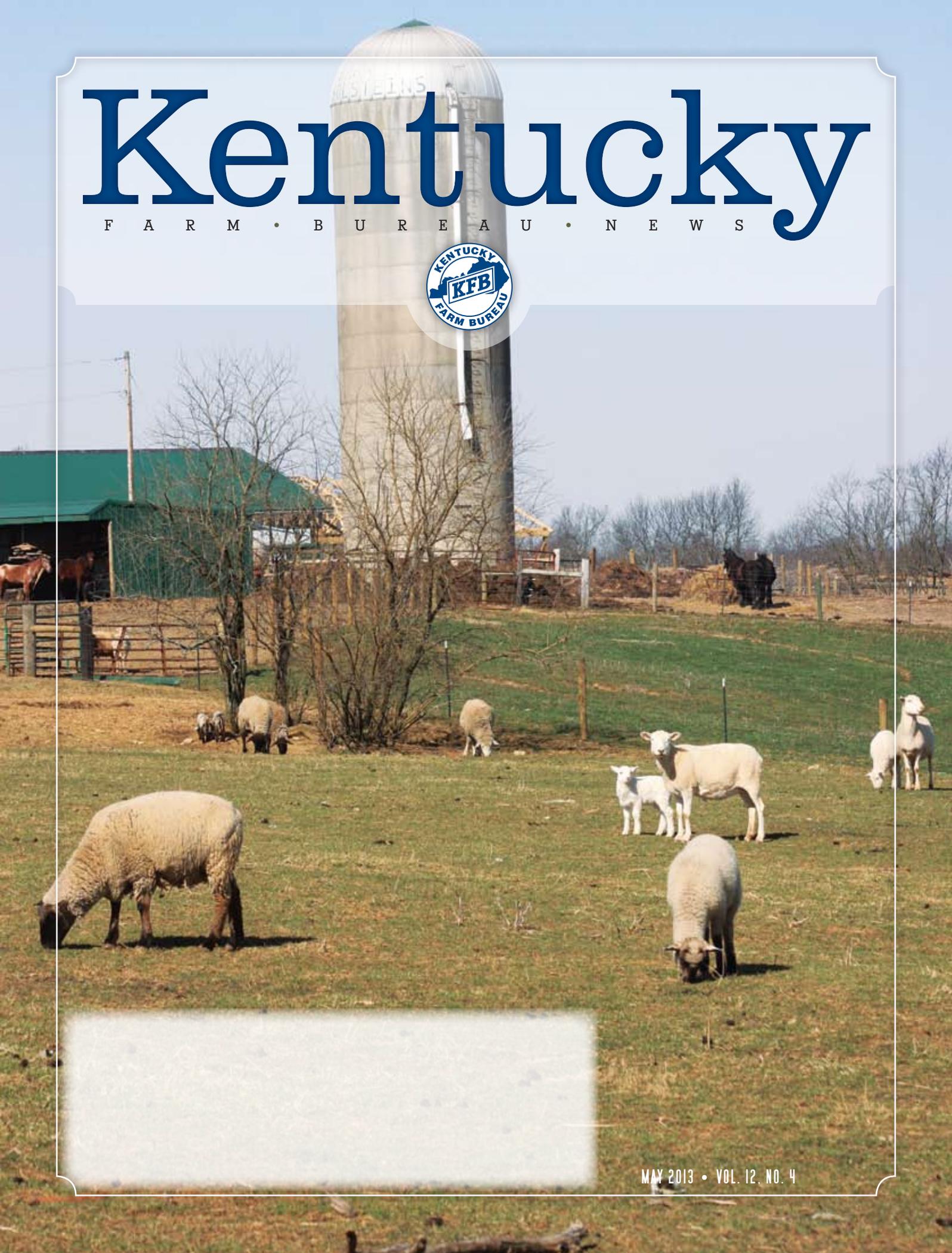


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Cover: Sheep graze on a Mason County farm.  
Photo by Roger Nesbitt

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**T**he cost of the federal crop insurance program has come under intense scrutiny during the current debate on a farm bill. While farm policy is a complex matter encompassing many facets, the primary goal is to secure our food supply by providing farm families with an economic safety net.



The risk of farming formerly was tempered by subsidies and disaster-assistance programs enacted in response to damaging droughts, floods and storms. In recent years these programs have been replaced by the crop insurance program, which has proved to be less costly, despite a high loss ratio stemming from a series of weather disasters.

No question this program rescued hundreds of thousands of farmers from economic ruin. In drought-plagued 2012, American farmers were paid indemnities of more than \$16 billion after investing more than \$4.1 billion to purchase 1.2 million policies on 86 percent of the nation's planted cropland. This included 128 different crops.

In Kentucky, there were 16,200 policies covering 2.9 million acres. Farmers paid \$144.5 million in premiums and received \$462 million in indemnity payments, according to the National Crop Insurance Service.

As the farm bill debate unfolds, there is a lively conversation about the federal government's role. There are some asserting the program is poorly designed and too costly. Others pose questions about what should be the government's level of involvement.

Are farmers making unfair profits off of these payments? Not likely, considering they use the checks to pay off operating loans, buy seed, fertilizer fuel and other inputs to plant this year's crops, plus pay down mortgages, invest in new equipment or land and building improvements. A recent survey commissioned by the Farm Credit Service of America reported that in Iowa, 2012 indemnity payments of \$1.9 billion preserved around \$1.02 billion in off-farm economic activity as farmers spent those available funds from crop insurance.

