



NEWTON COUNTY

JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2026

Happy New Year from your Newton County Extension Office! We hope that you have a Happy, Healthy New Year!! Our office is here to help provide resources with financial planning, nutrition advice, and family activities to ensure a joyful stress-free new year. Let us know how we can assist you!

Katrina McCaffis

Eric Brack

Observed: February 06, 2026

The first Friday of February has been designated as National Wear Red Day ® in the United States. On this day, men and women are encouraged to wear red as a symbol of their support of women's heart health.

Encourage everyone to wear red as a way to bring attention to heart disease in women. Many women wear red dresses, which is the identifying symbol for the day. Men can be asked to wear red ties or shirts. Employers schedule workshops and red/heart related wellness events to educate staff about prevention and screenings of heart disease.

American Heart Association.



BLACK-EYED PEA SALAD

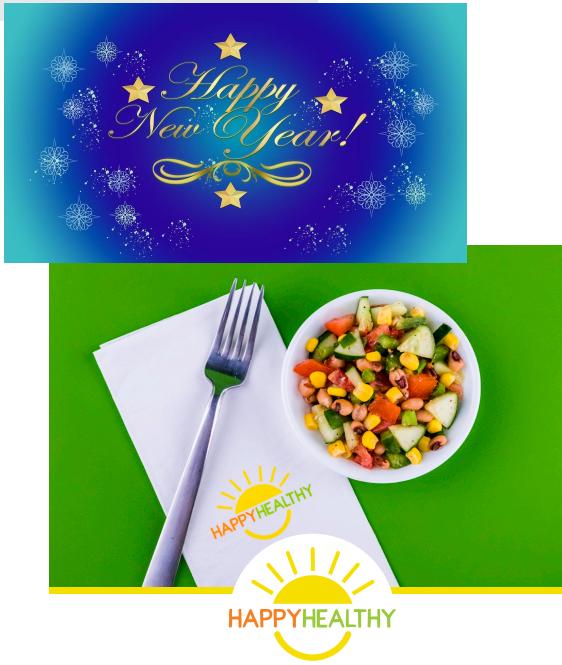
Makes 14 servings, ½ cup per serving

INGREDIENTS

- 2 15 ounce cans of black-eyed peas
- 1 15 ounce can corn
- 1 bunch green onions (5 green onions) or 1 onion, small
- 1 avocado (optional)
- 2 tomatoes, medium
- 1 bell pepper, medium
- 1 cucumber, medium
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 tablespoons vinegar or lime juice (juice of one lime or bottle)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash your hands well with soap and hot water.
2. Drain and rinse black-eyed peas and corn.
3. Wash and finely chop green onions.
4. Cut avocado in half and remove seed and skin. Dice avocado (optional).
5. Wash and dice tomatoes, bell pepper, and cucumber. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
6. Mix oil, vinegar or lime juice, salt, and pepper together in a small bowl with a fork.
7. Pour oil mixture over salad ingredients and toss lightly.
8. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



SAVE THE DATE!!

January 15- Google Classroom: Workshop for Homeschool Families: Getting started with Google Classroom @ Newton County Extension Office from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

January 27- Vision Board Goal Party @ Newton County Extension Office 3:30 to 5:00. Open to Teens and Adults. Design a Vision Board Limited seating, register by January 23rd by calling 601-635-7011

January 15- Scratch Jr Kids Coding Workshop: For ages 5-7 @ Newton County Extension Office from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

January 19-23 Southwest District Livestock & Dairy Show

January 29 - 4-H Contest Training Meeting @ Newton County Extension Office for 4-Hers ages 5-18 @ 4:00 p.m.

February 2- Dixie National Rodeo

February 3- Healthy Heart Salt-Free Program @ Newton County Extension Office @ 10:00 A.M.

February 6- National Wear Red day!! Everyone wear red as a way to bring attention to heart disease in women.

February 12- Stress-Free Charcuterie Heart Board @ 10:00 A.M. Please call 601-635-7011 to pre-register by February 5, limited seating is available.

March 12-Lego on the Farm. @ Newton County Extension. Office. Open to youth ages 5-13. Call 601-7011 for more details and to register!

March 24- Stress-Free Painting participants will be guided through each step...limited seating. Cost is 5.00\$

April 9th- Lego on the Farm. Open to youth ages 5-13 @ 4:00 P.M. Registration required.



