Welcome to the first issue of the Northeast Missouri Agriculture Newsletter.

Our newsletter is changing to a regional format, and you will be seeing articles from the different agriculture specialists that serve Northeast Missouri. No consensus has been made on the name for this newsletter, so a contest will be held for this inaugural issue. We ask you, our readers, for your input. What do you suggest that our newsletter for the Northeast Missouri region be named? Please send your ideas to Karisha Devlin at devlink@missouri.edu or call 660-397-2179. The winner will receive a prize, including special recognition for naming our newsletter.

### January/February/March Upcoming Events

**Annie’s III: Managing for Today and Tomorrow**, Economic Development Alliance Building, Kirksville, March 4, 11, 18, 25, and April 1, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Karisha Devlin at devlink@missouri.edu or call 660-397-2179.

**Beef Producer’s Seminar**, Greeley Research Center (Novelty), March 14, 6:00 p.m. Contact Zac Erwin at erwinz@missouri.edu.

**Spring Forward Into Gardening Workshop**, Kirksville Vo-Tech School, March 23, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Contact Adair County Extension office at (660) 665-9866.

**Lady Landowner Meeting**, Monticello, March 27, 10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Contact Lewis County Extension Center, 573-767-5273.

**NEMO BCIA Performance Tested Bull Sale**, F&T Livestock Market (Palmyra), March 30, 1 p.m. Contact Daniel Mallory at 573-985-3911 or Zac Erwin.
Useful Websites for Your Farming Operation

The University of Missouri Extension has a motto that says “Live. And Learn.” It always reminds me of the purpose of Extension in serving as the arm of the University of Missouri. Extension programs allow individuals to continue learning outside of the traditional classroom setting. A key to success in any field is being a life-long learner. Individuals who are life-long learners are always seeking ways to learn, grow, and improve their lives. One of the great things about the internet is the amount of resources that are available to help you learn. In this article, I would like to share five great resources for your farming operation.

AgEBB (Agriculture Electronic Bulletin Board) - http://agebb.missouri.edu/. This website from the University of Missouri has a wealth of information on many agriculture topics. Spreadsheets, articles, and timely tips are available to aid in decision making for your farm.

Ag Plan website – www.agplan.umn.edu. I believe that every farming operation and agbusiness should have a business plan. A business plan serves as a roadmap for your business, and allows you to put your goals and objectives on paper. I think a lot of people get intimidated by the words “business plan”. The Ag Plan site makes it easy for you to develop a business plan. First you will need to set up a password and user id. Once that is done, you are ready to roll. The website contains tips and resources on what to include in your plan. If you are a visual learner, you can view sample plans for ideas. In addition, you can add reviewers to your plan (like me) who can go online and add comments or suggestions. It is an easy way to start a business plan and get feedback from others. Your information will be completely confidential, and available only to you and the individuals you set as reviewers.

Ag Transition website - https://www.agtransitions.umn.edu/. AgTransitions helps farmers & ranchers develop a plan to transition their business to the next generation. The website contains tips and resources on what you need to include in your plan, and ways to stimulate multi-generational discussions. You can share your plan with family members and your transition team. It gives you the opportunity to interact with reviewers – your business advisors, educators, or consultants – for feedback and assistance.

Interpreting financial statements and measures – www.ifsam.cffm.umn.edu. This website helps you learn to use your financial statements effectively. The website will help you to understand how to interpret common financial statements, acquire an enhanced skill set to aid in managing your farm business, and build self-confidence in the area of finance.

Ag Decision Maker website - http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/. This is an agricultural economics and business website. The website contains informational articles and decision tools (spreadsheets) for crops, livestock, the whole farm, new business ventures, and renewable energy enterprises.

The websites are set up to be very user friendly. Think of them as a 24-hour classroom designed to help you in your farming operation. If you have any questions about the websites or would like me to be a reviewer, call or email me at 660-397-2179 or devlink@missouri.edu.
Performance Tested Bull Sale
The 41st annual sale will be held Saturday, March 30th, 1:00 p.m. at F&T Livestock Market. Catalogs should be available very soon. We have 66 bulls consigned this year. This includes 48 Angus, 8 Simmental, 7 Charolais, and 3 Polled Hereford. There will be several 18 and 24 month old bulls in the sale this year. Slaughter bulls are still bringing a pretty good price if you need to replace an older bull with a good young bull. If you want a catalog contact Daniel Mallory or myself.

Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop (Organized by the Alliance for Grassland Renewal)
This workshop, sometimes is called “the endophyte school,” teaches producers how to replace toxic tall fescue with nontoxic tall fescue. The curriculum of each workshop covers fescue toxicosis, field testing, establishment of novel endophyte fescue, management of new pastures, and seed quality. In addition, it highlights new fescue cultivars with novel endophytes and addresses cost-share opportunities. One of two schools is scheduled for 2013 in the Northeast area. Below is the information and agenda for that school.

The workshop will be held Thursday, March 21 at the University of Missouri Forage Systems Research Center in Linneus, MO. Registration = $60 single, $110 couple. Enrollment is limited to 65 people. For more information, contact Tamie at 660-895-5121 or CarrTa@missouri.edu

Agenda
10:00 am Welcome
10:10 am Fescue Toxicosis
11:00 am Establishment (to include testing)
Noon Lunch (included in registration)
1:00 pm Seed Quality
1:45 pm Management
2:30 Break
3:00 pm Products Available (seed companies, testing)
4:00 pm Incentives (cost-share)
5:30 pm Adjourn

Beef Producer’s Seminar
The MU Greenley Research Center will be hosting a Beef Cattle Seminar on March 14th featuring MU Extension faculty Dr. Ron Plain and Dr. Kelly Nelson. Dr. Plain, MU Extension Agricultural Economist, will discuss the current trends in beef production, trade, domestic supplies, demand factors, and price and profitability prospects for the coming year. Dr. Nelson, Research Agronomist at Greenley Research Center, conducts applied research in agronomic production systems, alternative crops and more. His research emphasizes the integration of crop production systems with the economic realities of farm management. Dr. Nelson will present an interesting program about cover crops for forage production.

