The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.
Basic Steps for Planting Legumes

Site selection is important for maintaining good legume stands. Avoid shallow, droughty soils and sites with very low soil fertility or heavy weed infestation. Several methods can be used to successfully establish legumes into a grass sod. The basic steps for success of any method include:

1. Establishing adequate soil pH and fertility
2. Controlling weeds prior to and after planting
3. Removing the grass canopy and excess residue before planting
4. Calibrating planting equipment for correct seeding rate
5. Providing good seed-to-soil contact during planting
6. Planting at the correct depth
7. Controlling the grass canopy after planting to reduce competition
8. Using proper grazing or hay harvest to allow legume persistence

Conversely, the most common reasons for unsuccessful legume establishment include excessive grass residue at planting time, poor weed control, low soil fertility, planting too deep, poor seed-to-soil contact, planting too late in fall or spring, causing excess grass competition by applying nitrogen fertilizer or litter and overgrazing.

Field Preparation

Fields should be clipped or grazed as closely as possible to remove the grass canopy and excess thatch before planting. In heavy grass residue, no-till drills perform poorly and broadcast seed will not reach the soil surface. Closely grazed grass stubble of two inches or less is ideal. Research at the Livestock and Forestry Research Station near Batesville showed no difference in stand counts between no-till or broadcast methods for establishing white clover. No-till drills should be calibrated and set to plant the seed an average depth of ¼ inch but no more than ½ inch deep. Note that the depth of cut into the sod by the drill’s disk openers sets the depth of seed placement. Shallow planting is far more successful for legume establishment than deep planting. Good success is often achieved by adjusting the disk openers to barely cut the sod and adjusting more down-pressure on the following press wheels. This allows the seed to drop to the soil surface and be firmed into the soil surface by the press wheels. When planting with a broadcast planter, roughing up the short sod by pulling a harrow, tire drag or even a cedar tree across the field exposes soil and improves legume establishment. Seeds that drop onto a slightly loosened soil surface will become anchored in place by action of frost or rain. Well-anchored seeds have a higher chance of forming established seedlings than seeds lying in thatch or on a hard soil surface. During germination, the seed must be well-anchored for the emerging root to penetrate the soil. If the seed is not well-anchored, the growing root pushes the seed away from the soil surface, leaving both the seed and root exposed. This reduces seedling survival and causes poor stand establishment.

Planting Legumes in Fescue and Other Cool-Season Grasses

Legumes can be planted into fescue and cool-season grass sods during fall or in late winter. Planting in late winter (February to early March) is sometimes called “frost-seeding” because freezing and thawing of soil helps work the legume seed into the soil surface. The fescue is usually grazed very short during winter so the small legume seed can reach the soil surface. An effective method also is to over seed legumes after stockpiled fescue has been completely grazed in late winter. Fall planting, late September to mid-October, can be successful if the fescue is grazed short (2- to 3-inch stubble). Fescue can produce heavy growth in fall, making it competitive for soil moisture during dry fall seasons.

Planting Legumes in Bermudagrass or Bahiagrass

Fall (late September to mid-October) is the preferred season for planting legumes into bermudagrass or bahiagrass sod. The reason is that warm-season grasses start to go dormant in fall when night temperatures drop below 60°F and they are not competitive with the legume seedlings. Planting during this period allows enough time for adequate seedling development before onset of cold weather. Fall establishment also allows the legume to have a developed root system for rapid growth in spring before warm-season grasses become competitive. Clipping or grazing the sod to a 2-inch stubble height before planting improves establishment success. Winter annual legumes are commonly grown in bermudagrass and bahiagrass pastures to provide forage in spring before the warm-season grasses become productive. Typical winter annual species include crimson clover, arrowleaf clover and hairy vetch. Winter annual legumes should be planted in fall for best results. Dry matter yield of winter annual legumes planted in February is lower and the production is typically delayed compared to fall plantings.
Beef Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is simply the consumer has confidence they are receiving a quality product that is safe and good to eat. Consumers are concerned about the safety of the food they eat. The perception of safety and wholesomeness plays a major role in the buying decisions of a health- and diet-conscious America.

