



UK Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
University of Kentucky,

Cooperative Extension Service
University of Kentucky
Department of Horticulture
N-318 Agricultural Science Center
Lexington KY 40546-0091
(859) 257-1477
Fax: (859) 257-2859
extension.ca.uky.edu

Nov.-Dec. 2023

Brett Wolff, Editor
Christy Cassady, Editor/Designer

What's inside

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Coming up

Jan. 2-4 - Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Bowling Green. Details, **Pages 1-2.**

Jan. 22-23 - Indiana Hort Conference & Expo, Danville, IN. For details and to register, visit <https://www.indianahortconference.org>.

Jan. 25-27 - Organic Association of Kentucky Conference, Frankfort, KY. For details, see **Page 6.**

Feb. 15-17 - PickTN Conference, Franklin, TN. For details and to register, visit <https://www.picktnconference.com/register>.

Feb. 15-17 - Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference, Newark, OH. For more information, go to <https://conference.oeffa.org>.

KY Fruit and Vegetable Conference features diverse learning options

From the 2024 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference program

The 2024 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference will be held in-person at the Holiday Inn Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green, KY, on Wednesday and Thursday, January 3rd and 4th. The event will begin on Tuesday, January 2nd with a pre-conference Farmers Market Short Course, Farm Food Safety Plan Writing Workshop, and a Bringing the Farm to School Grower Training followed by Vegetable and Tree and Small Fruit Round Table Discussions.

Conference sessions include Direct Marketing, Commercial Fruit and Vegetable Production, Organic Production, Protected Ag (High Tunnel) Production, a return of the popular Cut Flower Short Course, Beginning Farmer Basics, Marketing and Business Management, and more. Speakers include a number of growers as well as excellent out-of-state speakers. The trade show will feature more than 60 exhibitors. The complete program is available at https://kyhortcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2024-FV-Conf-Program_22Nov2023.pdf.

Registration includes the exhibitor/grower (Wednesday) and conference (Thursday) luncheons featuring Kentucky Proud products. A trading post bulletin board will be available to sell used equipment, so bring along any descriptions containing your name, phone number, and the equipment price for posting.

You may pre-register by mail or [online](#). Please make your room res-

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Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Continued from Page 1

ervations directly with the hotel at 1-800-HOLIDAY using the block code FVC or using the [group booking link](#). The conference block of rooms will be held until December 15th. After this date, room prices will be higher. Be sure to let the hotel know that you will be staying for the Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference to obtain our special room rate for a single or double of \$107.95. If you find that the block of rooms at our conference rate is full on or before December 15th, please call Angela Price (270-393-8668) only to increase the number of rooms that we have blocked. The room cost includes an evening manager's reception with drinks and two breakfast vouchers. We encourage growers to stay at the Holiday Inn adjacent to the Conference Center to help cover meeting overhead expenses.

The \$50 meeting pre-registration fee or \$75 registration on site includes a year's membership in the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association (KVGA), Kentucky State Horticultural Society (KSHS), or the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK) and entrance into all educational sessions as well as lunch on both days. Pre-registration means your tickets and name tag will be ready for you at the registration table when you arrive at the meeting. Name badges will be required to enter meeting rooms. Pre-registration forms or online registrations need to be in our hands by Friday, December 15th. After this date you may continue to register online or on-site at the conference at the \$75 rate. Phone registrations will not be accepted.

If you would like to serve on the KVGA or KSHS boards of directors or would like to nominate another member, please designate this at registration. If you are unable to attend and you would like to remain a member of the KVGA, KSHS, or OAK, please complete online registration or return the registration form with a check to KHC, PO Box 21736, Lexington, KY 40522-1736 to continue your association membership.

Please check the conference website at <https://kyhortcouncil.org/2024-ky-fruit-vegetable-conference/> for information about meeting updates.

