

Bell County Homemaker Newsletter

January/February 2025



Quote of the Month

“The new year is not just about a change in the calendar; it’s about setting fresh goals, embracing new opportunities, and believing in your own potential”.

-Unknown

Office Closures & Inclement Weather

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Jan, 20th.
- If the Bell County School System cancels school due to winter conditions, programs held at our office will also be cancelled.

Slow Cooker Tips for Warm Winter Soups and Stews

Slow cookers are electric appliances that are easy and convenient. You can use them to make soups and stews which are budget-friendly dishes you can stretch over several meals or feed a larger crowd. Use smaller slow cookers, in the range of 2 to 4 quarts, to feed one or two people. Larger slow cookers, 5 to 6 quarts, can feed larger families or gatherings. When preparing a soup or stew, make sure to fill the slow cooker at least halfway but no more than three-fourths full. This helps food cook evenly and reduces food safety concerns.

- Chop vegetables into similarly sized pieces to ensure even cooking. Vegetables that cook well within the slow cooker are onions, carrots, potatoes, parsnips, celery, and green beans.
- Add vegetables to the slow cooker first. They cook slowly and need direct contact with the heat.
- For soups and stews that have pasta in them, add the dry pasta about 30 minutes before serving time. This will cook your pasta without making it too mushy.
- When adding liquid, make sure to cover all the vegetables. The fluid level should almost cover the meat entirely to ensure heat transfer and thorough cooking. Common liquids used in soups and stews are water, chicken broth, beef broth, and vegetable stock.
- Don't forget to add flavor and depth using dried herbs and spices. Bay leaves, parsley, and oregano are common in slow cooker meals. Dried herbs will handle the heat of the slow cooker better over a longer period of time compared to fresh herbs. If you're making a soup or stew with no recipe, it may take trial and error to find the level of flavor that you enjoy.

- Rinsed, canned beans, lentils, and chickpeas (garbanzo beans) are a budget-friendly and nutritious protein source that you can add to a soup or stew at the beginning of the cooking time.
- If you're adding cream or a dairy product to the soup or stew, add it within the last hour of the cooking time. This will preserve the texture and creaminess of the soup or stew.
- If adding animal protein, trim the fat from the meat and cut into smaller, evenly sized pieces. Consider tougher cuts of meat that may be on sale such as chuck roast, stew meat, brisket, shoulder, or ribs. The ideal cut of poultry for a slow cooker soup or stew is chicken thighs. Place the meat or poultry on top of the vegetables.

Serve your soup or stew with whole-grain crackers or toast and a side of fruit for a well-balanced and nutritious meal.

With a little information, you can take several items you have on hand and pull together a hearty, nutritious winter meal that requires little time and attention. For more information about slow cookers, recipes, and food safety, connect with your local County Extension Office.



Upcoming Programs & Announcements

PLEASE CALL TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS (606-337-2376)



JAN. 21 WITS WORKOUT- EXTENSION OFFICE- 1:00PM
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARPEN YOUR MIND AND ENGAGE IN SOME BRAIN ACTIVITY? JOIN US FOR SOME FUN!

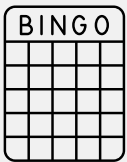
JAN. 30 BEGINNER CROCHET WORKSHOP- EXTENSION OFFICE- 5:00PM



FEB. 5 HOMEMAKER COUNCIL MEETING- EXTENSION OFFICE- 10:00AM

FEB. 18 PASTA- EXTENSION OFFICE- 11:00AM

FEB. 25 AREA HOMEMAKER LEADER TRAINING- LAUREL CO. EXTENSION OFFICE- 10:00AM
LESSONS AT 10:00, FOLLOWED BY A CRAFT AND LUNCH. A REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH CLUB NEEDS TO ATTEND



BINGOCIZE IS BACK!

JOIN US EVERY MONDAY AND FRIDAY IN FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL AT 10:00 AM. WE WILL EXERCISE AND PLAY BINGO, WHILE IMPROVING STABILITY AND AIDING FALL PREVENTION. CALL TO REGISTER.



