting our program and as always, we will be enjoying a steak dinner with all the fixings for \$15 per person.



Please call the office at 276 783-5175 to help us plan our meal and be sure to come out and improve your ability to manage your trees!

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Navigating our Beef Industry with Alternative Feeding and Marketing Meeting Alphin-Stuart Arena, VA Tech

On Tuesday, February 11 at the Farm Credit of Virginia Knowledge Center is hosting a meeting with a variety of industry representatives and producers who will talk about how they are navigating the current beef industry climate or helping producers through ways to value add to their product. We are excited to have speakers who are practicing intensive grazing systems with great success, alternative feeding techniques, offer ways to mitigate risk and alternative marketing options.

Enjoy a catered meal from 5-6pm and be ready at 6pm to hear from four panelists who will talk briefly about what they do. After that we will open the floor up for questions to all or some of our panel members. Our speakers include Jason Wisecarver, Crop Insurance Specialist with MidAtlantic Farm Credit, Callie Carson, cattle producer in North Carolina and NC Farm Bureau Field Service Representative, Gabe Pent, Superintendent of the Shenandoah Valley AREC and Jeannie Layton- Dudding, Animal Science Extension Agent in Giles County. Please contact the Smyth County Farm Bureau Young Farmers (276) 783-6148 for more information. You must register by February 7th.

Women In Ag Conference

Women in Agriculture Conference will take place on Saturday, February 22nd, 2020 at the Russell County Government Center in Lebanon, VA. The Women in Agriculture Conference is designed for anyone interested to come learn in an atmosphere where all questions are good questions & welcomed!

Registration will start at 9:30 am and the event will conclude by 3:00 pm. Lunch is included with registration and a trade show will take place. Registration before February 19th is \$20 for a single person and \$10 for a youth. To register, please go to <https://register.ext.vt.edu/> then select Programs then Agriculture then select Woman in Agriculture Conference or mail directly according to brochure directions. After February 19th, registration is \$30 for single and \$15 for youth. Registration will be taken at the door. Those interested may also contact their local Extension Office to receive a brochure.

AFCA Annual Meeting Set for February 13

The annual meeting of the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association has been set for February 13, 2020 at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Abingdon. If you participate in our VQA Sales, you are automatically a member of AFCA. Be sure to plan to attend this meeting, and as always, please call at least two days prior (Feb 11) to help us plan our meal.



2020 on the Farm

A new year means new opportunities, and while resolutions made in January rarely survive until February, there are some actions we need to put on our calendars so help make 2020 the best it can be for us on the farm.

In February, we need to be out in our fields and pastures looking for opportunities to improve the health of our soils. February is a great month (most times...not in 2019!) to collect soil samples and determine our fertilizer needs for the coming spring and summer. It is also a great time to renovate pastures and hayfields by frost seeding clover. Using this method, you simply scatter clover seed into existing grassland. The sod needs to be well clipped or slightly overgrazed to facilitate the seed getting to the soil, but it is great way to improve grazing animal performance without too much input costs. February can also be a great time to get the sprayer back out. Warm days (above 50 degrees) can offer the opportunity to blister several weeds such as thistles, buttercups, henbit and bedstraw. If your fields were yellow, white, or purple last spring....USE THIS OPPORTUNITY! One added benefit to treating fields this time of year is your chances of killing the neighbor's garden are all but non-existent; however, this only works if you use the correct chemical in the correct amount on the correct target. Know your enemy.

March is a good time to sow some more hardy crops such as spring oats but is probably too early (cool) for grass seeding. Apply your fertilizers now (although you can give cover crops a shot of nitrogen in February...again in warmer weather). One strategy that can work well is split your fertilizer applications especially in hay crops. Put on half your fertilizer needs now and put on the remainder after the first cutting. March is also a good time to move cattle and livestock to cleaner pastures. Animals that have been shorted on nutritional needs during the winter (and our hay this year is short on both supply and nutrients generally) can find themselves in distress in the cold days of March. Add in mud from cold March rains and cows getting ready to have calves and you have the recipe for a disaster.

April is really two months. The first part of April is a good time to reseed grasses in both our fields and lawns. It is also when we need to make sure our mowers and planters are ready to go. Late April is a time of readiness, if the weather is good, corn can be put in the ground and hay crops need to be coming down. Keeping a careful eye on both the weather and your grasses will help you determine the time to go. Being too early can be bad, but you never really catch up from getting behind. Keep an eye on your multiflora rose too. Spray them right before they bloom to best kill them all the way to the root.

May is for hay. In our area, with the exception of a pure stand of timothy (which is rare) every hay field needs to be put down in May. Weather and work schedules may interfere but the loss of nutrients by letting crops get too mature amounts to millions of dollars of losses every year. Mowing in May also means you can get that second shot of fertilizer out and working before the dry weather of summer sets in. Nitrogen is water soluble but it is also volatile in warm weather. We want our soil nutrients moving to the roots, not boiling skyward.

June is a good time to get the sprayer back out, but be careful. Gardens and bees are out so be very deliberate in your efforts. That said early June is a great time to treat our hay feeding areas for spiny amaranth or spiny pigweed while it is small. You can also go after some of the bedstraw areas (the white clouds of weeds you see in hayfields.)