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## Pasture Weed Control

Pasture weeds can rob grazers of tons of valuable forage. What starts as a few isolated weeds, can turn into a weed patch the next year and completely overtake the pasture within a few years. Common ragweed is a good example. While cattle will graze common ragweed when the plants are small, once it becomes mature, cattle will refuse to eat it. That single common ragweed plant can produce 15,000 seeds, and those seeds can live in the soil for as long as 40 years.

The first step in controlling a weed is to identify the plant and its growth habit. This helps determine the most effective method and timing of control measures. Improperly timed control measures can be ineffective and may increase the problem.

Annual plants, like common ragweed, live one year. They germinate, flower, produce seed and die in one season. Chemical control is most effective when the plants are small. Improving soil pH and soil fertility levels, can be effective as well.

Biennial weeds, like bull thistle, germinate and form a rosette the first year. The second year, they bolt and form a seedhead. Once the flower appears, they are difficult to control by any method. Chemical control is most effective in the fall of the first year, during the rosette stage. Timely mowing can reduce seed production, but will not likely eliminate the problem.

Perennial plants live longer than two years. Sericea lespedeza is a perennial weed most effectively controlled when herbicide applications are made prior to the bloom stage. Prescribed burning is effective in controlling some weeds, but not sericea lespedeza. It actually encourages the seed to germinate. Repeated mowing may reduce stem density, but mowing only once increases stem density. It is important to identify weeds to understand how to best control them.

After identifying the weeds, develop a strategy for control using the properly timed combination of herbicides, mowing and prescribed burning. This may include more than one method of control and more than one herbicide application. The label will provide information about the herbicide rate and any surfactants needed. It is important to follow this information to insure the product is effective. Plants must be actively growing to take up herbicides. Applying too much herbicide can burn the leaves making it as ineffective as applying too little. A surfactant helps the product “stick” to the leaves. Read and follow all label directions, including the required personal protective equipment. When spot spraying on an ATV, the potential for spray drifting onto the operator is high. Most products require long pants, a long sleeved shirt and chemical resistant gloves at a minimum. Cloth hats, leather gloves and leather boots absorb pesticides and hold them against skin, increasing exposure. Consider wearing eye protection even if not required by the label. If spraying large trees or shrubs over the head, wear a chemical resistant hood.

Maintaining a thick stand of desirable forage can help reduce future weed problems. Weeds are plants of opportunity. When pastures are grazed short leaving bare ground exposed, weeds have the potential to germinate and compete for sunlight, nutrients and moisture. By controlling grazing height and maintaining soil pH and fertility levels at medium to high levels, forages can thrive and keep weeds from encroaching.

**The MU weed science department has an online weed id tool [www.weedid.missouri.edu](http://www.weedid.missouri.edu) as well as a mobile app which can help identify weeds.**

For more information contact your University of Missouri Extension agronomy specialist or visit <https://extension2.missouri.edu/programs/nrcs-mu-grasslands-project>

**Source:** Valerie Tate, agronomy specialist



## USDA Releases 2017 Census of Agriculture Data

Finally, after many months, on April 11, 2019, the 2017 Census of Agriculture was released. The Census of Agriculture began in 1840 in 26 states and the District of Columbia. In 1997, the Census of Ag was transferred from the Census Bureau to USDA National Ag Statistics Service (NASS). The Census now encompasses all fifty states and Puerto Rico. USDA has been using the following definition of a farm since 1974 “any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.” Based on that definition, Missouri is #2 in number of farms with 95,320 farms. Texas is #1 with 248,426 farms and Iowa is #3 with 86,104 farms.

2017

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The number of farms with the following enterprises increased: beef cattle, swine, chicken (layers), barley, sunflowers, peanuts, sweet potatoes and orchards. The number of farms with the following enterprises decreased: dairy cattle, chicken (broilers), corn for grain, corn for silage, wheat, oats, sorghum, cotton, rice and potatoes.

Production expenses per farm increased an average of seven percent since the last Census. For many years, the average age of farmers increased. Overall the average age of Missouri farmers increased slightly, but the number of young farmer has grown. In 2012, the number of young producers in Missouri was 11,024, and in 2017 it was 16,570, a 50 percent increase.

The data can be organized in many ways including by geographical area (national, state or county), congressional district, watersheds and zip codes.

Nationally, a few noticeable items include:

- ◆ Farm numbers and land in farms, both continued to have small percentage declines.
- ◆ There continues to be more large and small farms, and few middle-sized farms.
- ◆ Fewer farms account for the majority of ag products sold.
- ◆ The new survey questions show that multiple people frequently have decision-making roles on farms.
- ◆ The average age of farmers and ranchers continues to rise.
- ◆ There is an increase in internet access, especially via mobile and fiber optic.

The 2017 Census had a few changes from previous years. The latest Census allows for multiple principal operators per farm. It also changed the term operator to producer. USDA NASS welcomes input for the next Census. Visit their website [www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus), then in the left-hand column click on *Ag Census-Solicitation for Input*.