Farmers rely greatly on crop insurance to manage their risk. The operator of an average 500-acre corn and soybean farm will have invested somewhere between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in a new crop. To go without insurance on that investment is as unwise as paying cash for your home and foregoing any insurance on it.

Whether or not they realize it, rural and urban residents also benefit when crop insurance payments are necessary. The program keeps farm families in business, and helps stabilize rural and urban economies when the farm economy is suffering. That's what farm policy is all about.

MARK HANEY

PRESIDENT

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

# BURLEY MARKET OUTLOOK IS GOOD

If everything falls into place, this year's burley tobacco crop will be the most valuable one since the tobacco program was abolished in 2004.

World burley production fell by around 25 percent last year, creating low stock levels. Companies are now clamoring for the high quality burley common in Kentucky and are expected to pay more for it, according to industry officials.

"Anticipated higher prices and production will likely enable the value of Kentucky's tobacco crop to exceed \$400 million, surpassing last year's \$408 million, which was the highest value since the buyout," said University of Kentucky tobacco economist Dr. Will Snell.

But he and others note that issues beyond weather, plant disease and insects could stifle increased production; most notably the availability of labor and barn space. Another issue has emerged with the USDA's Risk Management Agency's unexpected decision to mandate that tobacco will not be insured on any acreage on which tobacco

was planted in the two previous years. That announcement, which didn't come until December, has some growers – especially some large-scale producers -- scrambling to find land.

"It's caused a lot of problems," said Spencer County grower Scott Travis, a KFB Director who is chairman of the organization's Tobacco Advisory Committee. "We have a lot of large growers now and this puts some of them in a tough spot. They either have to find another place to grow or not get insurance – that messes them up with lenders because they require insurance. This caught everyone off guard."

Besides a supply situation that's in their favor, growers also could benefit from expanded sales outlets. Last year, a good number of growers became disenchanted with the contracting delivery stations and turned to alternatives such as uncontracted delivery stations, a couple of old-style auction houses or some independent "pop-up" buyers. This competition sent the average price soaring over \$2 a pound.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates a \$1.97 average for burley last year; the highest price since the buyout. It has estimated 2013 planted burley acreage of 78,000 acres, a five percent hike from 2012.

Snell and others say that's likely if growers can resolve the labor, barn space and available land issues.

"It's a supply issue, not a demand issue," Snell explained. "It's certainly going to be interesting to see what happens. I think prices will be attractive, but in the long-term I'm not sure. But we are seeing some fields planted for the first time in years. There is opportunity (for a good year). Certainly short-term optimism."

Travis acknowledged that he was among those who bypassed the contract system last year. He said he sold at auction and did well.

"There were plenty of options for growers last year and a lot of tobacco sold well. People were doing better outside of the (contract) system."

A lucrative sales outlet emerged last fall when the International Tobacco Trading Group (ITTG), a business involving former Burley Cooperative General Manager Brian Furnish of Harrison County, opened buying stations in Cynthiana and Lebanon. After word spread that ITTG was paying well above contract prices, a lot of contracted leaf found a home there.

ITTG has added a third station in Warsaw, is contracting with growers and plans to pay top dollar again, Furnish said.

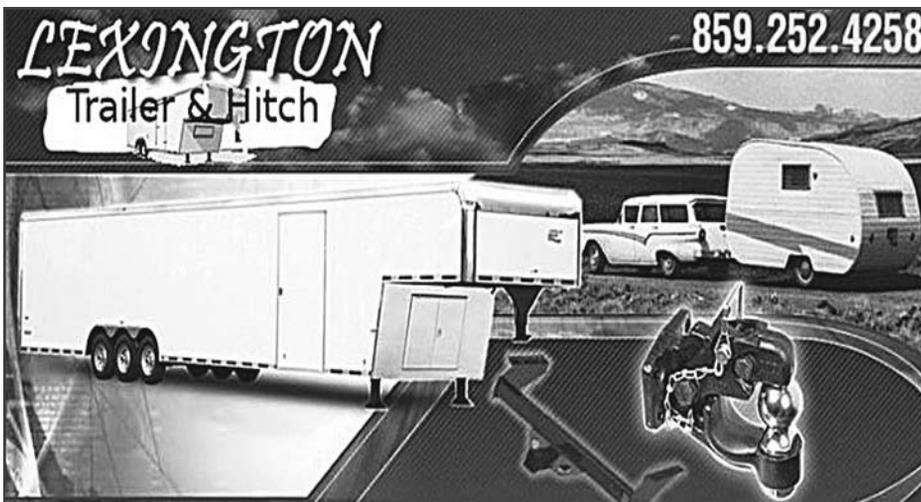
"This is the first time since the buyout that a tobacco farmer can really feel that he has options," he said. "When the buyout started it was felt that if you didn't have a contract you could be left out. But now there's good competition for the big buyers. I think prices will be higher."

Furnish, however, is not optimistic about a significant hike in production.

"We have an infrastructure problem in this state," he said. "A lot of the ones who took the buyout have the land and barn space, but aren't making it available (for tobacco). There's a lack of labor, good land and barns. Because of the high prices on corn and soybeans, it's difficult to rent land. With all these factors in play, I don't see a big upswing."

