



LIVE STOCK

companion



Volume 26: January 2026

MONTHLY TIP

As we move into February, prepare to overseeding clover into cool-season pastures. Legumes, like red and white clover, have the unique ability to fix N from the air which brings multiple benefits to your pasture and herd. First, legumes improve forage quality, boosting protein and digestibility, which leads to better cattle gains and overall performance. Second, they act as a natural nitrogen fertilizer. Maintaining around 30% clover in a pasture can provide the equivalent of 50–60 pounds of nitrogen per acre, saving money and supporting soil fertility. Finally, legumes enhance pasture diversity and soil health, supporting nutrient cycling, wildlife, and pollinators.

To maximize these benefits, overseed only clean pastures, control broadleaf weeds first, and aim for mid-February planting. A blend of 2 pounds white clover and 4 pounds red clover per acre usually achieves the target 30% coverage.

Dr. Bruno Pedreira,
Director, UT Beef & Forage
Center

"If you're dedicated and work hard, you'll always be rewarded."

- Glenn Burton

JANUARY 2026: NEW YEAR, NEW WORLD SCREWWORM?

*Katy Smith, Veterinary Entomology Education Specialist, PhD Candidate
Dr. Becky Trout Fryxell, Professor, Entomology and Plant Pathology*

New World screwworm (NWS), also known as primary screwworm, is a parasitic fly that poses a serious threat to livestock health. NWS larvae (maggots) feed on living tissue, making infestations far more destructive than those caused by other maggots that commonly feed on dead or decaying tissue. Female NWS flies lay eggs in existing wounds such as cuts, tick bites, castration or branding sites, ear tags, or healing umbilical cords of newborn animals. All warm-blooded animals, including livestock, pets, wildlife, and humans, are at risk. Good fly control alone is not enough to prevent NWS in cattle herds. Even small wounds like a tick bite can attract screwworm flies, and infestations require immediate larval removal and veterinary-guided treatment. Early infestations can be subtle, especially those on a calf's umbilical cord, and by the time maggots are visible, significant damage may already be present. While NWS was eradicated from the U.S. decades ago, it remains a serious concern. In November 2024, NWS was detected in southern Mexico, prompting increased surveillance and preventive measures to reduce the risk of northward spread of this pest. Although NWS has not been detected in the U.S. at this time, producers remain the first line of defense through regular inspections, prompt wound care, responsible animal sourcing, and rapid reporting of suspicious cases.

For more information, visit: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/screwworm> or <https://tiny.utk.edu/screwworm>

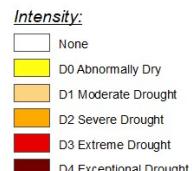
WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, Director, UT Beef & Forage Center

December temperature was 41.3°F, 2.2°F below the 10-year average. The precipitation totaled 2.1 inches, which is 3.2 inches below the 10-year average (ncei.noaa.gov).

Drought conditions were not a major concern through December, when only 18% of the state was experiencing some level of drought, up from 11% in November. However, January has been critical, with no county in the state free from drought conditions. Currently, 80% of the state is classified as D1 (moderate drought) and 8.6% as D2 (severe drought). Although plants are not actively growing at this time, timely rain or snow in the coming weeks would help recharge soil water reserves (droughtmonitor.unl.edu).

January is expected to bring near-normal temperatures across Tennessee, with precipitation trending above average in the northwestern region of the state. The 20-year average precipitation is 4.68 inches, which could be very helpful in January 2026. However, January precipitation can vary widely, ranging from 2.55 inches in 2018 to 8.64 inches in 2013.