Missouri - overall # farms down 3.9%		
Size	# farms	Change
1 to 9 acres	5,574	58%
10 to 49 acres	22,676	4%
50 to 179 acres	33,356	-10%
180 to 499 acres	20,111	- 12%
500 to 999 acres	7,310	- 7%
1,000 to 1,999 acres	3,603	- 4%
2,000+ acres	2,290	13%

Much more information can be found on the Ag Census website at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/index.php>

**Source:** Mary Sobba, ag business specialist

Remember....  
May 27th



## Garden Tips for May

### Ornamentals

- Fertilize azaleas after bloom. Use a formulation that has an acid reaction.
- Apples, crabapples and hawthorns susceptible to rust disease should have protective fungicidal sprays applied beginning when these trees bloom.
- Continue monitoring pines, especially scotch and mugho, for sawfly activity on new shoots.
- Do not remove spring bulb foliage prematurely or next year's flower production will decline.
- Begin planting warm-season annuals.
- Plant summer bulbs such as caladiums, dahlias, cannas, and elephant ears.
- Scale crawlers are active now. Infested pines and euonymus should be treated at this time.
- Trees with a history of borer problems should receive their first spray now. Repeat twice at three-week intervals.
- Pinch back mums to promote bushy growth.

### Vegetables

- Slugs will hide during the daytime beneath a board placed over damp ground. Check each morning and destroy any slugs that have gathered on the underside of the board.
- Growing lettuce under screening materials will slow bolting and extend harvests into hot weather.
- Place cutworm collars around young transplants. Collars are easily made from cardboard strips.
- Set out tomato, eggplant and pepper plants as soils warm.
- Isolate sweet, super sweet and popcorn varieties to prevent crossing.
- Keep asparagus harvested for continued spear production. Control asparagus beetles as needed.
- Control caterpillars on broccoli and cabbage plants by handpicking or use biological sprays such as B.T.
- Remove rhubarb seeds stalks as they appear.
- Plant sweet potatoes now.

### Fruits

- Mulch blueberries with pine needles or sawdust.
- Do not spray fruits while in bloom. Refer to local Extension publications for fruit spray schedule.

### Turfgrass

- Mow tall fescues at 2 to 3.5 inch height.
- Apply post-emergence broadleaf weed controls now if needed.
- Watch for sod webworms emerging now.

*Source* - Missouri Botanical Garden – website: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/your-garden/help-for-the-home-gardener/advice-tips-resources/gardening-by-month/may.aspx>

*Source:* Jennifer Schutter, horticulture specialist

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## Northeast Missouri Bull Sale

The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast MO Performance Tested Bull Sale was held in Palmyra, Mo. on March 30. The overall average on twenty-one bulls was \$3,467. Following an extremely hard winter, several bulls failed to meet requirements for the sale. However, buyers came looking for quality and bull prices rebounded from 2018.

The high breed average was Angus at \$3,605. Other breed averages were Polled Hereford \$3,100, SimAngus \$3,000, and Charolais \$1,800.

High selling bulls in the sale were Angus consigned by Hudson Angus Farm, Jefferson City, Mo. and Shannon Farms, Bowling Green, Mo. and sold for \$4,500 and \$4,200 respectively, they were purchased by Dearing Farm, Palmyra, Mo. and Sunsetview Farm, Center, Mo. Three other bulls sold for \$4,000 or higher.

Bulls offered in this sale met certain predetermined standards to meet eligibility. Bulls must be in the upper 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in two out of four EPD (Expected Progeny Difference) traits: CE or BW, WW, YW, or Milk, yearling height 49 in or above, weight at a year 1100 lbs. or above, semen tested and examined for breeding soundness and to be found satisfactory potential breeders. As well as meeting health requirements: tested and found negative for Brucellosis and BVD-PI, vaccinated against Leptospirosis, and must follow state requirements for trichomoniasis.

The annual meeting of the Northeast Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association, which sponsors the bull sale, was held April 4 at the Rialto Banquet Hall in Hannibal with 55 members and guests attending. Several awards were presented at the banquet.

Plaques were presented to the owners of the high indexing bulls in the sale. Angus went to Shannon Farms, Bowling Green, Mo.

Other awards presented included: Outstanding Seedstock Producer, Ed Jackson, Frankford, Mo.; Outstanding Commercial Producer, MU Greenley Research Center, Novelty, Mo.; and Outstanding Service to Brenda Schreck, Lewistown, Mo.

The sale is a cooperative effort between the Northeast Missouri BCIA and University of Missouri Extension. For details on participating, contact your MU Extension Livestock Specialist. The next sale will be March 28, 2020 at F & T Livestock Market, Palmyra, Mo.

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## **Memorial Day History**

As the Civil War neared its end, thousands of Union soldiers, held as prisoners of war, were herded into a series of hastily assembled camps in Charleston, South Carolina. Conditions at one camp, were so bad more than 250 prisoners died from disease or exposure, and were buried in a mass grave behind a grandstand. Three weeks after the Confederate surrender, an unusual procession entered the former camp: On May 1, 1865, more than 1,000 recently freed slaves, accompanied by regiments of the U.S. Colored Troops and a handful of white Charlestonians, gathered in the camp to consecrate a new, proper burial site for the Union dead. The group sang hymns, gave readings and distributed flowers around the cemetery.

## **It didn't become a federal holiday until 1971.**

Americans embraced the notion of "Decoration Day" immediately. The first year, more than 27 states held a ceremony, with more than 5,000 people attending a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. It was not until America's entry into World War I that the tradition was expanded to include those killed in all wars.

## **Recognized "birthplace".**

In 1966, 100 years after the town of Waterloo, New York, shuttered its businesses and took to the streets for the first of many continuous, community-wide celebrations, Pres. Lyndon Johnson signed legislation, declaring the tiny upstate village the "official" birthplace of Memorial Day.

## **Memorial Day traditions have evolved.**

The American flag should be hung at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day, then raised to the top of the staff. And since 2000, when the U.S. Congress passed legislation, all Americans are encouraged to pause for a National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. local time.

*Adapted from article on the History Channel*