



Volume 18: May 2025

# LIVE STOCK companion



## MONTHLY TIP

May has been a tough month for hay producers. With many fields now past the boot stage, forage quality is at risk. When sunny days aren't available for hay production, baleage becomes an alternative. Baleage involves cutting the forage, letting it wilt until it reaches about 40–60% dry matter, baling it tightly, and wrapping it right away. When making baleage, it's important to wrap the bales properly using bale wrapping equipment with 5 to 6 layers of plastic. This prevents oxygen from getting inside the bale, creating the anaerobic environment needed for fermentation. Skimping on the plastic and using fewer than 4 layers might save you money at first, but it can compromise the fermentation process and cause you to lose your forage.

Once wrapped, protect the bales from cattle and wildlife. Any holes in the plastic can let oxygen in, which can spoil the fermentation. So, if you find any holes, patch them as soon as you can to keep the baleage in good shape. However, remember that baleage has less flexibility for moving it around before feeding, so think through your storage and feeding logistics ahead of time.

Dr. Bruno Pedreira  
UT Extension Forage Specialist



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"The days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, a sure sign that summer is on its way."

- Anonymous

## THE TENNESSEE MASTER FORAGE PROGRAM

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist, Director of the Beef and Forage Center

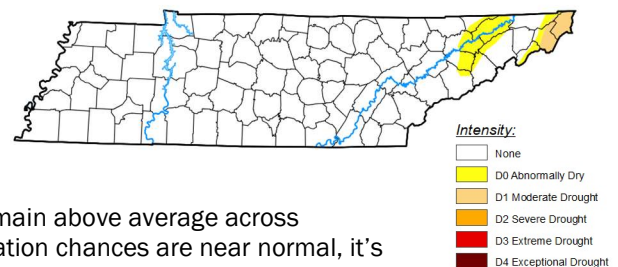


For Tennessee producers, good forage isn't just a seasonal concern, it's a year-round priority in all 95 counties. That's why we're excited to share that the Tennessee Master Forage Program is now available statewide. A practical program that works for everyone, from folks just getting started to experienced forage producers looking to sharpen their skills. This program isn't just a class, it is a producer-driven course featuring lectures from leading experts who will share insights into forage-livestock systems across different regions, including innovative practices and solutions from Tennessee and beyond. It covers everything from the basics of soil and plant health to more advanced topics like fertility programs, alternative nitrogen sources, forage quality, grazing strategies, weed control, silvopasture, storage techniques, and the economics behind good forage decisions. There are two ways to take part in the program: a 100% online or a hybrid option, which includes credits to be completed online and one in-person on-farm Forage Tour. These tours offer valuable hands-on learning through pasture walks, demonstrations, and real-world conversations about what's working in the field. Regardless of your choice, online or hybrid, monthly online meetings provide opportunities to ask questions and engage with other participants. Completing the Master Forage Program not only improves your forage management but also makes you eligible for the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program (TAEP) cost-share. Sign up is through your local Extension office or via the UT Ag Store. More information at: <https://utbeef.tennessee.edu/tennessee-master-forage-program/>. We hope to see you at one of our online sessions or during an upcoming Forage Tours!