Snell concurs with the infrastructure problem. That, plus the volatile world market, have him reluctant to make predictions about the long-term situation.

"To coin a phrase typically used in tobacco, 'we're in transition,'" he said.



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If there's one thing I've learned in my years on this earth, it's that you never really say goodbye to Kentucky. Take it from me, a farm kid who walked the halls of Lyon County High School in Eddyville, you may leave to see the world, earn a degree or two, marry and have children who give you precious grandchildren, but the rolling hills of bluegrass, the whinny of thoroughbred horses and the rally cries of a championship basketball team are never far from your heart. I always look forward to coming home to Kentucky.



The same could be said for the return to Louisville of the National FFA Organization's convention and expo this October. There is growing anticipation at the FFA Center in Indianapolis as we prepare to embrace the great city on the Ohio. While it's been seven years since our national convention took place in Louisville, we still remember how the people of Kentucky opened their hearts and arms wide to welcome our FFA members, advisors, alumni, supporters and staff.

In the time we've been away, FFA has changed, just as Louisville has increased its stature as an internationally known destination for food, sports and down-home values. FFA membership has grown to more than 557,000 students in over 7,400 local FFA chapters in 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Convention & Expo, the largest annual student gathering in the country, now attracts more than 56,000 attendees, and our award-winning expo features more than 400 exhibitors showcasing the abundance of careers in agriculture. In fact, our expo was recently named one of the top 25 fastest-growing expos in the country.

For the next three years, we will look forward to enjoying warm southern hospitality as we make the Kentucky Exposition Center, the Kentucky International Convention Center, the YUM! Center and six event hotels our home away from home. The people of Kentucky and Louisville are sure to be amazed, yet again, when they meet our FFA members and see the outstanding qualities and boundless potential they develop through their experiences in agricultural education.

We thank the Kentucky Farm Bureau, the state of Kentucky and all of the state's agricultural companies and organizations for welcoming the return of FFA to the Bluegrass State. Please be sure to stop by and say hello to these young leaders. They would love to show you around our event.

See you in October.

**W. DWIGHT ARMSTRONG, PH.D.**  
 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
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Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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# Beef Tour has



**K**FB's 8th annual John C. Hendricks Beef Tour went south, with stops at farms and other ag-related facilities in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. The return trip featured a stop at the famous Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C.

A bus load with 46 participants plus some KFB staffers began the five-day journey with a stop at Western Kentucky University's Agricultural Expo Center. Besides a variety of cattle farms, other stops included the large animal hospital and meat laboratory at Auburn University, the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center and AGCO Inc. World Headquarters in Duluth, Georgia.

The group of Kentucky cattle producers

# southern flair



Above, Maple Angus Farm in Elkmont, Alabama.

Left, The group assembled for a photo at Three Trees Ranch in Woodbury, Georgia.

Bottom left, Deer Valley Farm No. 2 in Fayetteville, Tennessee.

Below right, The Kentucky Barn at the Auburn University Veterinary School, which has an agreement to enroll an annual quota of Kentucky students.

and ag interests visited Angus breeders in Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia; a Brangus seed stock operation in South Carolina; an Angus cow-calf operation in South Carolina and an Angus back-grounding business in Alabama. Besides high-quality stock, the group also observed some successful pasture management and cropping systems.

Cargill and Farm Credit Mid-America joined KFB in sponsoring the tour dedicated to the memory of John C. Hendricks, the KFB First Vice President who passed away in 2010. The Clark County farmer was among the originators of the tour as a way to spark ideas for Kentucky producers. The tour has taken hundreds of Kentuckians throughout the west, mid-west, southwest and south to look at cattle operations, beef industry facilities and much more.





# Springtime business is blooming for Croppers Greenhouse and Nursery

Springtime sprouts big business for greenhouses and nurseries as homeowners spruce up their property with flowers, hanging plants, shrubs, trees, mulch and the like. The boom extends from the garden departments at the big box stores in the city to rural roadside markets like Croppers Greenhouse and Nursery in Mason County.

Wayne and Diana Cropper and their handful of employees have been hard at work since February to prepare for the wave of customers they'll handle during late April and early May. The surge is due to a combination of the planting season and Mother's Day gift giving, says Wayne Cropper.

"The weekend before Mother's Day and the weekend of Mother's Day are extremely busy; our parking lot won't be able to handle it — they'll be parking up and down the road," Cropper said, referring to the adjacent KY 324.

At least five employees will be needed to serve the customers

pouring through one or more of the eight greenhouses filled with thousands of hanging baskets and pots of perennials and annual plants. There's also a rush on mulch and shrubs, Cropper said.

"And we'll fill pots" on request, he added.

Around 4,000 pots were filled for the spring market season. Shrubs and trees were shipped in from as far away as Oregon and tons of mulch (they sell 12 to 13 semi-loads a year) were put in the bins — all is in anticipation of a brisk business that extends until summertime.

"Late April to mid-June, we can hardly look up," Cropper said, smiling.

Croppers Greenhouse and Nursery is among more than 90 markets throughout the state that participate in KFB's Certified Roadside Farm Markets program. It's a natural fit as Wayne Cropper is a long-time Farm Bureau leader (he is the current president of Mason County FB), plus has needed an added boost with marketing and promotion after starting the business only 13 years ago.

He confesses that "when I started out I didn't know a geranium from a petunia."

Then, he added: "But when it's in your pocketbook, you learn fast."