In the past decades maybe even centuries, people rarely questioned the source of their food or its safety. In the past, Farmers just had to worry about producing crops and livestock and paying the bills to make a living for their families. Today, Farmers have these same responsibilities along with the added job of educating a majority of the population who knows nothing about how their food is produced. We have to do all things that lead to an excellent perception in food production from the farm to the table.

The overall goal of the Arkansas Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) is to encourage the consistent production of high quality cattle in Arkansas, enhancing the reputation of Arkansas cattle and ensuring their health and wholesomeness. Educational efforts center on cow calf and stocker cattle management practices such as proper handling, injection-site techniques, etc., that affect beef value and quality.

The Arkansas BQA Program offers producers two levels of participation.

Level 1 - Voluntary Participation: Producers can participate in this level by reading the BQA Handbook and adopting BQA guidelines. Participation is voluntary and will place the producer on the BQA mailing list for future updates.

Level 2 - BQA Certification: Producers can participate in Level 2 by successfully completing the Arkansas Beef Quality Assurance Producer Certification Exam, signing the BQA Producer Contract and returning the enrollment form, the exam, and the contract to the address indicated on the form. Upon successful completion of the exam and receipt of a signed contract, the producer will be issued a BQA certification number, BQA certificate, BQA ID card, and property sign. The producer will also be placed on the mailing list for future updates.

For more information on the Arkansas Beef Quality Assurance Program go to [www.arkansasbeef.org/bqa](http://www.arkansasbeef.org/bqa) or call the Van Buren County Extension office at (501)745-7117.

Controlling Buttercup in Pastures and Hayfields

Between the middle of April and May each year, I get many questions on how to control that weed in my fields with that little yellow flower on it. Why then, because at that time when Buttercup is blooming in most fields, it looks like a sea of yellow. Buttercup is a winter annual weed common to our area that will infest pastures reoccurring each fall and winter. Buttercup and most winter annual weeds usually germinate appearing very small and sometimes unnoticed in the fall of the year. They are ready to suck up your money by robbing the grass in your fields of the fertilizer that you apply in late winter and spring. Actually, these weeds rob you twice. First in using your fertilizer dollars up for a plant that is less desirable to your livestock, and, second by outcompeting desirable grasses and legumes for grazing or hay production. Controlling weeds in general, should involve more than herbicides. An integrated approach of methods involving soil fertility, grazing management, and herbicides should be used. Buttercups and many winter annual weeds can be controlled for herbicide cost of $1.60 to $2.10 per acre when very small in late fall or early winter. There is not much else you can do to a pasture or hayfield to gain grass yield any cheaper. If you allow these weeds to grow larger in the spring, you may be looking at cost up to $4.20 per acre and loss of some grass production. The ideal time to control Buttercup and other winter annual weeds is from late October through March. That is a longer window than what most people allow which is usually March and April when it is windy and rainy. November, December, January, and February will have many days that are 50 degrees F or above. When we have two to three days together that are 50 degrees, spraying conditions are ideal for winter weeds. If using your sprayer in late fall, winter, or early spring, make sure to take extra precaution to protect your spray pump and other parts from freezing. If you are interested in developing a weed control program including herbicides, you will need to attend a Private Applicator Training this winter or spring due to some of the herbicides you may need could be Restricted Use Pesticides. The Van Buren and Searcy County Cooperative Extension offices of the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture will be conducting one of these trainings Tuesday March 8, 2016 at 6:30 pm at Leslie School’s cafeteria. The cost of the training is $10 per person.

Alternate Private Applicator Trainings – contact these offices to check any time and location changes.