Direct Marketing Session

January 3rd, 2024 Bowling Green, KY

@ KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference

(2) DIRECT MARKETING

Ballroom A

Sharon Spencer, Presiding

- 1:30 p.m. Propagate Profits Through On-Farm Retail — Megan Bruch Leffew
- 2:00 p.m. *Continued*
- 2:30 p.m. **Cider/Coffee Break and Visit Exhibits — Foyer Areas and Ballroom D**
- 3:10 p.m. Adding Value to Your Farm Operation with Meat Sales — Greg Rentfrow
- 3:40 p.m. Kentucky Local Food Consumer Insights: 2024 Edition — Emily Spencer, Brett Wolff, Tim Woods
- 4:10 p.m. Moving Your Business Forward — Helpful Financial and Marketing Tips — Amanda Kelly
- 4:40 p.m. *Continued*

Beginning Farmer Basics Session

January 3rd, 2024 Bowling Green, KY

@ KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference

(5) BEGINNING FARMER BASICS

Meeting Rooms 1&2

Delia Scott, Presiding

- 1:30 p.m. Beginning Farmer Resources — Delia Scott
- 2:00 p.m. Producer Perspective — Jacob Abbott
- 2:30 p.m. **Cider/Coffee Break and Visit Exhibits — Foyer Areas and Ballroom D**
- 3:10 p.m. What Your Soil Can Do For You — Becky Gillfillen
- 3:40 p.m. USDA NRCS Opportunities for New and Beginning Farmers — Jeran Lane and Katie Smith
- 4:10 p.m. Business Basics — Spencer Guinn
- 4:40 p.m. Introduction to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) — Jonathan Larson

Cut Flower Short Course

January 4th, 2024 Bowling Green, KY

@ KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference

(10) CUT FLOWER SHORT COURSE

Meeting Rooms 1&2

Alexis Sheffield, Presiding

- 8:30 a.m. Blooming Opportunities: Digging Up Opportunities for Your Business — Angela Watson
- 9:00 a.m. Who's That Bug: ID and Scouting Tips — Jonathan Larson
- 9:30 a.m. Maximizing Cut Flower Profits Through the Inclusion Of Dual-Purpose Vegetable Varieties — Eva Bogue and Anna Claire Griggs
- 10:00 a.m. **Cider/Coffee Break and Visit Exhibits — Foyer Areas and Ballroom D**
- 10:40 a.m. Are Hardy Annuals Hard to Grow? — Tara Watkins
- 11:10 a.m. It's a Bug Eat Bug World: Biological Control Basics — Jonathan Larson

(16) SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER SHORT COURSE

Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

Kristin Hildabrand, Presiding

- 1:30 p.m. Tips and Tricks for High Tunnel Growing — Alexis Sheffield
- 2:00 p.m. Kentucky Cut Flower Wholesale Collectives — SOKY Floral Exchange and Kentucky Flower Market
- 2:30 p.m. Making the Workshop Work for You — Savannah Columbia
- 3:10 p.m. Inviting the Public to Your Farm: What You Need to Know — Michelle Wheeler

2023 Plant Hardiness Zone Map published

By Joshua Knight, Senior Extension Associate, Horticulture

The [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map \(PHZM\)](#) is a standard for gardeners and growers to determine which perennial plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is calculated and modeled using average annual extreme minimum temperatures over a 30-year period (1991-2020) and is updated about every 10 years since first developed. The two most recent revisions have been prepared by the PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University, which also [makes the GIS data publicly available](#) for generating additional maps.

The map divides the country into zones representing a spread of 10°F (zones 1-13), each subdivided into two half-zones with 5°F spreads (e.g., zone 6a and 6b) with resolution down to a little under 0.5 miles across the entire country. The lower the number of the zone, the lower the average annual extreme minimum temperature.