Winter Preparedness: Weatherproofing Homes and Barns

As we head into the winter months, now is the perfect time to make sure your home, barns, and equipment are ready for colder temperatures. A little preparation can go a long way in preventing costly repairs and keeping your family and livestock safe.

Below is a practical **"Winter Weather Checklist"** tailored for Newton County homeowners and agricultural producers.

Home Weatherproofing Tips

- 1. Inspect and seal drafts.** Check around doors, windows, and vents for gaps. Use weather stripping or caulk to seal leaks and improve energy efficiency.
- 2. Protect your pipes.** Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or heat tape, and know how to shut off your main water valve in case of freezing.
- 3. Check your heating system.** Have your furnace or space heaters serviced before the first freeze. Replace filters monthly for efficiency and safety.
- 4. Clean gutters and downspouts.** Remove leaves and debris to prevent ice buildup and roof damage during freezing rain or snow events.
- 5. Prepare an emergency kit.** Include flashlights, batteries, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable food in case of power outages.

Barn and Farmstead Preparation

- 1. Inspect roofs and doors.** Repair leaks, secure loose panels, and ensure doors close tightly to reduce drafts and moisture buildup.
- 2. Protect livestock water sources.** Use heated buckets or tank de-icers to keep water from freezing. Check them daily for safety and function.
- 3. Stock feed and bedding.** Cold, wet weather can disrupt deliveries. Keep extra feed, hay, and dry bedding on hand for a few weeks' supply.
- 4. Check electrical systems.** Inspect cords, lights, and outlets in barns for wear or damage. Avoid using extension cords long-term or in damp areas.
- 5. Ventilate safely.** While sealing drafts helps retain heat, maintaining airflow prevents condensation, mold, and respiratory issues in animals.



Equipment and Property Readiness

- Service tractors, trucks, and small engines—change oil, check antifreeze, and inspect tires and batteries.
- Store fuel safely—keep gasoline and diesel in approved containers, away from heat sources.
- Mark driveways and paths in case of snow or ice to ensure access for emergency vehicles or feed delivery.

Stay Informed

Keep an eye on local forecasts and sign up for weather alerts from trusted sources. The Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) both offer helpful resources for seasonal preparedness.

A little prevention now can save time, money, and stress later.

By preparing your home, barn, and farmstead before freezing weather arrives, you'll help ensure a safer, smoother winter for everyone, two and four legged alike.

It's just common cents!
**Keep cash
& coins
handy after
a disaster
strikes.**



Calendar of Home Gardening Chores in Mississippi



Growing plants in the landscape or garden can be a fun task for Mississippi gardeners. Sometimes it can be difficult to remember when to do what. There are gardening chores that need to be done every month of each year. This publication will help guide you through the year toward a prettier and healthier landscape or garden.

January

Planning

- Record any plans on paper for changes or improvements in the garden. This will help you avoid mistakes and save time, effort, and money.
- Order seeds early for planting because companies may run out of the more popular varieties.

Planting

- Set out dormant trees and shrubs. Container, bare-root, and balled-and-burlapped (B&B) plants are all available this time of year. Your planting site should be well-drained. Place plants at or slightly above the existing soil level.
- Plant onions, poppies, and larkspur.

Fertilizing

- Apply lime to lawns if a soil test analysis recommends (any month).

Pest Control

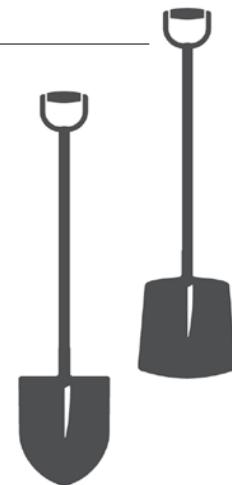
- Spray dormant oil for scale control on broad-leaved evergreens and fruit trees.

Pruning

- Remove dead, diseased, or broken limbs on all trees.
- Lightly trim shrubs if they are creating a hazard.
- Dispose of clippings to prevent spread of disease or insect issues.

Miscellaneous

- Keep bird feeders stocked. Provide water for birds.
- Collect scion wood for grafting and store in a cool, dry place.
- Protect tender plants during periods of extreme cold.



Home Accent

- Collect winter berries and tree needles for a winter potpourri. Mahonia and aucuba will root in water indoors and provide color from the outdoors.
- A small amount of sugar in the water will help prevent cut holly branches from losing berries. Wash and dust leaves of house plants.
- Inspect house plants for insects and diseases. Treat as needed with a safe indoor insecticide and fungicide.

