

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

# AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8 Issue 3 · December 2023

## UK Beef Management Webinar Series

Registration is necessary, please send an email to [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto:dbullock@uky.edu) with Beef Webinar in the subject line and your name and county in the message. You will receive the direct link with a password the morning of each meeting. This invitation will directly link you to the site and you will be asked for the password which can be found just below the link. Each session will be recorded and posted for later viewing. **All meeting times are 8:00pm ET/7:00pm CT.**

### **December 12, 2023**

Shooting the Bull: Answering all your Beef Related Questions! – Updates and Roundtable discussion with UK Specialists

### **January 9, 2024**

Management decisions that impact reproductive efficiency in beef herds – George Perry, Professor, Texas A&M University

### **February 13, 2024**

What's the Cost of a Cheap Mineral – Katie VanValin, Assistant Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

 Cooperative Extension Service

UK Beef Management Webinar Series

Keep Your Chickens Healthy This Winter

The 2023-2024 Winter Outlook for Kentucky

Building an Emergency Kit

Tiny Taco Beef Tarts

Upcoming Events

Flyer Insert: Master Cattleman



## Keep Your Chickens Healthy This Winter

Source: Jacqueline Jacob,  
agriculture extension project manager

Keeping your chickens happy and healthy in the winter is important, but maintaining a cozy and vigorous flock during the colder months demands diligent care.

Chickens, which typically have an internal temperature around 106 degrees Fahrenheit, may experience cold stress when the environment's chill overwhelms their heat-generating capabilities. Indications that your chickens might be feeling the cold include behaviors like feather fluffing, huddling and tucking one foot up to their body for warmth. When such stress is prolonged, it can impair their well-being and could be fatal.

When considering your flock, it's vital to recognize that not all breeds are equally winter-resistant. Heavier breeds, such as the Plymouth Rock or Orpington, tend to endure cold better than their lighter counterparts or those with substantial combs and wattles, which are susceptible to frostbite. Monitoring the flock dynamics, especially if diverse breeds are present, is crucial since bullying over resources can leave some chickens malnourished and more vulnerable to the cold.

Preparing your coop for the winter is fundamental. It should be a sanctuary, protecting against elements and predators alike. Roosts are essential, providing an elevated perch that shields them from the cold ground and also allow the feet to dry better. These should be crafted from materials like wood, avoiding metal or plastic, which can aggravate the cold. Perches should be spacious to prevent overcrowding, but cozy enough to allow shared body heat.

Managing airflow is essential; you must ensure adequate ventilation to prevent the buildup of harmful ammonia and moisture accumulation. Chickens can withstand relatively cold temperatures as long as they are dry. You may need to insulate the coop to keep the warmth in. On below freezing nights, it may be necessary to provide supplemental heat.

Historically, infrared heat lamps have been used to provide supplemental heat, but they can be a major fire risk. Alternative heat sources that have lower fire risk are now available. Use only equipment designed for livestock, and always have installations carried out by a professional.

Regarding nutrition, chickens' dietary intake tends to increase during winter since they require more energy to keep warm. Treats like scratch grains are beneficial for their warmth-inducing digestion and as an activity stimulant, but should be offered sparingly and never mixed with a complete, nutritionally balanced feed as it would dilute nutrients. Ensuring continuous access to unfrozen water is equally important because chickens will not eat if they cannot drink.

Egg production might dip due to reduced daylight; therefore, some opt for supplementary lighting to stimulate laying. It is important that the number of light hours per day never decreases during egg production. A minimum of 14 light hours per day (no more than 18) is recommended to maintain egg production throughout the year.

Tending to chickens in winter revolves around striking a delicate balance: ensuring they're warm but not overheated, well-fed but not overindulged and active yet secure from the harsh external environment. With meticulous planning and proactive management, your poultry can thrive even when the temperatures drop.

More information on caring for chickens and other livestock is available at the Cumberland County Extension office.