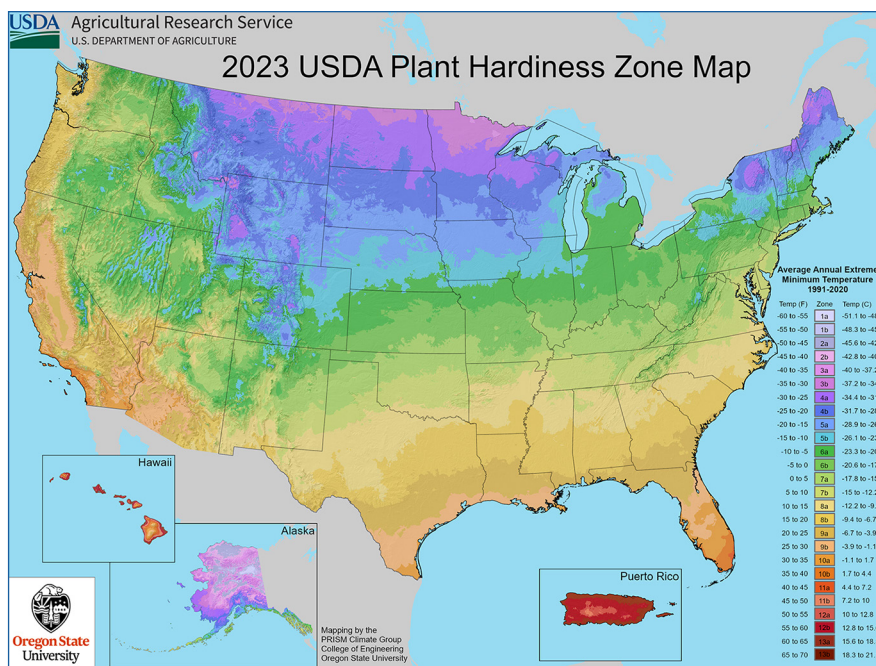
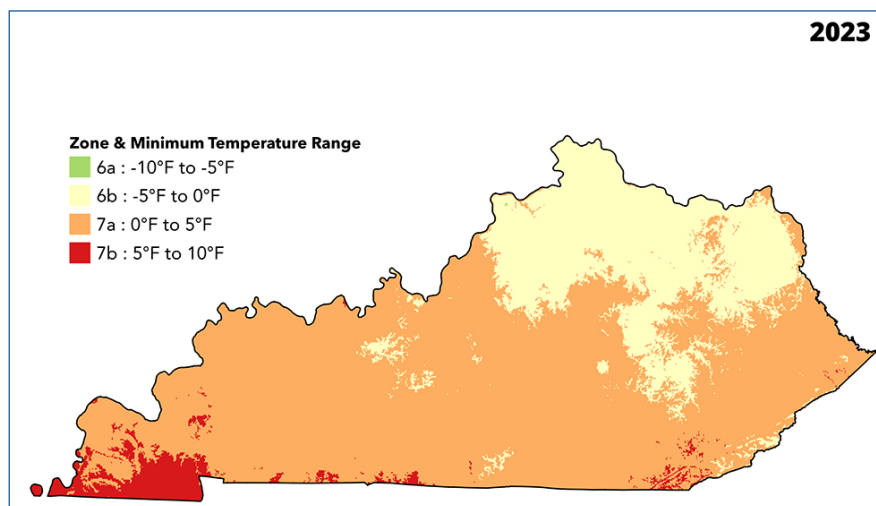
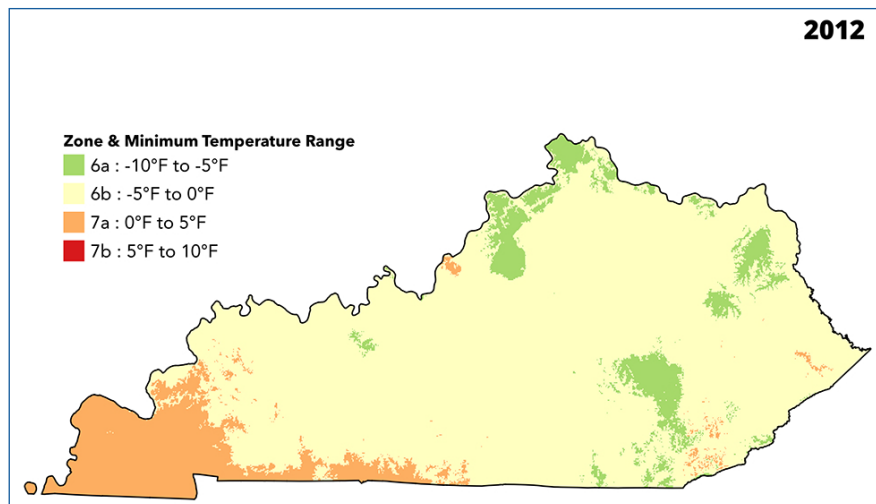
If we use this data and focus exclusively on Kentucky, we can see how the climate patterns have shifted in the last 10 years.