Raising burley tobacco, hay and cattle is a different matter : Cropper has been producing those commodities for many years on his 200 acre farm a few miles west of Mays Lick. But like so many other tobacco growers, he decided to diversify because of

tobacco's downturn.

Back in 1997 he was raising a whopping 125 acres of burley plus was working in a Maysville auction warehouse. He's growing 25 acres this year, and continues to serve on the Board of Directors for the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association. But the roadside market now gets as much attention as the golden leaf.

Cropper said he was concerned about tobacco's future when he started the greenhouse business back in 2000, but probably would have done it anyway.

"I've always wanted to do this," he explained. "You have to diversify on a farm. For me, it made sense to diversify with something I knew I would enjoy. This is a lot of hard work, but I enjoy it. I'm a people person, so I really enjoy it when we get busy with customers."

Despite a somewhat remote location, Croppers Greenhouse and Nursery has developed a solid customer base thanks to word-of-mouth and some timely advertising.

"We'll get people from Lexington and the Cincinnati area, some from as far as Columbus (Ohio)," Cropper said. "People tell me all the time that they didn't know we were here until someone told them about us."

Croppers also sells wholesale and does landscaping work. While business slows down after the spring rush, it picks back up in the fall season with around 10,000 mums for sale and a lot of tree planting. In August, thousands of blooms must be planted.

Wayne says he and Diana regularly attend trade shows to



Wayne Cropper



make contacts for obtaining stock.

This is truly a family business. The Croppers' home is within eyesight of the market, as are the homes of their two daughters and six grandchildren.

Their H-2A migrant workers also are vital to the market's success. "We've had most of them for a good number of years and they have become like part of the family," Cropper said. "We've visited their families in Mexico. They mean a lot to us."

Although he's at the retirement age for most people, Cropper is moving forward under a strong economic foundation. Cattle markets have been good for several years now. Burley tobacco currently is on an upswing. He does well selling square bales of alfalfa hay. And he says the greenhouse business "has been good the past several years."

"We have plenty here to keep us busy," he said, grinning.

# From field to fuel . . .

PROJECT AT MURRAY STATE SEEKS DEVELOPMENT OF BIOMASS CROPS



MSU plans to heat its spacious equine center with biomass burners.

**A** research and development project at Murray State University is aimed at stimulating the production of biomass crops on West Kentucky farms. Determining the most feasible crops is subject to ongoing research. Identifying a viable use is clearer — foremost is fueling biomass burner/boilers that can heat most any size building at a lower cost than gas or electricity.

MSU's Hutson School of Agriculture has established a residential demonstration site at its Garrett Conference Center to showcase how a biomass burner can get the job done. The next step is installing a much bigger system to heat the spacious Instructional Equine Center at its West farm. To heat the riding arena (which is 220x170 feet), two 500,000 BTU units will be installed. This is an application typical of what would be required for some types of farm facilities, including animal production units such as the hundreds of broiler houses in West Kentucky that currently are heated with propane gas.

MSU received a \$309,000 federal grant for the equine center project.

These and other developments are part of the West Kentucky AgBioworks project based at MSU's Regional Business and Innovation Center. AgBioworks is in a regional, multi-state network focused on developing businesses to commercialize bio-energy crops and biomass.

"We're trying to be the catalyst to connect the dots," explained Loretta Daniel, Director of the Business and Innovation Center.

Biomass includes all agricultural crops and trees in harvested, unprocessed form. The MSU project is testing wood shavings, wheat straw, energy sorghum, sweet sorghum and switchgrass. Horse bedding will be used for the equine center heating system.

The 100,000 BTU unit housed in a shed just outside the Garrett Center for Agricultural Education and Research recently was burning sawdust to heat the 3,500-square foot facility. Manufactured by LEI Products in Madisonville, the bio-burner uses the biomass to heat water for space heating. The system is attached to the center's previous heating system.

The Hutson School of Ag is growing sorghum and switch-

grass for demonstration purposes. The equine project will solve an ongoing issue of disposing of equine bedding, as well as meeting the need to heat the arena, which is used by the school's equestrian teams. Plans are to use other biomass as well.

Dr. Tony Brannon, Director of the Hutson School, is optimistic about the prospects for biomass in West Kentucky. Sorghum can grow well in the region. Switchgrass could be promising. And the heating system possibly could find a market with the region's formidable poultry industry, he said.

"There are a lot of large farm buildings and animal production facilities that could utilize this system and save energy costs," Brannon said.

An MSU project summary states that "West Kentucky AgBioworks seeks to capitalize on the unique existing attributes of the region — agricultural diversity, superior logistics and transitional manufacturing to develop a new localized supply chain from farm to fuel or factory."

Ms. Daniel cited four goals: (1) Establish a demonstration center where farmers and others can see how to grow, process and utilize biomass crops; (2) Create a farmer network to transfer the research to the farms; (3) Business development; (4) A comprehensive educational program on biomass.

"The goal is to develop the whole supply chain," she said.

The project is in line with a regional strategy for biobased products in the Mississippi Delta that was released in 2009 in



coordination with the Memphis Bioworks Foundation. That project received financial support from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, as well as MSU and the Purchase Area Development District.



Using wood shavings, this burner heats the Garrett Center.

# Tic-tac-toe-rific ...



## Nelson County FB develops nifty game for ag education

**T**hanks to a game developed by Nelson County FB, the county's third graders are having fun learning about agriculture and our food supply.