Recipe of the Month

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 180 CALORIES; 2.5G TOTAL FAT; 0.5G SATURATED FAT; 0G TRANS FAT; 35MG CHOLESTEROL; 740MG SODIUM; 23G CARBOHYDRATE; 4G FIBER; 6G SUGAR; 17G PROTEIN; 10% DAILY VALUE OF VITAMIN A; 15% DAILY VALUE OF VITAMIN C; 4% DAILY VALUE OF CALCIUM; 8% DAILY VALUE OF IRON

INGREDIENTS

- 4 THAWED BONELESS, SKINLESS CHICKEN BREASTS
- 1 (7 OUNCE) CAN CHOPPED GREEN CHILIES
- 1 (8 OUNCE) BAG FROZEN CORN
- 1 (28 OUNCE) CAN DICED TOMATOES, NO SALT ADDED
- 1 (15 OUNCE) CAN BLACK BEANS
- 1 (14 OUNCE) CAN OR BOX VEGETABLE BROTH, NO SALT ADDED
- 1 (32 OUNCE) BOX LOW-SODIUM CHICKEN BROTH
- 3 TABLESPOONS LOW SODIUM CHILI SEASONING MIX

DIRECTIONS:

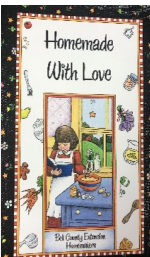
1. PLACE ALL INGREDIENTS IN SLOW COOKER AND SIMMER ON LOW 6-8 HOURS OR 3-4 HOURS ON HIGH.
2. REMOVE COOKED CHICKEN AND SHRED WITH TWO FORKS.
3. RETURN CHICKEN TO SOUP AND IT IS READY-TO-SERVE.



SLOW COOKER CHICKEN SANTA FE SOUP

SERVINGS:8 SERVING SIZE:2 CUPS

Bell County Homemakers "Homemade with Love" Cookbooks \$15



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Equal Opportunity Office, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Kentucky, Room S-105, Agriculture Science Building, North Lexington, Kentucky 40546,
The UK Office of Equal Opportunity, 13 Main Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0032 or
US Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

What is a Farm Number and Why do I need one?

<https://www.kcard.info/news2/farm-numbers>

What is a farm serial number (FSN)?

Just as a Social Security number is a unique identifier for a person, a farm serial number is a unique identifier for parcels of land, not to be confused with an Employer Identification Number (EIN) which is specific to the business operation. The farm number is used to identify the property when applying for grants, loans, and some governmental programs.

Why do I need one?

To apply for programs such as crop insurance, FSA farm loans, disaster assistance, and most recently, programs such as Pandemic Assistance for Producers and Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) you must have registered and received a farm serial number through their offices.

Applying for new programs will be easier as you will already be in their system. Be sure to join your local FSA's mailing list so you can be one of the first to know when a new program is announced.

You have the ability to fill out the Census of Agriculture. The Ag Census is a direct data source that includes land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures. It demonstrates the value of agriculture nationwide and can result in more resources and support for farms in Kentucky.

How do I get one?

Contact your local Farm Service Agency office to set up an appointment, stop by the Bell County Extension Office, or attend the January 16th meeting from 2:00 pm -7:00 pm at the Leslie County Extension office. If you have questions, please call the Bell County extension office and ask to speak to Michelle

If you have questions about the USDA Farm Service Agency and how to obtain a farm serial number, feel free to contact us at (859) 550-3972 or kcard@kcard.info.

Michelle Brock

Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

Bell County Extension Office

337-2376





Keep your Chickens Healthy this Winter

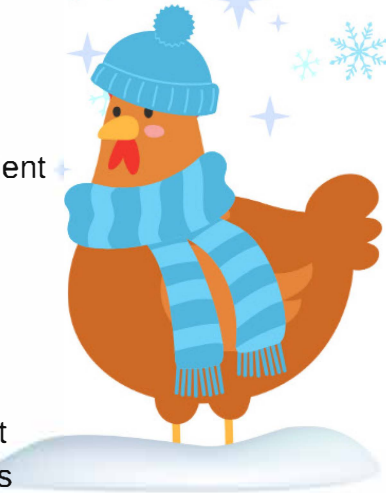
Source: Jacqueline Jacob, Agriculture Extension Project Manager