*Mon, March 14, 2016: 1 PM - 2:30 PM @Faulkner County Extension Office , 844 Faulkner Street, Conway, AR 72034 (501)329-8344
*Tue, March 15, 2016: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM @UACCM Auditorium-Morrilton (501)354-9618
Spring Break Adventure Camp

This year during spring break we are planning to have a Tri-County camp at Blanchard Springs. We will go on a tour of Blanchard Springs Caverns and afterwards there will be lessons on the great outdoors. The afternoon will be left for families to explore the park on their own. More information about the camp will follow. We will send out an email, post it on Facebook, and mail a letter out about the upcoming camp.

Make a Snack for Wildlife

You Will Need
- Several large pinecones
- Peanut butter (vegetable shortening for people with nut allergies)
- Birdseed
- String, pipe cleaners or wire
- Scissors (if using string)
- Butter knife
- 2 or more plates
- A place to hang your bird feeder

#1: Tie a String or Pipe Cleaner to a Pinecone
#2: Spread the Peanut Butter on the Pinecone
#3: Roll It in Birdseed
#4: Once it’s covered, press the birdseed into the peanut butter and roll some more.
#5: Hang Bird Feeders Outside in a Place Your Family can Enjoy!!

Check out this website: http://www.birdsofarkansas.org/ to learn more about the birds that visit your backyard!
Congratulations Record Book Winners

Cloverbud: Makayla Jones, Kendall Jones, Creed Leonard, Tommy Stone, & Theo Cooper.


Intermediate: Tanner Riddle, Kyle Evans

Advanced: Taylor Holland, Dakota Mooney

Babysitting Basics

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is offering a “Babysitting Basics” workshop on Thursday, March 24 and Friday, March 5 from 9:30 am to 3 pm each day at the Van Buren County Extension office. The cost of the classes is $10 for each person. The workshop is for youth ages 12 and older who are interested in learning how to safely care for young children. Participants will learn about the responsibilities of a babysitter, understanding children (infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children) and their care, behavior and guidance, the importance of play and appropriate toys and activities, safety and emergency procedures including basic first aid, and business basics. The curriculum includes individual and small group activities and hands on practice in caring for infants. Participants must attend all ten hours of training to receive a certificate of completion for the course. Pre-registration is required by Friday, March 18. Lunch and snacks will be provided as well as a notebook of handouts and resources.

To register, contact the Van Buren County Extension office at 501-745-7117.
**Extension Get Fit**

The National Institute on Aging and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services both recommend performing different types or kinds of exercise. Participation in all four types of exercise is needed for the full health benefit of physical activity. The types of exercise are balance, endurance or aerobics, strength training or weight lifting, and stretching or flexibility. The key to fitness is to do all four of the major types of exercise regularly and increase your level of intensity over time. The good news is the Extension Get Fit program does all four. Currently there are FIVE Extension Get Fit classes happening in and around the county.

- Alread class meets at the Alread EHC Building on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 AM.
- Chimes class meets at the Chimes Community Building meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 AM.
- Shirley class meets at the Shirley Senior Center meets Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:00 AM.
- Peace Lutheran Church meets Wednesdays and Fridays at 1:30 PM.
- Dennard class is working out a new time schedule but for more information contact Debra Huie at debra.huie@gmail.com or Torrie Caston.

The cost of joining a class is $12 per year. If you are interested in an Extension Get Fit class getting started in your community or interested in more information, contact Torrie Caston at the Extension Office at 501-745-7117.

---

**CROCKPOT FAJITAS**

**SERVES: 10**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Red Bell Pepper/ Sliced
- 1 Yellow Bell Pepper/ Sliced
- 1 Green Bell Pepper/ Sliced
- 1 Yellow Onion/ Sliced
- 2 lbs Boneless Skinless Chicken Breasts/ Cut in half
- 2 Tbsp. Taco Seasoning (or See Recipe Below to make your own)
- 4 Cloves Garlic/ Diced
- 1 Lime
- 1 10oz Can Diced Tomatoes with Green Chilies/ Drained

