

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

- October 15 Sign up for Disaster Assistance, FSA Office, Abingdon (Address on Page 1)
- October 25 Deadline to wean and consign calves to December VQA Sale
- October 30 Pesticide Take-Up, Supergro of VA Seven Mile Ford 9 AM (Please pre-register)
- Nov 5 VQA Calf Sale, Abingdon
- Nov 7 Smyth Washington Cattleman’s Association Meeting, 4-H Center 6:30 PM
- Nov 11 VQA Steer Take-Up, Tri-State Livestock Market
- Nov 13 VQA Heifer Take-Up Tri State Livestock Market
- Nov 18 Private Pesticide Recertification Course, Extension Office Conference Room 6 PM
- Nov 20 Private Pesticide Recertification Course, Extension Office Conference Room 8 AM
- Nov 29 Deadline to wean and consign VQA calves for the January 7, 2025 Sale
- Dec 2 VQA Sale 7 pm
- Dec 9 VQA Steer Take Up
- Dec 11 VQA Heifer Take Up
- Jan 7, 2025 VQA Calf Sale 7 PM



Just Look at Everything That’s Going On!

A great way to stay current is to pick up a Saturday edition of the **Smyth County News**. In it, you will find an “Upcoming Events” section at the end of all of Andy’s weekly articles!

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Andy Overbay or Pam Testerman at (276) 783-5175/TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

Serving You by Reporting and Listening!

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Smyth County Agriculture Extension Newsletter! My goal is to continue to provide you with a newsletter packed with information at least once each quarter. Let us know what you think. If you have ideas for articles or topics of interest, please contact us at (276) 783-5175.



Hurricane Helene Relief

Folks like to compare weather events. Was Helene worse than the Flood of 1977? Hugo? Regardless of where you stand on those comparisons, one thing is for sure. If you were adversely affected by any of these events, it’s bad.

A bright spot has been how neighbors have been helping neighbors. We take care of our own in Southwest Virginia and I am inspired and rejuvenated by your efforts.

Another bright spot is the efforts of our friends at the Farm Service Agency. Wayne and his staff have been working to get help coming our way. Sign-ups for fence loss, debris clean up, hay and feed loss, down timber and animal losses begin October 15th at their office at 448 Commerce Drive, Abingdon. Their number is (276) 525-6680.

I know many of you have not waited for help, but if you will document what you have done in pictures, notes, and receipts, the FSA will accept them as well during sign-up.



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Contact :
Dr. Andy Overbay
Smyth County ANR Agent
121 Bagley Circle, Suite 434
Marion, VA 24354
(276) 783-5175
aoverbay@vt.edu

Online:
<http://offices.ext.vt.edu/Smyth/>
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New Grant for Cattle Handling Facilities

It's been nearly 20 years, but the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association has once again successfully persuaded the Tobacco Commission to provide cost-share funds for cattle working facilities. The grant will cover squeeze chutes, roofs over current working chutes, panels, fencing, and several other new purchases.

One stipulation is that if you received a grant on the original 2005 cost-share, you can still participate; however, you cannot purchase the same item as a replacement. For instance, if you got a squeeze chute in 2005, you cannot get another chute, but you could buy a sweep to go with it or put a roof over the chute.

Funding is as per usual, first come, first served and sign ups will begin the morning of **Nov 4, 2024.**



Own a 1945 Farmall H for \$5!

The Southwest 4-H Tractor Club was recently the recipient of an 80 year old Farmall H from Mr. Jeff Fry in Rural Retreat. With just a bit of work the tractor is up and running and the club is giving the tractor away at their Toy Show in Abingdon On March 22, 2025.

The club will be offering 2000 chances on the tractor. For a gift of \$5 you get one ticket, or you can get 5 chances for \$20 and 30 chances for \$100. All proceeds go to support the club's activities.



After The Storm: A Parable from the Tobacco Patch

Smyth County saw its share of unprecedented weather events last month. We've seen hurricanes blow through and floods sweep the countryside, but last month's storm touched areas that have rarely seen that type of damage before.

Several of us remember the devastation of the Flood of 1977. Those waters topped the Interstate 81 bridge just west of Exit 35, shutting down traffic completely. That said, when the water receded the bridge was still there.

Several of our farms and homes along the streams and rivers suffered extensive damage. Miles and miles of fence along with gates and accompanying infrastructure are missing or badly damaged. Many had personal bridges that were swept away or left unsafe to cross.

Barns and sheds were leveled. One was literally plucked out of the ground, turned upside down and place a few yards from its original site. Hay crops, which were scarce already, were swept away or left waterlogged and injected with mud and other foreign material.

With all this destruction, likely the most devastating damage was done to the human spirit. Several home and farm owners reached out to share their losses as part of the Extension Office's agricultural loss assessment. Many were so disheartened; they really had no idea where to begin to clean up.

Their mental state took me back the helplessness felt by the victims of the April 2011 tornado outbreak. To be honest, that assessment was much easier than last month's task. While damage assessment is no one's favorite chore, a tornado has a distinct and easily seen path. Follow the path, record what was lost, tally the results. The damage from Hurricane Helene was widespread and often hidden by roads that were busy with emergency vehicles or just gone altogether.

But we can all take a bit of comfort in the model for recovery tornado victims set for us. Do what needs to be done, get some rest, and hit it again tomorrow. The recovery from Helene will take months if not years, and some things will never be the same; however, some things will be rebuilt better than ever. It will all take time.

And that's where the tobacco patch come into play. Hoeing tobacco had to be one of my least favorite jobs. It was hot, pain-taking work that required stamina and focus to be done to my Dad's satisfaction.

One thing hoeing tobacco taught me was to not let the task before me overwhelm me before I started. "Don't let the patch 'white-eye' you," as Dad would say. "Just focus on the plant in front of you and the next thing you know, that row is done; then the next row, and the next thing you know, you're standing at the end of the field thinking, 'that wasn't so bad!'"

Dad always preached that the worry of tackling any chore was always worse than actually doing it. I think that is why he was so successful even though his eyesight was poor, and he had no high school diploma. He didn't worry about doing anything. "If we can't buy it, we'll build it," he'd say "and if we can't make it, we'll make do without it."

Another one of Dad's favorite saying when faced with a crushing task was "We're going take this thing like a cat eating a grindstone. We're going to swallow it one nibble at a time."

And that is my advice if you find yourself cleaning up after this storm or any other personal tragedy. Set a reasonable goal for today. See that goal through to its completion and then set another goal for tomorrow. And as you go, think about Glade Spring.

Those of us who remember can still see some scars from the April 2011 tornado, but it is also amazing at the recovery they have made with little to no help from anyone other than themselves.

When there didn't seem to be a square foot of space in Glade that didn't have a board or a piece of insulation spread across it, they did like the old cat eating a grindstone. They whipped it a piece at a time.