# The 2023-2024 Winter Outlook for Kentucky

Derrick Snyder – National Weather Service, Paducah, KY

As the leaves change colors and fall to the ground, crops are harvested, and tendrils of frost form on plants, conversation often turns to what the coming winter will bring. As we have seen, winter in Kentucky can bring a bit of everything, from ice and snow, to flooding, to bitter cold - even severe weather. Given how variable the weather during the winter can be, is it possible to predict what will happen? Many of us have heard homespun wisdom about ways to predict what an upcoming winter will bring. Some of the more popular ones include how dark the hair of a wooly worm is in the fall, the shape of the seed inside of a persimmon, and counting the number of morning fogs in August. Unfortunately, these tales are not necessarily based in truth. The National Weather Service has a division called the Climate Prediction Center (CPC). The climatologists use historical data and pattern recognition, along with latest trends and observations, to predict a seasonal outlook. This past month, CPC just issued the outlook for the upcoming 2023/2024 Winter Season. So how does it shake out?

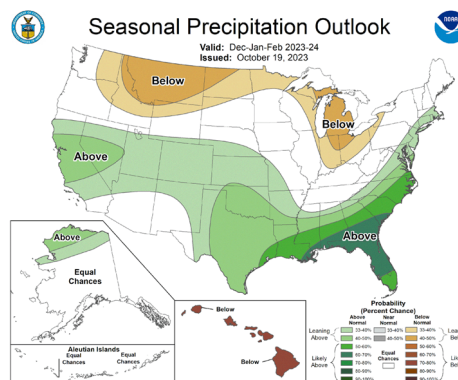
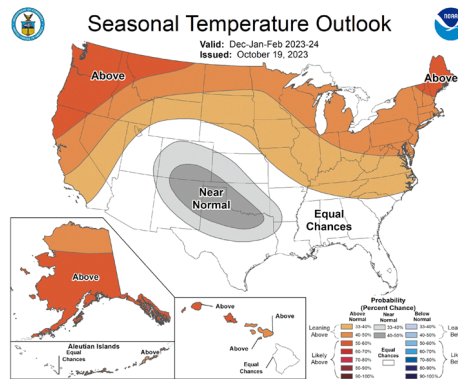
The winter outlook compiled by CPC covers the months of December, January, and February. It is not possible to give a day by day forecast of what will happen, but it is possible to forecast whether a region will see a greater chance of above-, below-, or near-normal temperatures and precipitation (rain and melted snow and ice). If there is not a strong signal either way, the outlook will say that a region will have an equal chance of seeing above-, below-, or near-normal temperatures and precipitation. It is important to remember that these outlooks cover a three-month period. Periods of cold weather can occur when above-normal temperatures are favored, and the opposite can happen when below-normal temperatures are favored. The same rule also applies for precipitation.

This year, the United States is entering into a strong El Niño pattern. During El Niño, trade winds weaken in the Pacific Ocean. Warm water is pushed back east, toward the west coast of the Americas.

El Niño means Little Boy in Spanish. South American fishermen first noticed periods of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean in the 1600s. The full name they used was El Niño de Navidad, because El Niño typically peaks around December.

El Niño can affect our weather significantly. The warmer waters cause the Pacific jet stream to move south of its neutral position. With this shift, areas in the northern U.S. and Canada are dryer and warmer than usual. But in the U.S. Gulf Coast and Southeast, these periods are wetter than usual and have increased flooding.

In Kentucky, the outlook for this winter slightly favors above-normal temperatures across the entire state. For precipitation, the great majority of the state has an equal chance of seeing above-, below-, or near-normal precipitation. However, across far northern Kentucky, the outlook does slightly favor below-normal precipitation amounts. How will this end up playing out over the winter? – We shall have to wait and see!



# Building an Emergency Kit

By Jane Marie Wix -  
National Weather Service Jackson, KY

After an emergency (whether it be natural or man-made), you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own food, water, and other supplies to last during this amount of time. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. Once you take a look at the basic items, consider what unique needs your family might have, such as supplies for pets or seniors.

## Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

To assemble your kit, store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag. A basic emergency supply kit includes the following recommended items:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)

- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

## Additional Emergency Supplies

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- Soap, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Prescription Medications. An emergency can make it difficult for you to refill your prescription or to find an open pharmacy. Organize and protect your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins to prepare for an emergency.
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, allergy medication, antacids, etc.
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

***Continued on next page.....***

## Continuation of Building an Emergency Kit....

### Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

- Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
- Replace expired items as needed.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

### Kit Storage Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work and cars.

- Home: Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- Work: Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a "grab and go" case.
- Car: In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

### Finally...Make a Plan!!!

- Learn what hazards affect your area. Contact your local National Weather Service office, your local emergency management office, or a local Red Cross chapter to learn which hazards can affect you.
- Make sure you know what to do when severe weather strikes.
- If you get separated from family, make sure you have a place to meet, and a point to contact to let someone know you are ok.
- Involve children in the plan making process.
- Practice your plan.

## Tiny Taco Beef Tarts

A easy-to-prepare Mexican-style appetizer, this Tiny Taco Beef Tarts recipe will win over any crowd.

Source: [kybeef.com/recipes/recipe/3294/tiny-taco-beef-tarts](http://kybeef.com/recipes/recipe/3294/tiny-taco-beef-tarts)

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces Ground Beef (93% lean or leaner)
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 cup prepared mild or medium taco sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 packages (2.1 ounces each) frozen mini phyllo shells (30 shells total)
- 1/2 cup shredded reduced fat Mexican cheese blend
- Toppings: Shredded lettuce, sliced grape or cherry tomatoes, guacamole, low-fat dairy sour cream, sliced ripe olives (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, onion and garlic in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, breaking up beef into small crumbles and stirring occasionally. Add taco sauce, cumin, salt and pepper; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes or until mixture is heated through. Cook's Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.
2. Place phyllo shells on rimmed baking sheet. Spoon beef mixture evenly into shells. Top evenly with cheese. Bake 9 to 10 minutes or until shells are crisp and cheese is melted.
3. Top tarts with lettuce, tomatoes, guacamole, sour cream, and olives, as desired. Cook's Tip: Try out Tiny Greek Beef Tarts for another variation.

**Servings:** 30

**Nutrition information per serving:** 43 Calories; 15.3 Calories from fat; 1.7g Total Fat (0.7 g Saturated Fat; 0 g Trans Fat; 0.1 g Polyunsaturated Fat; 0.7 g Monounsaturated Fat;) 12 mg Cholesterol; 92 mg Sodium; 2.7 g Total Carbohydrate; 0.1 g Dietary Fiber; 4.2 g Protein; 0.6 mg Iron; 59 mg Potassium; 1 mg NE Niacin; 0.1 mg Vitamin B6; 0.4 mcg Vitamin B12; 1 mg Zinc; 4 mcg Selenium; 13.2 mg Choline. This recipe is a good source of Vitamin B12.

**SCAN**   
**ME**   
**for the recipe and more!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Office Closing

- December 25th, 2023–January 1st, 2024

### Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference

- Date: January 2nd – 4th, 2024
- Location: Bowling Green, KY

### Bee Keeping

- Date: January 9th, 2024
- Time: 5pm
- Location: Cumberland Extension Office
- Group will meet monthly on the second Tuesday.

### Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention

Date: January 11th–12th, 2024  
Location: Lexington, Kentucky

### Master Cattleman

- See flyer insert.

### Tick Class

- Date: January 18th, 2024
- Time: 5pm
- Location: Cumberland Extension Office
- Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Larson

### Women in Ag Meeting

- Date: January 19th, 2024
- Time: 9am
- Location: Cumberland Extension Office

### Wicking Raised Beds

- Date: February 20th, 2024
- Time: 1pm
- Location: Cumberland Extension Office
- Instructor: Steve Higgins

### National Farm Machinery Show

- Date: February 14th–17th, 2024
- Location: Louisville, Kentucky

### Master Logger

- Date: February 27th, 2024
- Time: all day
- Location: Cumberland Extension Office

### Cumberland County Gardeners

Gardeners meet the 4th Thursday at 10am at the Cumberland Co. Extension Office. Schedule subject to change, call to check schedule.

**IMPORTANT!**

#### REGISTER

If you plan on attending any of the events, please call the Cumberland County Extension Office to register.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the events, please visit our website and click "Events":  
[cumberland.ca.uky.edu](http://cumberland.ca.uky.edu)

**Chelsey Anderson, agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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