

# Central Kentucky Master Haymaker Program: Growing Knowledge and Harvesting Success

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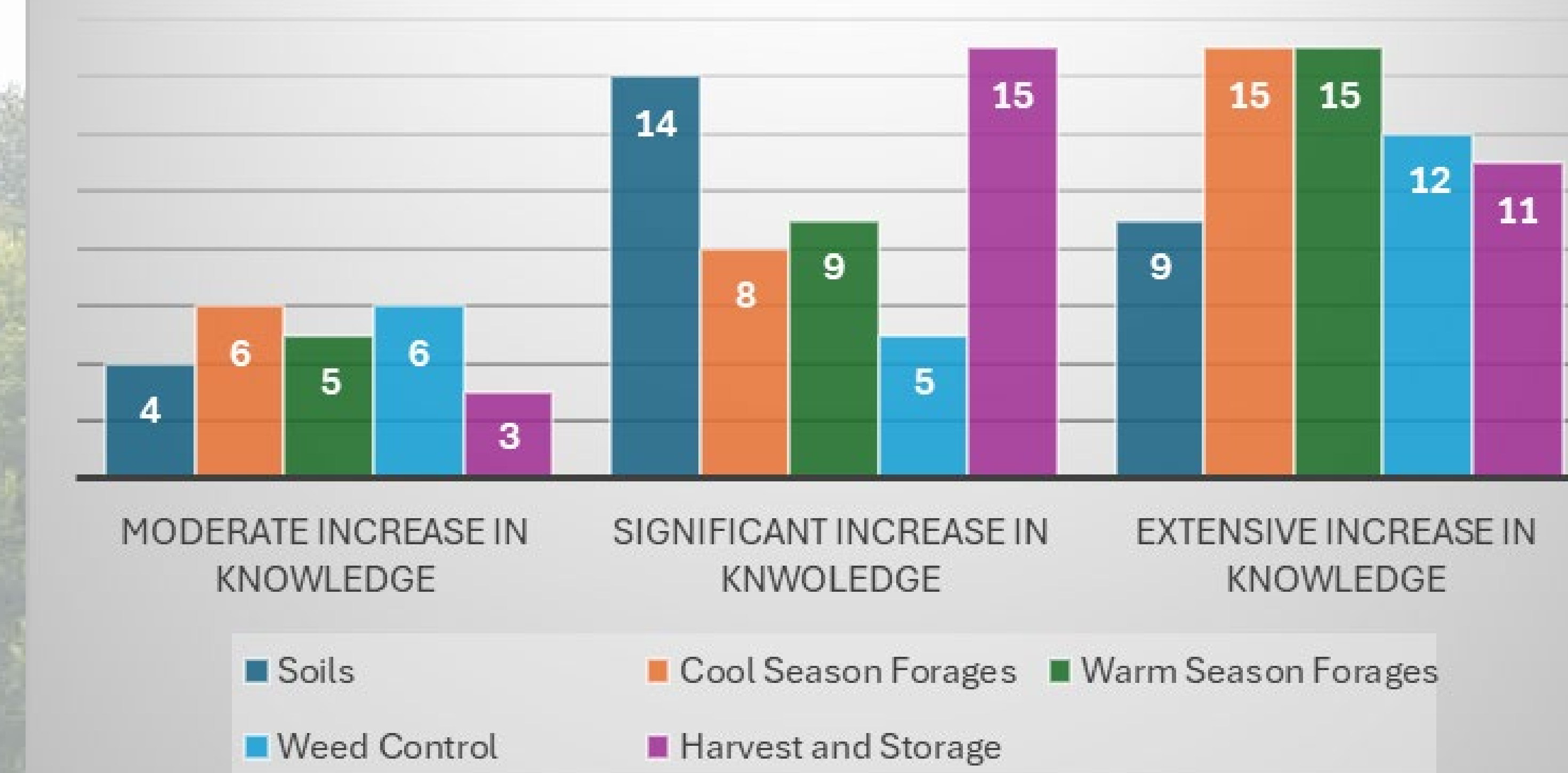
## Introduction

The Central Kentucky Master Haymaker Program was designed to address the growing need for improved hay production practices in Kentucky. As the fourth-largest hay-producing state in the U.S., Kentucky harvested over 2.1 million acres of hay in 2024, yielding 5 million tons (NASS, 2024). The economic impact of alfalfa hay alone reached \$344 million in 2022 (NASS, 2022). Despite this opportunity, many farmers face challenges in achieving a high-quality final product due to knowledge gaps in soil management, forage selection, weed control, and storage techniques.

## Goals

1. Enhance producer knowledge of soil fertility and weed management.
2. Introduce diverse forage species suited to Kentucky's climate and growing conditions.
3. Educate farmers on modern harvesting and storage methods.
4. Encourage economic and environmental sustainability.
5. Foster peer learning and industry networking.

## Participant's Increase in Knowledge



## Results

100% of participants reported the information provided would help them increase productivity, enhance forage quality, or improve profitability.

64% noted a significant increase in knowledge in 4 out of the 5 topics covered.

50% indicated they planned to implement new forage varieties based on the information provided.

18% committed to changing their hay storage methods in some way to reduce losses and improve quality.

"I plan to increase my productivity and quality by soil sampling and fertilizing. Which will increase my profitability."  
-Master Haymaker Participant

## Teaching Methods



## MASTER HAYMAKER ABC FARM



Figure A: Custom farm entrance sign given to each completing participant



Figure B: Participants during the weed management session

## Acknowledgements

A special thank you to University of Kentucky and The Ohio State University Extension Specialists Dr. Edwin Ritchie, Dr. Travis Legleiter, Dr. Ray Smith and Dr. Jason Hartschuh for their time presenting for this program.

## References

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2022). *Bourbon County, Kentucky: Demographic profile* [Data set]. In *2022 Census of Agriculture: County Profiles*. Retrieved June 2025.