Equipment

- Repair and sharpen mower blades and gardening tools.
- Order new pots and markers.
- Check condition of sprayers and repair or replace if needed.

Blooming

- Camellias, winter honeysuckle, winter jasmine, flowering quince (South Mississippi).
- Pansies, violas.

Fruiting

- Dogwoods, yaupon hollies, Chinese hollies, cotoneasters, pyracanthas, nandinas.

To receive the complete publication please contact 601-635-7011.



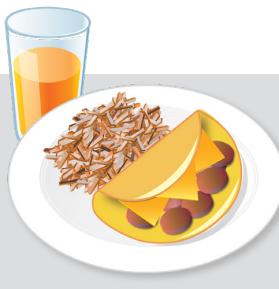
Salt (sodium) can be sneaky

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks can add up to nearly **4,000 mg of sodium for the day**.

Each day, the average American eats nearly 3,400 milligrams of sodium for the day. This is more than two times the amount recommended by the American Heart Association for ideal heart health. Too much sodium can be risky for your health. Guess what? Meals with lower sodium can be just as delicious and can keep your sodium in check.

— Here's how the sodium can add up: —

BREAKFAST



Sausage and cheese omelet with hash browns and orange juice
Total sodium: 697 mg

VS

Egg and veggie breakfast sandwich on a whole-grain English muffin
Total sodium: 547 mg



Breakfast tip: Add color! Replace some meats, cheeses and side dishes with flavorful fruits and vegetables.

MORNING SNACK



Honey bun
Total sodium: 280 mg

VS

Banana
Total sodium: 1 mg



Snack tip: Satisfy your sweet tooth with a delicious piece of fruit.

heart.org/Sodium

Salt-Free Spice Blends

Spices are a great way to add healthy flavor to your food. These spice blends pack flavor in three easy steps and can be used in four ways!

Steps

Wash your hands with soap and water.

Mix the ingredients in a jar or airtight container and

1. Shake
2. Seal
3. Enjoy!

These spice blends can be used in four ways: As a dry rub, or combined with oil, vinegar, lemon juice, or other seasonings to make a marinade, sauce, or dressing.

Greek

1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon basil
1 tablespoon oregano

1½ teaspoons black pepper
1½ teaspoons rosemary, minced
1½ teaspoons thyme
¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Tip: Use on salads, roasted potatoes or other vegetables, and seafood.

Barbeque

2 tablespoons dried basil
2 tablespoons dried sage

2 tablespoons dried thyme
2 teaspoons black pepper
1½ teaspoons dried savory
½ teaspoon dried lemon peel

Tip: Use on grilled meats and vegetables.

Chili Lime

1 tablespoon ground coriander

1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon lime zest
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin

Tip: Use on chicken, shrimp, grilled meats, and vegetables.

Lemon Pepper

3 tablespoons lemon zest (zest of 3 lemons)

2 tablespoons black pepper
1 tablespoon garlic powder (optional)

Tip: Use on vegetables, seafood, chicken, and whole grains like brown rice.

Paprika

2 tablespoons paprika
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 teaspoons black pepper
2 teaspoons cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons dried thyme
2 teaspoons dried oregano
½ teaspoon lemon zest

Cajun

Tip: Use on seafood, ground beef, pork, and chicken.

Chili

2 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
1 teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon regular paprika
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder

Chili

Tips: Use on vegetarian or meat chili, ground beef, and sloppy joes.

For a quick chili, all you need is 1 can of beans, 1 pound of ground beef or chicken, and 1 can of tomatoes!

Garlic Pepper

1 tablespoon garlic powder
½ tablespoon black pepper
½ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon onion powder

½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon dried parsley

Tip: This recipe makes enough to season three to five large chicken breasts.



4-H Shooting Sports

- To encourage participation in natural resources and related natural science programs by exposing participants to the content through shooting, hunting and wildlife habitat management.
- To enhance development of self-concept, character and personal growth through safe, educational and socially acceptable involvement in shooting activity.
- To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment including sound decision making, self-discipline and concentration.
- To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior.
- To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports and wildlife management.
- To strengthen families through participation in life-long recreational activities.
- To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety, shooting and hunter education programs using experiential educational methods and progressive development of skills and abilities.