Named "Tic Tac Toe – A Farming We Will Go," the game is patterned after the popular "Toss Across" game in which participants play tic-tac-toe by lobbing bean bags at targets in an attempt to change the target to their desired 'X' or 'O'. In this case, contestants seek to flip a Nelson County Farm Bureau target to a tractor or a barn. They earn the right to make a toss by correctly answering one of the more than 300 agriculture-related questions developed for the game, which comes in a bag designed and constructed by Nelson County FB members.

The project runs a gamut of Farm Bureau support. It was initiated with a \$500 KFB Women's Program mini-grant. KFB Director Scott Travis of neighboring Spencer County, who represents the district, voluntarily made a donation after hearing about the project. The Nelson County FB Board endorsed it and the county women's committee did most of the work.

The local FFA chapter and extension office were involved in developing the questions.

"We have a simple objective: We want kids to know where their food comes from," explained Holly Bischoff, the long-time chairperson of the county's information committee. "We feel we've come up with a fun way for these students to

learn."

Ms. Bischoff and others at Nelson County FB are especially pleased with the team effort. Women's Committee member Jean Jury applied for the grant and sewed the game bags along with Sarah Wheatley. Ms. Bischoff sewed artwork onto the bean bags. Insurance Agent Adam Wheatley assisted in a number of ways, including distributing games to some of the elementary schools in the county.

The women's committee purchased 19 "Toss Across" games from the internet and then customized them. Recipients are being urged to send in an evaluation form to be eligible for a \$50 award to go toward purchasing classroom supplies. There are nine public elementary schools in Nelson



Left, The tic-tac-toe game hinges on flipping the Nelson County FB targets to reveal a barn or a tractor.

Above, The third-graders wait to play as Holly Bischoff explains the rules.

Below right, Lawson Strencky takes a turn after correctly answering a question during the “trial” at Foster Heights Elementary School.

County, plus parochial and private schools.

The game was unveiled last month when a group from Nelson County Farm Bureau and FFA visited Emily Hunt’s third grade class at Foster Heights Elementary School in Bardstown. It was a hit. After playing a couple of games, the youngsters shouted their approval when asked if they had fun.

School Principal Donna Paulin also voiced approval.

FFA members Audrey Coomes (chapter president), Alyssa Mattingly, Tai Robbins and Gabby Cheatham played the first game so the students could see how it goes. Then the 25 students played. The game can be played either by teams or as an individual competition.



The questions include: “Where do pork chops come from?” “What is hay?” “What is cotton used for?” “What is the most popular pizza topping?” “What do all plants and animals need to live?” “What is a baby sheep called?” “What is a major source of energy for all things?” “What do

you call the thick hair on a horse’s neck?”

Nelson County FB plans to find a home for all of the games.

“Maybe the children will be able to teach their parents something,” said Ms. Bischoff.

# “AG ADVENTURES” in SCOTT COUNTY



The youngsters formed groups and rotated among 18 stations. At right is the Kentucky Beef Council exhibit handled by Alison Smith.



KFB's Scott Christmas spoke about agriculture's importance.

**V**eteran farmers in Scott County can tell youngsters about a time when the area had a rural flavor, marked by lush pastures where horses and cattle fed, and for majestic rows of “the golden leaf.” That was before Georgetown became known for Toyotas rolling off the assembly line.

But thanks to Scott County FB, third graders annually have an opportunity to learn about agriculture past and present during “Ag Adventure Day.” The fourth edition was held last month at the Kentucky Horse Park’s Alltech Arena, where some 800 third-graders from six schools rotated in groups among 18 work stations for an educational, and fun-filled, experience.

The subject matter was as diverse as the list of exhibitors, a group that included Cleveland Veterinary Clinic (accompanied by a pair of alpacas),



Program Director Brent Burchett handled the exhibit for the Kentucky Soybean Association.

Mike Ford, representing the Kentucky Poultry Federation, quizzed the youngsters about the parts of a chicken. He was joined by some live birds.



“I’d say probably less than five percent of these kids have a farm background. That’s quite a change from 20, 30 years ago.”

KFB, the Kentucky Corn Growers Association, Kentucky Beef Council, Kentucky Soybean Association, Kentucky Dairy Development Council, Kentucky Poultry Federation, Alltech, Scott County Beef Improvement Association, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, FFA, 4-H, Bluegrass Stockyards, Soil Conservation Service and People’s Exchange Bank.

The exhibits encompassed three huge meeting halls plus the foyer of the spacious facility used for equine events. The first two years the event was held at the county park, which proved to be too limiting logistically.

Scott County FB Director Daniel Smith said “this is a way for us to interact with the teachers and the school system and to teach kids about agriculture and where their food comes from. We show them how agriculture interacts with local communities. We’re trying to reach out and let them know we’re their neighbors.”

Scott County FB got the idea from a county Farm Bureau presentation at KFB’s Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference, Smith added.

“We feel it’s one of the more important things we do,” he said.

Concurring was Scott County FB President Jimmy Richardson, who explained that “a lot of these children never had any idea where their food comes from.”

While Scott County once was heavily rural, the influx of Toyota and the ensuing population boom has vastly changed the community, said Smith, who farms near Stamping Ground in the northwest area of the county. His brother, Stephen, a past president of Scott County FB, worked at the local Beef Improvement Association exhibit along with Extension Agent Michelle Simon.