Clearly, the zones have shifted to reflect warmer annual extreme minimum temperatures across the commonwealth. This does not represent the coldest temperature ever recorded or expected in an area, but is an average of the lowest winter temperature for a given location from 1991-2020.

For more detailed information about how Plant Hardiness Zone Maps came about or how they can be applied to horticultural production, see [Horticultural Applications of a Newly Revised USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#).

Though originally published for the 2012 map, the strategies for risk management or survival prediction for the cultivation of woody and herbaceous perennial plants are the same.

An updated map focusing on Kentucky data is now available at the [Center for Crop Diversification Printable Maps page](#).



University of Kentucky Extension Enhances Small-Scale Specialty Crop Production

Kentucky ranks 5th in number of farms but 38th in farm size. More than 20% of the farms are less than 9 acres, many of which grow specialty crops like fruits and vegetables. Kentucky also has the largest number of high tunnels - which extend the growing season and provide protection for crops - in the Southeast.

Extension supports the small-scale specialty crop industry with research-based programming and outreach efforts.



Education and training translates research into actionable knowledge and promotes best practices for specialty crop production. Extension Specialists and Associates provide workshops, trainings, seminars, field days, demonstrations and educational resources on various topics to enhance the production, management and marketing of specialty crops. The [*UK Extension Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) program*](#) provides technical guidance and research-based education and outreach to help farmers address disease, insect and weed management. The [*UK Pesticide Safety Education Program*](#) provides training and certification of private pesticide applicators to support safe and responsible use.



Virtual and hybrid programming make research-based education and resources available and accessible to specialty crop farmers. Extension offers on-demand videos and live-streamed virtual field days and demonstrations to connect specialty crop farmers with resources.



Strategic partnerships enhance rapid response to emerging needs and trends, creating new market opportunities for specialty crop growers. For example, the annual [*Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference*](#), which is devoted to fruit and vegetable production, handling, harvesting, marketing, storage and related topics, is presented in cooperation with the Kentucky Horticulture Council, UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, Kentucky State University College of Food Science and Sustainable Systems and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.



Beginning and experienced specialty crop farmers have access to needed resources. The [*UK Division of Regulatory Services*](#) provides affordable diagnostic services for soil testing, while the [*UK Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab*](#) provides free plant health, entomology and pathology services. Likewise, the [*UK Center for Crop Diversification*](#) provides various online resources and publications including decision tools, crop profiles, market channels, market development opportunities, enterprise budget planning tools, market price reports and price indices. The center also supports produce auctions and farmers markets.

Capacity building for emerging needs is critical. For many small-scale specialty crop farmers, county Extension agents are the first point of contact for technical guidance on production and management issues. Extension uses a train-the-trainer model, where specialists teach county agents who then provide technical assistance to growers, to build and sustain the capacity of agents to help farmers.

Results

Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) Outcomes

167 CCD supported farmers markets across the state

405 KY producers used CCD's Horticulture Business Quiz to explore new crop and market options

65K users visited the CCD website in 2023

200,000+ publications and other resources downloaded from the CCD website in 2023

600+

new pesticide applicators

10K+

clients/farmers trained and certified on pesticide safety and pest management strategies

1,600+

farmers and farmers market vendors gained knowledge of crop diversification

580+

growers diversified their crops

500

growers, researchers, and technical service providers attend the two-day Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable conference and pre-conference events each year

170

educational videos focused on specialty crops have attracted 1,644 subscribers and nearly 190,000 views