MUST BE 8 on JANUARY 1st to participate in 4-H Shooting Sports



**4-H Shooting Sports Sign-Up Meeting
January 20th 6:00 to 7:00 @
Newton County Showbarn**



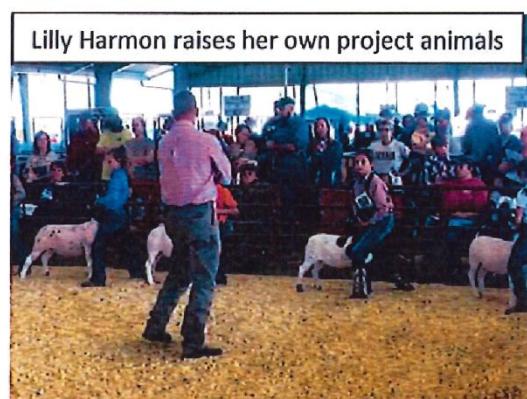
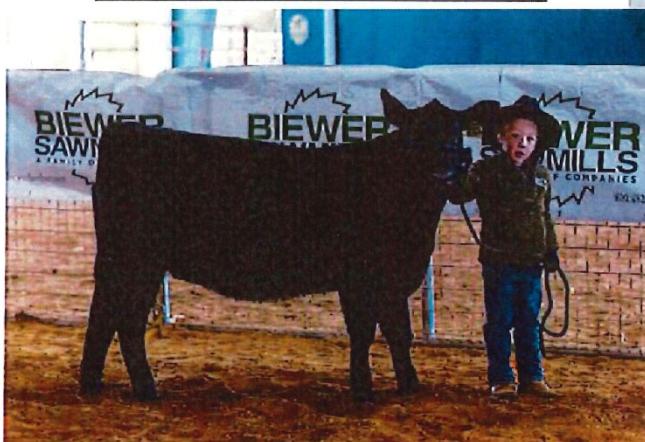
Market Animals

Purchasing a Market Animal — What you need to know

There are a lot of questions people have about buying a live animal from a 4-H or FFA student project. Let me start by saying, you do not have to handle the animal in any way! Unless you want to take it home, you leave your purchase with the family until they deliver the live animal to Myers Processing in Newton for you.

1. The 4-H or FFA family is responsible for feeding, caring, and delivering your purchase to the processor on the set date.
2. The buyer (you) will be contacted by the processor to see how you want the carcass broken up. This is where you need to have in your mind how you want your meat packaged and how thick you like certain cuts. The processor will help you make these decisions if you have questions. We use a lot of burger more than roasts so, I have more ground meat made, Think about it in terms of how you cook.
3. The buyer pays the Newton County Jr. Livestock Assoc for the animal. The animals will sell on a "per head" basis. You can go partners on animals with another party if you want to split the meat.
4. Whatever you pay for the animal over market value is considered a donation and is tax deductible.

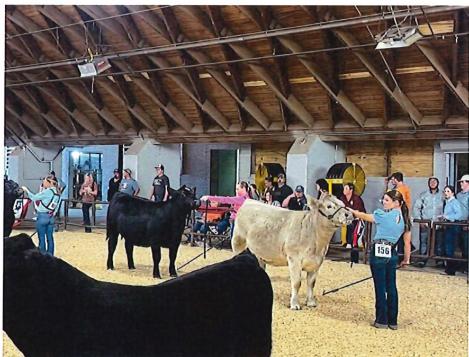
Newton County exhibitors will be at the Dixie National in Jackson MS on February 2nd. If you have any questions, please contact the Newton County Extension Office at 601-635-7011.



Sale of Champions is on February 12th!



Newton County Jr Livestock youth had a great time at the 2025 Mississippi State Fair in Jr ran from October 1st through the 10th. Families from Newton exhibited chickens, sheep as well as participated in 4-H day. The exhibitors work very hard to keep their animals to best while on display for the public at the fair. It's a lot of work but it's also a lot of fun!



Amelia Williams and Maddie Luke in competition for Supreme Champion Showman. Both had won their respective age divisions. Maddie Luke was named Supreme Champion!



Anna Kate Westbrook was Reserve Champion Middleweight in the Market Hog show and both Anna Kate and Laya won their showmanship classes - awesome job, girls!



Kipton Wiggins competed in his first Poultry Chain competition this year and loved it. He plans on doing it again in 2026 after learning so much about the contest.



Maddie Luke and her European Market Steer "Toby" – class winner. Maddie was named Supreme Champion Showman in the beef cattle show after winning 15-year-old showmanship and going against all the other age divisions. Congratulations Maddie!!

For more information on how to get involved showing livestock with your children, please contact Shani Brackeen at 662-769-1004 or you can email at smh964@msstate.edu