“I’d say probably less than five percent of these kids have a farm background,” Smith said. “That’s quite a change from 20, 30 years ago.”



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# The Home Place

*KFB News is pleased to publish this essay by Russ Bingham, who is on Lyon County Farm Bureau's Board of Directors. His story is a good example of how agriculture's dynamics have changed over the years. And as Mr. Bingham so artfully points out in closing, Kentucky Farm Bureau has been there all the way to serve farm families like his.*

By Russ Bingham

Near the end of the great depression, Dad and Mother purchased a 185-acre farm in Western Lyon County. My parents were in their mid to late twenties when they moved onto this land, established their

home where they continued to live until their death.

This farm was typical in size of farms at that time and its layout favored the farming operations as practiced in those early times. Tobacco was the anchor enterprise which was managed in concert with cattle and hogs. But there was one major difference – a water supply that few farms enjoyed. A very large spring that produced a constant year-round flow through both wet and dry years fed and stream that ran the length of the land.

Without question, the supply of abundant, year-round water was an overriding consideration in their selecting the farm. That which was seen as a blessing in 1930 has shifted to resemble a detriment today. Restrictions imposed by environmental controls that limit animal access to the creeks and the usage of farm chemicals near free flowing water limits this once-coveted resource.

The spring pours water at a year-round

temperature of 54.32 degrees and at a measured rate of 354 gallons per minute. The flow rate and temperature values were certified by the Kentucky Division of Water, which continues to monitor the spring and its upkeep.

Changes abound. Activity at the home-place is not what it once was. Tobacco production has ceased, free range hog management is long gone, the small fields and streams do not favor row cropping. Hay production and grassland management have moved to front and center.

Some things remained unchanged. When times seem rough and there are no readily available answers to today's questions, one can get a jug of cold water from the spring, gather the grandchildren, ride the old 1941 Model H John Deere tractor or Gator to the hilltop, look out over the bottomland and feel just a little closer to Heaven. Life is good. Everything falls into place and, after all the many years, the Farm Bureau sign remains on the gatepost.



# KFB delivers Earth Day message

**K**FB's Communications Division circulated an agricultural message to the public in regard to the annual Earth Day observance in April. A news release and an opinion piece were sent out to the media, both focusing on how Kentucky farmers protect natural resources and their commitment to that endeavor.

"Farmers have always been the primary caretakers of the land and they carry that responsibility with honor and pride," KFB President Mark Haney said in the news release.

The release noted that "Kentucky's farmers not only do a great deal to protect the land, they strive to make it better. Aside from planting trees and shrubs for windbreaks, preserving and restoring wetland areas, and providing a habitat for many forms of wildlife, farmers also work diligently to improve the quality of the environment by installing conservation buffers on their farmland. Across the U.S., more than 500,000 farmers have voluntarily enrolled approximately 27 million acres into the nation's Conservation Reserve Program to date, making it the largest public-private partnership for conservation and wildlife habitat in the country."

"Unlike most other jobs, farming is often a family affair and passed down from one generation to the next," added Haney. "It only makes sense that farmers would try to take the best possible care of their land."

The release continued: "Today's farmers are also embracing advanced methods for managing their land and investing in business services that will help them excel in an environmentally sensitive world. From contour farming and the Kentucky-pioneered no-till farming practices to dead animal composting and complex manure management systems, sound environmental stewardship is a 24/7, year-round job for the Commonwealth's agricultural producers.

Farmers additionally remain at the forefront of producing clean, renewable fuels that provide for a healthier environment and a wide array of "green"

jobs around the world. Through agricultural efficiencies made possible by biotechnology, farmers are also shrinking their environmental footprint, reducing their use of pesticides and producing more food on less land with even fewer impacts on soil and water resources."

"Farmers don't celebrate Earth Day just once a year; they live it out every day," Haney concluded.

The op-ed message made repeated references to Kentucky's unique Agricultural

Water Quality Law and the associated cost-share program that has helped farmers to establish a variety of environmental practices.

For social media, specialist Carilyn Gravatte made posts on the KFB Facebook and Twitter accounts promoting messages, stories, photos and videos from farmers. The young farmer and certified roadside farm market program also had Earth Day posts.





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## County Annual Meetings

- BARREN COUNTY**  
Date: September 21, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Trojan Academy
- CAMPBELL COUNTY**  
Date: September 15, 4 p.m.  
Place: St. Peter & Paul Social Center
- CLAY COUNTY**  
Date: October 10, 6 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau Bldg.
- DAVIESS COUNTY**  
Date: August 15, 5 p.m.  
Place: Reid's Orchard
- ESTILL COUNTY**  
Date: June 6, 7 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office
- GRANT COUNTY**  
Date: September 21, 7 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau bldg..
- GREENUP COUNTY**  
Date: November 4, 6 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau Meeting Hall
- MADISON COUNTY**  
Date: July 22, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Fairgrounds
- MARION COUNTY**  
Date: October 14, 7 p.m.  
Place: Masonic Temple
- MUHLENBERG COUNTY**  
Date: June 4, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office
- LEWIS COUNTY**  
Date: August 4, 12:30 p.m.  
Place: Ruggles Campground
- LOGAN COUNTY**  
Date: September 14, 6 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office
- OHIO COUNTY**  
Date: August 1, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office
- OWEN COUNTY**  
Date: October 7, 6 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office
- TRIMBLE COUNTY**  
Date: August 15, 7 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office
- UNION COUNTY**  
Date: June 22, 3 p.m.  
Place: John Arnold Park