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

Chickens, which typically have an internal temperature around 106 degrees Fahrenheit, may experience cold stress when the environment's chill overwhelms their heat-generating capabilities. Indications that your chickens might be feeling the cold include behaviors like feather fluffing, huddling and tucking one foot up to their body for warmth. When such stress is prolonged, it can impair their well-being and could be fatal. When considering your flock, it's vital to recognize that not all breeds are equally winter resistant.

Heavier breeds, such as the Plymouth Rock or Orpington, tend to endure cold better than their lighter counterparts or those with substantial combs and wattles, that are susceptible to frostbite. Monitoring the flock dynamics, especially if diverse breeds are present, is crucial since bullying over resources can leave some chickens malnourished and more vulnerable to the cold. Preparing your coop for the winter is fundamental. It should be a sanctuary, protecting against elements and predators alike. Roosts are essential, providing an elevated perch that shields them from the cold ground and also allow the feet to dry better. These should be crafted from materials like wood, avoiding metal or plastic, which can aggravate the cold. Perches should be spacious to prevent overcrowding, but cozy enough to allow shared body heat. Managing airflow is essential; you must ensure adequate ventilation to prevent the buildup of harmful ammonia and moisture accumulation.

Chickens can withstand relatively cold temperatures as long as they are dry. You may need to insulate the coop to keep the warmth in. On below freezing nights, it may be necessary to provide supplemental heat. Historically, infrared heat lamps have been used to provide supplemental heat, but they can be a major fire risk. Alternative heat sources that have lower fire risk are now available. Use only equipment designed for livestock, and always have installations carried out by a professional. Regarding nutrition, chickens' dietary intake tends to increase during winter since they require more energy to keep warm. Treats like scratch grains are beneficial for their warmth-inducing digestion and as an activity stimulant, but should be offered sparingly and never mixed with a complete, nutritionally balanced feed as it would dilute nutrients. Ensuring continuous access to unfrozen water is equally important because chickens will not eat if they cannot drink. Egg production might dip due to reduced daylight; therefore, some opt for supplementary lighting to stimulate laying. It is important that the number of light hours per day never decreases during egg production. A minimum of 14 light hours per day (no more than 18) is recommended to maintain egg production throughout the year. Tending to chickens in winter revolves around striking a delicate balance: ensuring they're warm but not overheated, well-fed but not overindulged and active yet secure from the harsh external environment. With meticulous planning and proactive management, your poultry can thrive even when the temperatures drop.



BELL COUNTY 4-H NEWSLETTER



4-H Camp Sign-Ups are Around the Corner!

Get ready for an unforgettable experience at the 2025 4-H Camp! This highly anticipated week is filled with exciting activities that will inspire and engage youth, including archery, riflery, fishing, swimming, paddle boating, canoeing, climbing walls, ziplines, and thrilling craft and nature classes. Mark your calendars for June 10-13, 2025, and be sure to sign up starting in early April. Over the past three years, we've had a waitlist for camper spots, so if your child is eager to join in on the fun, it's essential to reach out as soon as registration opens. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! For more information, please contact the Bell County Extension office.

MIDDLESBORO 4-H CLUB

Join the Middlesboro 4-H Club, where young leaders are made! We meet once a month on the third Wednesday at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College. In our engaging one-hour sessions, youth enhance their leadership skills, create exciting projects for the Bell County Fair, forge lasting friendships, and listen to inspiring guest speakers from our community. Being a part of 4-H is a fantastic way for students aged 9 to 18 to develop into confident leaders who can make a difference in Bell County. Best of all, membership is completely free! Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity—contact the Bell County Extension Office at 606-337-2376 for more information.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bell County Cooperative Extension Newsletter

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 Bell County Cooperative Extension Service

*Are you interested in going
paperless? We are now offering our
Bi-Monthly Joint Newsletter via
email! If you're interested in making
the switch, call our office.*