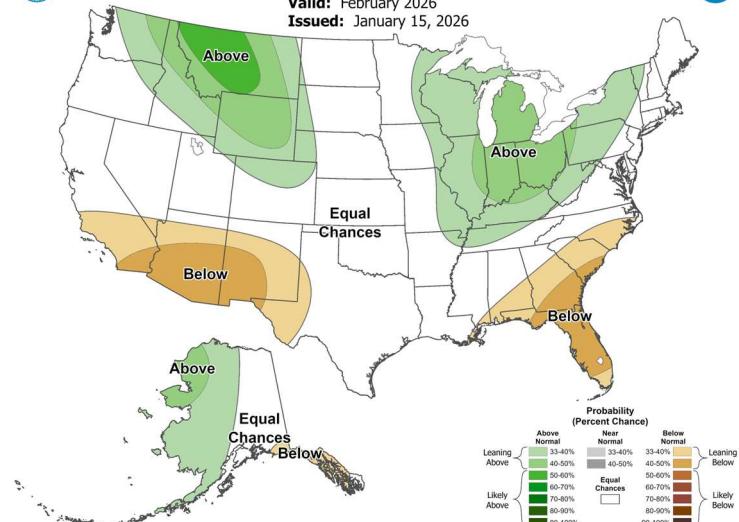
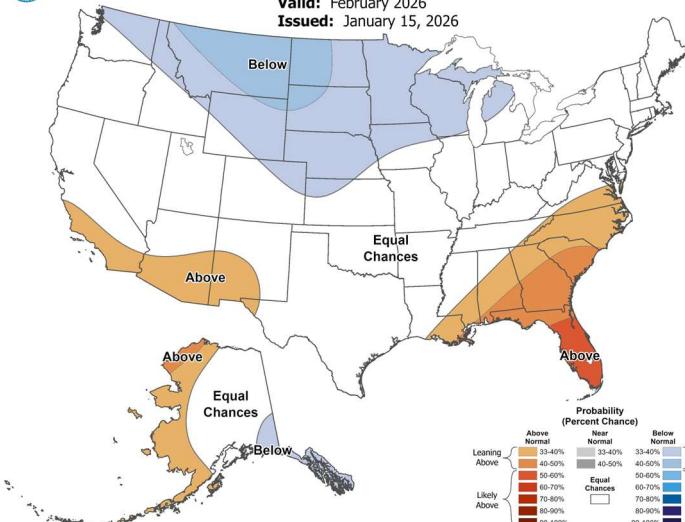
Monthly Temperature Outlook

Valid: February 2026
Issued: January 15, 2026



Monthly Precipitation Outlook

Valid: February 2026
Issued: January 15, 2026



PREPARING FOR A PRODUCTIVE FORAGE GROWING SEASON

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, Director, UT Beef & Forage Center

As we prepare for the upcoming forage growing season, many producers are already thinking ahead to spring green-up. Cool-season forages respond quickly as temperatures begin to rise, and early-season management decisions play a major role in determining pasture productivity and forage availability for the rest of the year. Careful planning now can help set pastures up for success.

- Watch for cool-season weeds:** From December through March, it is important to remain vigilant for cool-season weeds. When the forecast calls for three or more consecutive days with temperatures above 60°F, these weeds will be actively growing. That creates an excellent window for effective herbicide applications.
- Consider spring oats for early forage:** If soil moisture allows, spring oats can be planted at 100 to 150 lb/acre. The ideal planting window is late February through early March, but oats can be planted from February 20 through April 1. This practice can provide valuable grazing in April and May, helping reduce the need to graze perennial cool-season pastures before plants have rebuilt their energy reserves.
- Use hay feeding to improve pasture condition:** As you feed hay, avoid placing bales in the same location repeatedly. If you have thin pastures or bare ground, feeding hay in these areas can help boost soil nutrients and introduce some seeds from the hay, helping thicken and improve the stand over time.

Early planning and timely management are key to maximizing forage production. Small decisions made now can pay off with healthier pastures and more grazing days later in the season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- LiveStock** - Join us for our broadcast
- February 11, at 2 PM ET
- TDPA Annual Meeting**
- January 24, Lebanon, TN.
- TCA Annual Convention & Trade Show**
- February 6-7, Franklin, TN.



Recently, The UT Beef and Forage Center hosted their Annual Research and Recommendation meeting in Knoxville, TN. We are excited to serve Tennessee in 2026!

This and other useful information can be found at your local UT Extension office or on UTBEEF.COM

T BEEF & FORAGE CENTER

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status