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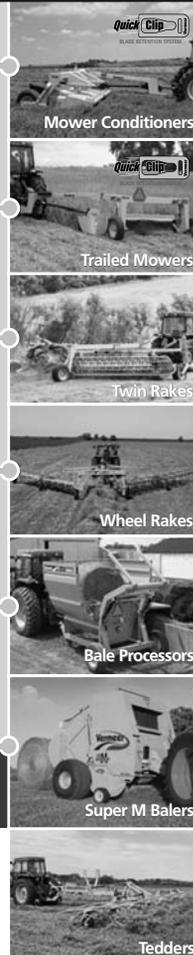
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## Drought reduced honey production

U.S. honey production dropped 1.3 million pounds to 147.1 million pounds in 2012 despite a 5.3-percent increase in honey-producing bee colonies. However, the average yield per colony fell by six percent due to drought. Honey's average price climbed to \$1.95 per pound, up 10.5 percent from 2011 and the total crop value rose nearly ten percent to \$287 million. Farm value per colony in 2012 averaged a record \$109, up four percent. The States with the top values per colony in 2012 were Wisconsin (\$141), North Dakota (\$130), Minnesota (\$126), and South Dakota (\$122).

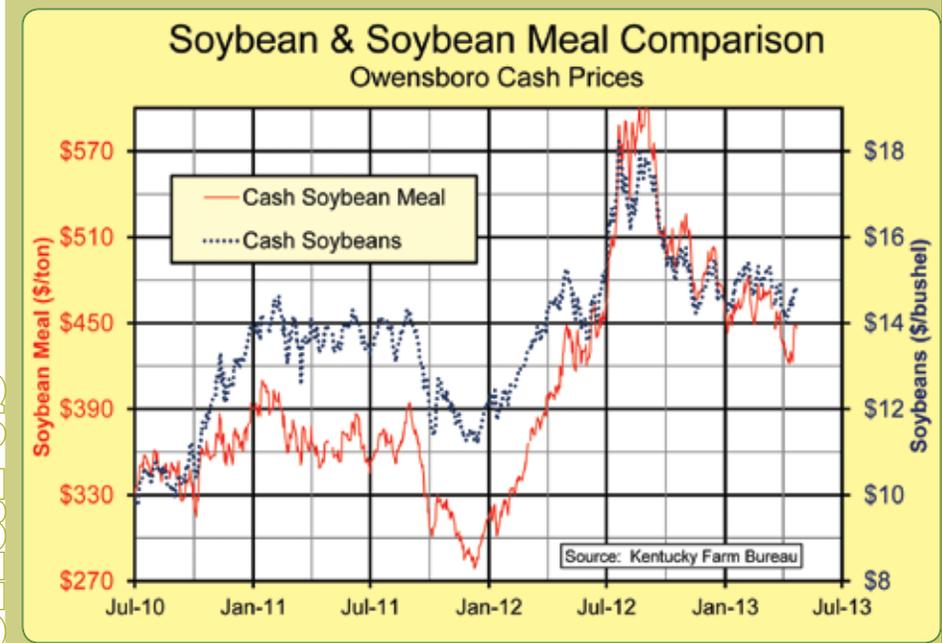
The retail price of natural honey averaged \$5.55 per pound in 2012, up 40 cents from 2011. Domestic producers received eight percent higher prices (\$4.09) and retailers earned six percent higher profit margins (\$1.46) in 2012. Honey imports increased by nearly eight percent in 2012, which raised domestic honey supply by 2.7 percent. Per capita consumption was 1.4 pounds, ranking among the highest levels over the past two decades. Imported honey approached 70 percent of total supply in 2012, the highest level thus far. Using producer prices, average consumer spending for honey amounted to a record \$2.19 per capita in 2012, more than double the \$1.06 per capita consumption value in 2007.

## Kentucky hay data released

The Kentucky Field Office of USDA-NASS recently released 2012 hay production data by county. For alfalfa hay, the top three yielding counties were Montgomery with 4.20 tons/acre, and Madison and Daviess counties with 4.15 tons/acre each. The state average yield was 2.90 tons/acre resulting in production of 522,000 tons. In the "all other hay" category, Garrard had a yield of 2.60 tons/acre, Warren had 2.50 tons/acre, followed by several counties with 2.45 tons/acre - Adair, Bracken, Metcalfe, Shelby and Wayne. The state averaged 2.00 tons/acre and produced 4.40 million tons of hay.

## More pork with smaller breeding herd

From 2000 to 2012, U.S. federally-inspected pork production increased by almost 24 percent, even as the U.S. inventory of breeding animals decreased by more than nine percent. According to USDA, the key factor behind this is the rapid increase in litter rates (pigs per litter). Other factors are heavier slaughter weights and strong imports of Canadian swine for finishing here. From December 1999 to February 2007, the annual growth in litter rates averaged about 0.5 percent. From March 2007 to August 2011, this growth rate increased to 2.0 percent. The improvement was mostly attributable to advances in genetics and management. It appears that this growth in litter rates is slowing, averaging just 1.2 percent between September 2011 and August 2012. Average dressed weights increased from 194 pounds in 2000 to almost 206 pounds in 2012, creating more efficient production and processing.



charts





## Farmer of Year applications are invited

KFB is now accepting applications for the 2013 Farmer of the Year award. The state winner will receive \$1,000, a commemorative award plus will represent the state in the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest on October 14-16, 2014, in Moultrie, GA. Kentucky's representative will have the opportunity to compete against nine other state winners for the South's most prestigious agricultural award. Since its inception in 1990, the Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest has awarded over \$844,000 to state and overall winners.