The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. with a free meal provided courtesy of the Knox County SWCD, Knox County Farm Bureau, and the Missouri Corn Grower’s Association with the programming beginning at 6:45 p.m. Please RSVP by March 8th to Zac Erwin, MU Livestock Specialist at 573-767-5273, or Karisha Devlin, MU Agri-Business Specialist at 660-397-2179.
Pruning Fruit Trees

Experienced fruit growers often have very complex rules they follow when pruning, choosing specific times of the year to prune and removing branches from different locations depending on the age of the branch or tree. In fact, experienced fruit growers often refer to pruning as “training” and have multiple training methods they use depending on the type of fruit tree and production goals. If you are a beginning fruit tree grower, or are responsible for maintaining a landscape that contains one or more fruit trees such as apple, pear, peach, nectarine, plum, or cherry don’t be intimidated by complex pruning or training systems. Following two general pruning guidelines will benefit most fruit trees without requiring you to learn complex pruning methods. Once you get started pruning you can observe the outcome of your work and decide if you would like to spend time learning more complex pruning methods or just stick with these two simple guidelines.

First, limit stress on the tree by removing less than one third of the canopy each year. Observe the tree from a distance and visually estimate the healthy branches you can remove to be within this limit. Whether removing a few large limbs, or the new growth on several branches, removing roughly one third or less of the canopy will ensure the pruning has a very low risk of stressing the tree. Dead, damaged, or steeply angled limbs are usually the first limbs targeted for removal. If you decide to learn more about pruning you will find that in some cases it is beneficial to remove more than one third, but for beginners one third or less is a good general rule to follow. Second, prune in late fall, winter, or early spring when leaves are not present and the tree is dormant. Experienced growers may suggest pruning only during a specific month of the year for best results, and it is good to follow those suggestions when possible. However, in general, a pruned fruit tree will stay healthier and produce more fruit than an un-pruned fruit tree, regardless of the timing of pruning. That is it! Two guidelines are all you need to know to get started pruning. Remember to be safe when pruning tall trees, and do not use extended handle pruners near electric lines. Of course, there are reasons so many people have developed complex pruning and training systems for fruit trees.

If you are interested in learning more about pruning and training, contact your MU Extension county office or go online to extension.missouri.edu to download free publications that offer pruning advice for common Missouri fruit trees.

Spring Forward Into Gardening Workshop – Saturday March 23, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kirksville Vo-Tech School. $16 registration fee includes lunch, proceeds benefit the Adair County Garden n’ Grow youth gardening program. Pre-registration required by March 19th by calling the Adair County Extension office at (660) 665-9866. More information is available online at http://extension.missouri.edu/adair.

Lewis County Lady Landowner Workshop – Wednesday March 27 10:00a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Methodist Church in Monticello. The workshop is free; registration is required by calling the Lewis County Extension Center at 573-767-5273. Topics will include USDA and MU Extension updates, caring for plants during drought, growing and eating microgreens, the truth about preservatives, organic, and farm estate planning.
Calving Management

While I await the return of calving surveys from the recent Show-Me-Select sale, the calving season continues and producers must recognize that calf losses can be economically devastating for a herd of any size. I would like to highlight some management strategies that producers can utilize to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

Avoiding calving difficulty starts before the calving season begins with proper bull selection, heifer development and culling females with histories of dystocia. When breeding heifers consideration must be placed on choosing a heifer bull; the Show-Me-Select Replacement heifer program has placed strict standards on what is considered to be a calving ease bull. Conversely choosing a bull for your cow herd does not need as much emphasis on Calving Ease (CE). However, producers need to pay close attention to hybrid vigor in crossbreeding systems to avoid increased birth weights.

As calving approaches cows and heifers should be placed where they can be checked often, so that if a problem arises assistance can be given. Special attention should be given to first-calf heifers, because they are the most prone to calving difficulty. Also by having cattle close to a set of working facilities delivering a difficult calf in a timely and efficient manner can be achieved.

Be ready to assist in delivery if reasonable progress stops, normal delivery in cattle should be completed within 2 hours after the water sac appears. Normal calf presentation is front feet forward bottom of the hooves facing downward with the head following on top of the knees. A good relationship with your veterinarian should be established on when to call or attempt a pull alone, and this should be based on your confidence level and experience. Be sure that calving areas are clean and free of items that may injure cattle in the calving process.

Preparing for the Breeding Season

Calving seasons may have just started but it’s not too early to start planning for the breeding season. Here are some key points:

- Pre-breeding vaccinations or de-worming should be completed at least 30 days prior to breeding
- Keep a steady to increasing plane of nutrition (rations less than 16 percent protein)
- Cows should average 45 days postpartum prior to artificial insemination (AI)
- Cows and calves should be clearly and individually identified with legible ear tags and/or brands
- Individual calving dates should be recorded for each cow
- Only use natural service sires that pass breeding soundness exams (BSE)
- Only use AI sires proven to perform effectively in a fixed-time AI program
- Use AI sires that are genetically proven (EPD’s)
- Ensure AI technicians are scheduled for the AI date and capable to perform task
- Check corrals, alleys, and chutes to ensure proper functionality

As a reminder AI breeding barns are available, to make arrangements for your operation contact: Daniel Mallory at 573-985-3911 (malloryd@missouri.edu) or Zac Erwin at 573-767-5273 (erwinz@missouri.edu).