Commercial Horticulture Outcomes

694 growers adopted techniques that extend the growing season

131 growers conducted foliar tissue testing

460 growers implemented irrigation systems

852 growers planned and practiced crop rotation

Links



Vegetable Scouting Guides



Vegetable Crops Extension & Research



UK entomologist Bessin among winners of 2023 SOAR Award

Dr. Ric Bessin, an extension professor in the University of Kentucky's Department of Entomology, received a 2023 SOAR Award from the [The IR-4 Project](#). Bessin has served as the IR-4 State Liaison Representative (SLR) for Kentucky for many years. In addition to being his department's Extension coordinator and go-to specialty crop

expert, Bessin is the Pesticide Safety Education program lead and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) coordinator. The SOAR Award honors external partners who exemplify the areas of Service, Outreach, Altruism and Research, while supporting specialty crop growers and the mission of The IR-4 Project.

OAK Conference early bird pricing deadline is Dec. 15th

From the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK)

Join us for [OAK's 13th Annual Farming Conference](#): Advancing Organics in Kentucky: Adopting Practices, Increasing Resilience and Strengthening Systems! This January 2024 gathering offers three days of learning, connecting and exploring with the expanding OAK community.

This event is open to everyone. Take advantage of early bird pricing - [register by December 15th](#) and plan to join us on January 25th-27th, 2024, at KSU's Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort.

Don't miss the opportunity to immerse yourself in a half-day pre-conference workshop with experienced farmers and content experts on January 25th.

Morning workshops

Introduction to Seed Growing in the Southeast (Chris Smith)

Five Steps to Your Regenerative Resilience Plan: A Workshop for Farmers (Laura Lengnick)

No-Till Cover Cropping Strategies on Small to Medium Scale (Jesse Frost and Susana Lein, with Joel Dufour, Shawn Lucas)

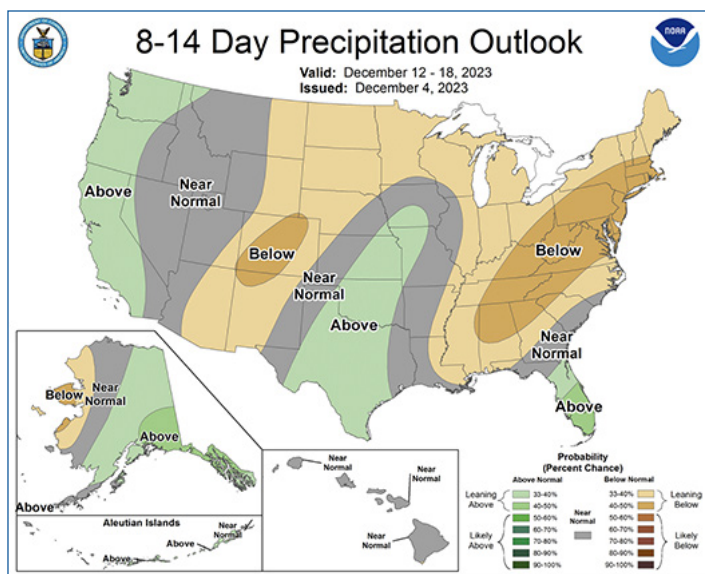
Afternoon workshops

Regenerative Grazing Ecosystem Function and the Tool of Livestock (J. Dylan Kennedy, with Adam Jones, Mike Wilson, Annie Woods)

The Science and Practice of Off-Season Organic Production (Tony Silvernail, Joel Dufour, Krista Jacobsen, Nathan Lind, Shawn Lucas)

Want to Grow Fruit? Small Fruits for Kentucky (Blake Cothron)

Raising Goats in Kentucky (Von Barnes, Emily Clement, Fatima Jackson, Holly Robinson, McKinley Stonewall)



Late December warmer than average, precipitation variable

By Joshua Knight, Sr. Extension Associate, Horticulture

Near normal temperatures are predicted in the first half of December for Kentucky and much of the Upland South. With warmer than average patterns to our east and west, the NOAA's Climate Prediction Center shows a high probability of warmer than average conditions in the commonwealth after mid-December and likely to the end of the year.

December starts with wet conditions and above average precipitation patterns are forecast as we move into the second week of December, especially for the eastern half of Kentucky. Drier than average conditions are expected by mid-December, though these may not last. The current long-range outlook calls for equal chances of drier or wetter than average conditions as we reach the end of 2023. Overall, the U.S. Monthly Drought Monitor update at the end of November expects drought conditions to persist for central and eastern Kentucky through December and into early 2024.