Individuals interested in applying may obtain an application from their county Farm Bureau office. The application is also available at [kyfb.com](http://kyfb.com). Completed applications must be postmarked by July 1.

## KSU aquaculture field day is May 16

Kentucky State University will have an Aquaculture field day and workshop on May 16 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. (including lunch) at the KSU Center for Sustainability of Farms and Families. Indoor and pondside talks will include discussions and/or demonstrations on production of largemouth bass, paddlefish, catfish, koi, trout, Australian red claw crayfish and freshwater prawns. Other topics will be aquaponics, aquaculture economics & marketing, recirculating systems, pond management, weed & disease control and low input aquaculture. Cage construction will also be a hands-on activity. Those interested in attending may contact Carol Faulkner at (502) 597-6830 or [carol.faulkner@kysu.edu](mailto:carol.faulkner@kysu.edu).

## AFBF calling for tax reforms

With more than 96 percent of farms and 75 percent of farm sales taxed under IRS provisions for individual taxpayers, as congressional lawmakers consider tax reform they must address the individual tax code and not focus exclusively on corporate tax provisions, Farm Bureau told the House Ways and Means Committee.

Although broadening the tax base and lowering the rate are important parts of tax reform, lawmakers should note that lowering rates will impact farms and ranches differently than other businesses because farmers' and ranchers' income can swing so wildly as a result of unpredictable weather and uncontrollable markets, cautioned AFBF President Bob Stallman.

IRS data shows that in 2010 nearly three out of every four farm sole proprietors reported a farm loss, and since 1980 farm sole proprietors as a group have reported negative aggregate net farm income for tax purposes. In light of this, a lower individual tax rate may not adequately compensate farmers for lost tax provisions and over time could result in a higher effective tax rate, which is why Farm Bureau is urging lawmakers to allow farmers and ranchers to apply the tax benefits of excess deductions and credits to previous and/or future tax years.

Farm Bureau supports the continuation of unrestricted cash accounting for farmers and ranchers who pay taxes as individuals and cautions against reducing the number of farms classified as corporate that are eligible to use it.

Expensing and depreciation options are also important to capital-intensive businesses like farms and ranches. For example, AFBF is calling on Congress to maintain the \$500,000 Sec. 179 small business expensing limitation and not reduce the \$2 million acquisition limit. This helps with the single, large purchases farmers and ranchers make, particularly for equipment.

## Burley Co-op has new general manager

The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association (BTGCA) named Steve Pratt as General Manager. He comes to BTGCA from the Kentucky Farm Service Agency (FSA) where he served as a District Director for 17 years. In this role he was the agency representative between the Kentucky FSA office and 13 local Service Centers covering 41 counties in Central, Northern, and Eastern Kentucky. Pratt worked for 18 years as a county supervisor with the USDA Rural Development/Farmers Home Administration before accepting the position at FSA, giving him more than thirty five years of experience at the United States Department of Agriculture.

As general manager, Pratt will be focusing on expanding the market for burley tobacco and continuing the tradition of the Burley Co-op's service to the farmers. His goal is to expand the number of grower contracts with members in 2013.

"I have been involved in farming and working with farmers my entire life and I look forward to getting out to the farm and meeting our members to hear their concerns," said Pratt. "Today's tobacco farming has to be competitive in a global market and I want to work to meet those demands."



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- Bi-Water Farm & Greenhouse**  
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- Blue Ribbon Market**  
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- Boone Gardiner Garden Center**  
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- Reed Valley Orchard**  
Paris · (859) 987-6480
- Ridgeview Greenhouse & Nursery**  
Shepherdsville · (502) 955-5939
- Rising Sons Home Farm Winery**  
Lawrenceburg · (502) 600-0224
- Serenity Hill Fiber**  
Nicholasville · (859) 913-1615
- Sherwood Acres Beef**  
LaGrange · (502) 222-4326
- Sunny Acres Farm**  
Jeffersonton · (502) 643-6584
- Sweet Home Spun**  
Pleasureville · (502) 878-4814
- The Greenhouse in Gertrude**  
Brooksville · (606) 782-0033
- Thieneman's Herbs & Perennials**  
Louisville · (502) 491-6305
- Tower View Farm & Nursery**  
Jeffersonton · (502) 267-2066
- Triple J Farm**  
Georgetown · (502) 863-6786
- Wilson Nurseries**  
Frankfort · (502) 223-1488
- Yuletide Tree Farm & Nursery**  
Winchester · (859) 771-4729

### EAST

- Black Barn Produce**  
River · (606) 297-2600
- Bramble Ridge Orchard**  
Mt. Sterling · (859) 498-9123
- Country Garden Greenhouse**  
Beattyville · (606) 424-9379
- Feathered Wing Farm Market**  
Greenup · (606) 932-8065
- Golden Apple Fruit Market**  
Whitesburg · (606) 633-9763
- Hutton-Loyd Tree Farm**  
Wallingford · (606) 876-3423
- Imel's Greenhouse**  
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