College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Kentucky Nursery LISTSERV Bulletin

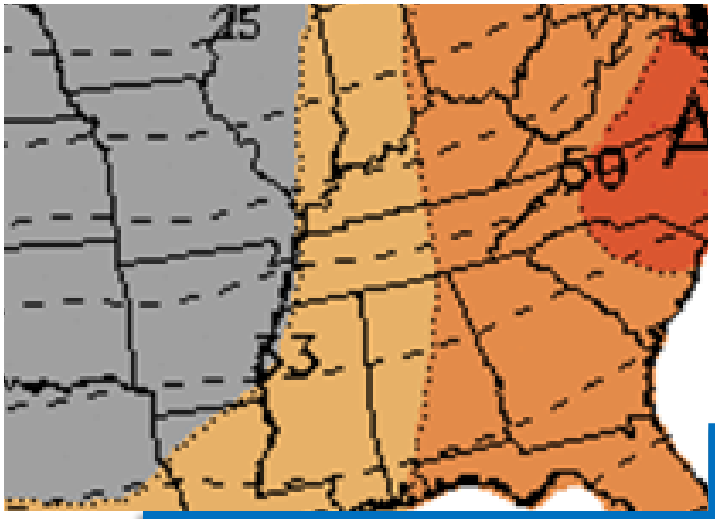
University of Kentucky Nursery Crops Team | End of January 2020

Expected Warmer than Average Start to February May Not Hold

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center is forecasting above normal temperatures for the first week of February across the Commonwealth. This trend will give away into the second week as cooler weather is expected to push down into the northern Midwest.

Above normal rates of precipitation are expected in the second week of the month for most of Kentucky, but overall the forecast calls for normal rates of precipitation, on average, for February.

See **UKAg Weather's Long Range Outlooks** for a variety of forecasts of temperature and precipitation probabilities.



Feb 03-07, 2020, Temperature Probability
Image: NOAA Climate.gov, 28 JAN 2020

- **Operating Heavy Equipment Safely**

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Operating Heavy Equipment Safely

Joshua Kight, Extension Associate, Nursery Crops

Spring is quickly approaching, and activity with workers and machines will be increasing. It is important to have a quick safety meeting with employees to go over the basics in heavy equipment operation a few times a year. Especially if any new equipment was acquired during the off season as employees may not know how to operate the new machinery properly. These meetings will help to prevent accidents in the workplace. Remember that accidents can happen to greenhorns and seasoned operators. There are 10 simple safety tips that are recommended by constructionequipment.com, and Nektar Data Systems.

Image source: TotalLandscapeCare.com

Blind Spots

Operators have to be aware of their surroundings, and what is behind them or in the blind spots of the machine. When vison is limited it may be necessary to have a spotter that is in direct contact with operator. If there is no spotter available, and the operator is unsure of hazards that may be in blind-spots the operator shall get out of the machine to check area. Workers in the area should be informed that is necessary to make eye contact with the operator before approaching a machine.

Communication

Communication needs to be maintained at all times between operator and workers with hand signals and if necessary a two-way radio and spotters. All workers should be trained in proper hand signals used for communication.

Seatbelts

Wear your seat belt while operating, it can save your life in a rollover. The seatbelt also keeps the operator firmly in the seat while operating on rough terrain. It is just as important to wear your seat belt in a machine as it is to wear in a motor vehicle.

Dismounting and mounting

Entering and exiting the machine improperly are some of the main causes of injury. Operators should use the 3-points of contact rule, this requires the operator to maintain 3-points of contact with the machine while entering and exiting, an example is 2 feet and one hand, or 2 hands and 1 foot. Replace any damaged steps or hand holds as necessary.

The Loading and Un-loading of equipment

Always ensure that the ground is level and stable before unloading/loading, this helps to reduce rollovers and sliding. In busy areas with lots of traffic make sure the area is clear and use a spotter to guide you.

Be Aware of Overhead and Underground Hazards

Identify any potential above ground hazards on the jobsite. If there is any uncertainty of underground utilities in the area where work is to be done CALL 811 ahead of time so that utilities can be marked.

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Lock-out and Tag-out procedures

OSHA states that all employers must have lock-out and tag-out procedures in place, and that all employees are properly trained in the procedures. These procedures prevent accidents from happening during maintenance or service. The equipment must be rendered inoperable and picture warnings, locks and tags should be used to communicate the dangers to all employees.

Load Limits of machines while in operation

Operators should be aware of load limits on the different machines they may use through-out the day. Load limits vary on machines, and loads can shift. When lifting and moving objects, make sure the load is secure and that the proper rigging attachment is used. Before lifting the object, the operator needs to ensure that all workers are at a safe distance.

Inspecting of the Machine

All machines should be inspected on a daily basis before operation. It is a good idea for employers to develop a pre-determined check-off sheet for all machinery. The sheet needs to include components for the employee to check. These areas can include hydraulic hoses, undercarriage, grease points, tire condition, oil levers and many others. Any discrepancy found should be reported to management for maintenance.

Always Be Aware of Your Limits

Operating machinery is dangerous and at times very stressful. An operator should never put themselves in an uncomfortable positon, if an operator is unsure about a certain situation, stop and make sure of the process. Perhaps a more experienced operator can take charge and even use this as a training moment. It is important for those that are around machinery remain calm and alert throughout the day.

This list is a basic set of guidelines and may have to be modified to fit the needs of the company.

For more information

- https://www.constructionequipment.com/10-equipment-safety-tips-incident-prevention
- https://nektardata.com/
- https://www.osha.gov/
- https://www.dutchmantreespade.com/used-products/used-tree-spades.html
- https://www.totallandscapecare.com/landscaping-equipment/avoid-backhoe-accidents/

The University of Kentucky's **Nursery Crop Extension Research Team** is based out of two locations across the bluegrass to better serve our producers.

The **University of Kentucky Research and Education Center (UKREC)** in **Princeton** serves western Kentucky producers while our facilities and personnel on main campus in **Lexington** serve central and eastern Kentucky producers.

Check out our YouTube Channel!

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