For Serving: (Optional)
- Flour Tortillas
- Cheese
- Sour Cream
- Guacamole

**Directions:**
Add half of the sliced peppers and onions to your slow cooker. Next, layer the chicken and coat all sides with taco seasoning. Top with garlic, tomatoes (be sure to drain) and the juice from one lime.
Add the remaining peppers and onions, cover, and cook on HIGH for 3-4 hours. Remove chicken and cut/shred into slices (chicken left longer will tend to shred more - cook to your preference). Return the sliced chicken to the slow cooker to marinate in the juices for about 10 more minutes (on LOW) until ready to serve. If you find that there is too much liquid, you can remove until there is a desired amount before serving. Assemble Fajitas to your liking - we recommend topping with cheese, sour cream, and guacamole! Enjoy!

---

*To make your own Taco Seasoning at home mix:*

- 1 Tbsp. Chili Powder
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1/2 tsp Onion Powder
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne Pepper
- 1/3 tsp Oregano
- 1/2 tsp Paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp Ground Cumin
- 1 tsp Black Pepper
- 1 tsp Corn Starch
- 1 tsp Salt

---
The 2015 Opportunity Quilt winner was Jim Bradley from Shirley

EHC We need your blocks! We are planning to have the best Opportunity Quilt ever in 2017. We will be celebrating our 100th anniversary of the extension clubs in our county. To go along with that occasion, we are asking each club to make 2 blocks that will be included in this special quilt. The blocks should have "Arkansas" in the name or represent something for the past 100 years. Blocks we already have collected from the past few Quilt Shows include: Arkansas Crossroads, Arkansas Snowflake, Rail Fence, an appliqued cowboy boot, Arkansas Traveler and Bear Paw. Blocks should measure 12 1/2" square, unfinished. Help us make this the best ever Opportunity Quilt. Contact Kay Bensuk with any questions about this project at 745-3454.

EHC Spring Bake/Plant Sale will be on Friday, 6 May, in front of Cash Saver Grocery Store. Items should be wrapped in clear plastic, so customers can see the product. There is always requests for sugar-free products.

Get Your Walking Shoes and a Team to Walk Across Arkansas this Spring!

Walk Across Arkansas, an eight-week opportunity that has inspired thousands of Arkansans to get moving, begins February 15.
The Walk Across Arkansas campaign is coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service of the University Of Arkansas System Division Of Agriculture. Participating is easy: Collect a team of between 2 to 10 people, choose a captain, a team name, find a stopwatch, good walking shoes and set a personal goal and track your progress.

Although the program is called Walk Across Arkansas you can conduct any activity you want (swimming, running, bike riding, etc) to count for the program. Exercise qualifies as any activity that is performed "with the intent to be physically active, raises heart rate and/or causes you to break a sweat" for at least 10 minutes at a time.

The first step in registration is the team captain creating the team on-line! Registration opens February 8. Sign up can be found on the main page of: www.uaex.edu by clicking the WAA logo. At the WAA site, there is a list of options, and one is the team registration. The Team Captain must follow the steps to register the team. Team members cannot register until the team captain registers the team first. After the Team captain registers the team, there is a slight delay before the team members can register. This delay is to double-check the information entered. The delay ranges from a few minutes to a day as it must be done by person. For individuals to register, they must select their team on the registration site. Teams are listed by county. Once their team is selected, then follow the on-line directions.

For more information about Walk Across Arkansas or any other health and nutrition programs, contact Torrie Caston, County Extension Agent at (501)745-7117.

Get yourself a team and start Walking Across Arkansas!
Van Buren County Extension Office
1414 Hwy 65 S. ~ Suite 137
Clinton, Arkansas 72031
501-745-7117

Danny Griffin
County Extension Agent
~ Staff Chair

Kerri Jones
Administrative Support Supervisor

Sincerely,

Danny Griffin
County Extension Agent
~ Staff Chair

Torrie Caston
County Extension Agent
~ Family & Consumer Science/ 4-H

All meetings and activities announced in this newsletter are open to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the county Extension office as soon as possible prior to the activity.