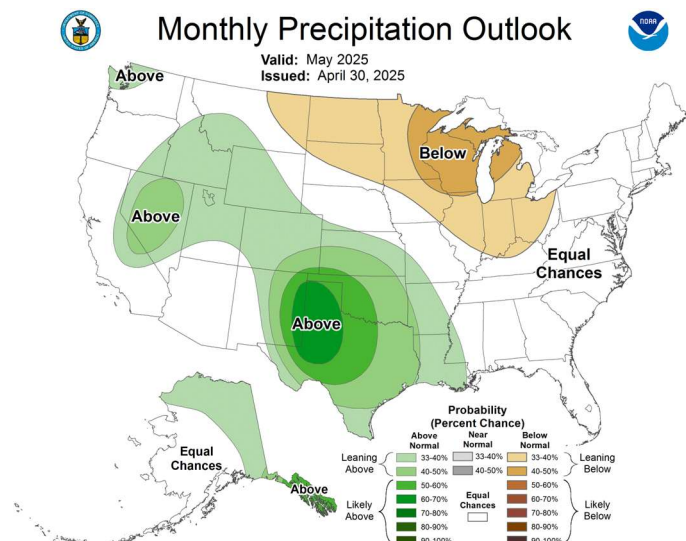
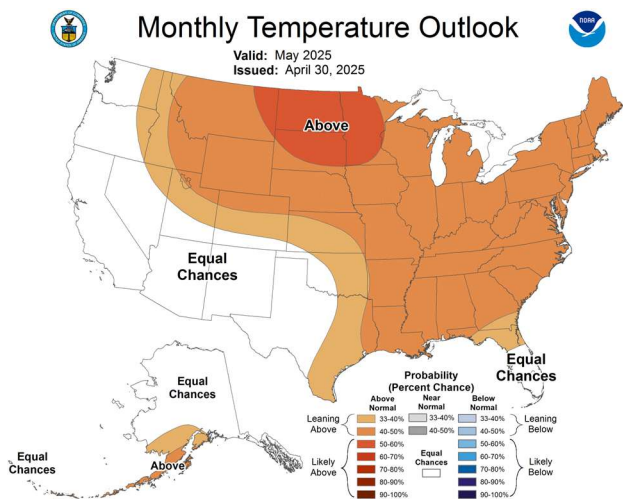
## WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist

April temperature averaged 3.5 °F higher than the average, and rainfall was 1.72 inches above the 10-year average of 58.5 °F, with 5.15 inches of precipitation. [ncei.noaa.gov](https://ncei.noaa.gov)



Temperatures are expected to remain above average across Tennessee in May. While precipitation chances are near normal, it's been a rainy month so far. This is great for greening up pastures, but difficult for making hay. According to the latest drought monitor, only Johnson and Carter counties are experiencing moderate drought (D1), while Hawkins, Hancock, Grainger, Hamblen, and Jefferson counties are classified as abnormally dry (D0). For the rest of the state, soil moisture is not a problem. [droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



## TENNESSEE BEEF HEIFER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Dr. Saulo Zoca, Assistant Professor, UT Extension Beef Cattle Reproduction Specialist



The Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Lewisburg is proud to host two signature events that reflect the state's growing leadership in beef cattle production. On May 22, the Tennessee Beef Heifer Development Field Day will bring together producers, students, and industry professionals for a full day of education, including sessions on pasture improvement, genomic selection, and market readiness. On May 23, the 2nd Annual Bred Heifer Sale will feature

approximately 80 high-quality bred heifers developed through the Tennessee Beef Heifer Development Program - animals bred through artificial insemination and natural service, with expected calving dates from August to November, offered in uniform groups ready for the herd. With historically strong cattle markets and the early signs of national herd rebuilding underway, this year's sale presents a timely opportunity for producers to invest in genetically superior, reproductively sound females raised in a structured, science-based environment. The Tennessee Beef Heifer Development Program is designed to enhance productivity, longevity, and profitability by focusing on health, nutrition, and genetics, making it an ideal resource for producers looking to build back stronger. Those interested in consigning heifers for the 2025-2026 class are encouraged to contact program coordinators and take part in the next cycle of this impactful and growing initiative.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Live Stock** - Join us for our broadcast - June 11 at 2 PM ET
- **Tennessee Beef Heifer Development Field Day** - May 22 at 8 AM-3 PM CT
- **2nd Annual TBHDP Bred Heifer Sale** - May 23 at 1 PM CT
- **Tobacco, Beef, and More Field Day** - June 26 at 8 AM-3 PM CT

Details can be found on [UTBEEF.COM](http://UTBEEF.COM)



**Photo of the Month by Ken Goddard:** Dr. Fred Allen and Dr. Bruno Pedreira discuss the Native Warm-Season Grass Breeding Program at ETREC, Knoxville, TN.

This and other useful information can be found at your local UT Extension office or on [UTBEEF.COM](http://UTBEEF.COM)

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