Photos by Emily Spencer, UK

Maggie Bowling, Old Homeplace Farm.



Clockwise, from top left: David Walker, Walker Family Farms; Maggie Dungan, Salad Days Farm; Joana Amorim, Sylvatica Forest Farm; Jim Coleman, Coleman Crest Farm.

CCD's Producer Voices videos feature growers from around Kentucky

*By Emily Spencer, Extension Associate,
UK Agricultural Economics*

The Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) launched its new monthly video training series Producer Voices in October. The Producer Voices series is led by Emily Spencer, an Extension Associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics. The series features growers from around Kentucky who discuss different aspects of their growing operation in depth - from marketing to record keeping and more. The first episode, Making Time for Marketing, featured Lesley Dennis, owner and operator of Solway Farms in Eastview, KY. Lesley walked the team through what her marketing plan looks like week-by-week

and how she makes marketing work alongside her growing and harvesting schedule. The second episode was a three-part release on Farm Retail spaces, featuring three different retail operations: small, mid, and large scale. The producers featured in this episode are Maggie Dungan of Salad Days Farm in Versailles, KY, Jeff and Sara Pettit of Faith Acres Farm in Butler, KY and Rhonda Cornett of Cornett Farm Fresh in London, KY. The series aims to educate other producers in the state by showcasing the lived experiences of other Kentucky farmers. The series can be viewed on the Center for Crop Diversification Youtube channel, [@ukyccd](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCycccd). If there are episode topics that you would like to see, please send an email to emilyspencer@uky.edu.

KY Christmas Tree Farm Map

*By Tara Watkins, UK Extension Associate
for Commercial Ornamentals*

Everyone has at least one Christmas tradition. For some, it is visiting a farm to pick out a real Christmas tree with those they love. KY farmers are rising to the occasion to meet the growing demand for real Christmas trees, as the state's industry has seen significant growth in recent years. To ring in the most wonderful time of the year, we have developed an interactive directory map that allows you to easily find a Christmas tree farm near you. If you want to support KY agriculture and proudly display a KY-grown tree in your home or business for the holidays, [visit the map](#) to find a farm near you! If you are a KY Christmas tree producer and want to be added to the map, email tara.watkins@uky.edu.



Please help Kentucky Extension and the CCD serve you better

From the UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Program and Staff Development website

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Extension) is the local outreach arm of the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and Kentucky State University College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment. Extension provides practical, research-based education that helps individuals, families and communities solve problems and improve lives. Extension addresses issues (e.g., farming, gardening, parenting, budgeting, healthy living, and youth, community, and economic development) that are important to Kentuckians.

We are inviting you to complete a survey to help us understand the needs and priorities within your community. Your responses will help everyone in Extension, including the Center for Crop Diversification (CCD), tailor new and existing educational programs and outreach to address the issues that directly impact you, your family, and/or your community.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, go to <https://psd.ca.uky.edu/communityassessment>. The survey closes on December 18th.

FSA offers programs for honeybee producers

From the Somerset USDA Service Center

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) and the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.

NAP is designed to reduce financial losses when natural disasters result in lower yields or crop losses, including honey. For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov.

KENTUCKY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

KENTUCKY STATE
UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment

How can we
serve you, Kentucky?

Take a **ten-minute** survey to help us develop
programs addressing needs in your community.

[go.uky.edu/serveKY](https://psd.ca.uky.edu/serveKY)

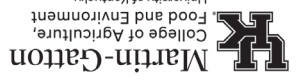
An Equal Opportunity Organization.

Thanks for reading!

If you know someone who would enjoy our newsletter, or you're not subscribed yet yourself, visit www.uky.edu/ccd/newsletter and click "Subscribe Now." Or call Brett Wolff at 859-218-4384, or Christy Cassady at 859-257-5635. Stay up to date with the Center on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ccduky/>

Christy Cassady

Christy Cassady, Extension Specialist



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