

Atascosa Ag Newsletter

Courtesy of: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office Atascosa County

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Check out our website at Atascosa.agrilife.org

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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunities throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

ATTRACTING POLLINATORS TO YOUR LANDSCAPE

In the news recently there have been many stories of the Asian Giant Hornet, incorrectly nicknamed the murder hornet. While this hornet can be dangerous to humans, one of the biggest



threats is to Texas Agriculture. The Asian Giant Hornet, native to areas of Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and India, is an invasive species in the west. At 2 inches long it is towering in size to our nearest sized hornet found in Texas. The Asian Giant Hornet was found in Washington earlier this month and alarms sounded to get this destructive species under control. Asian Giant Hornets attack bee colonies and kill queens and the population of worker bees.

The threat of Asian Giant Hornets is low in Texas. However pollinators need all the help they can get so they can keep Texas Agriculture as productive as possible. Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds pollinate crops. Pollination is the biological process by which female plant parts are fertilized by the carrying of pollen from one plant to another.

We can attract and protect pollinators with a few simple things.

1. Plant native flowering plants.
2. Plant flowering plants in clusters instead of spread out individually
3. Choose a variety of colors and shapes to not only make your garden more attractive, but to make it more attractive to a variety of pollinators.
4. Choose plants that flower at different times providing nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season
5. Avoid or limit pesticide use

For a list of plants to add to your garden check out the Earth Kind Plant Selector at <http://ekps.tamu.edu/>

PEST MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR COW HERD

Efficient pest management requires that cattle operators understand the three components of integrated pest management (IPM) and how they work together. IPM uses cultural, biological, and chemical control methods to more effectively suppress insect pests. **Cultural control** focuses on preventing new infestations by minimizing conditions that support insect breeding. The best way to prevent initial infestations is to check and treat new cattle for lice, ticks, or mites before adding them to existing herds. The most effective way to control insect and mite populations is to minimize breeding conditions:

1. Remove and dispose of carcasses quickly. 2. Clean up and dispose of manure and spilled feed—especially if they are wet. 3. Keep drainage ditches clear by cleaning out weeds. 4. Remove straw or hay that has been defecated and urinated on. 5. Clean and dress all wounds on cattle to exclude blowflies and prevent infection.

Biological control is using insects that are harmless to humans and animal, to control insects that are detrimental to human and animal health. Identifying insect populations accurately to make pest control decisions is key to avoid over-using pesticides. For example: Fire ants prey on any available larvae. Black dump fly larvae feed on house fly larvae developing in the same manure. Small fish and immature dragonflies, damselflies, and mayflies feed on mosquito larvae. Beneficial insects can also control pest populations through competition: Soldier fly maggots eat more manure than horn fly or house fly maggots, leaving competitors short of food and unable to complete development.

Chemical Control should be used when preventive methods are not effective or available. Use chemical control methods only when pest activity is at its highest. When chemical control is needed always remember the label is the law. Use personal protective equipment when necessary to avoid illness, and side effects. Keep a record of all chemical applications to keep proper rotations of chemicals, and to look back on in case issues arise, including withdrawal dates. For more information check out a detailed management guide at <https://1g92472cqoiu485bu53vpy6c-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/E-570.pdf?>



NOT ALL THAT IS FUZZY IS FRIENDLY

As the start of summer begins we may find ourselves spending more time outside. With the usual party stoppers such as mosquitoes, ticks, and wasps, another critter to watch out for are stinging caterpillars. “Spring foliage has brought on an abundance of caterpillars, a few of whom carry irritating or even venomous hairs,” said Janet Hurley, AgriLife Extension integrated pest management for schools statewide specialist, Dallas.

Especially if out with small children, the temptation to pick up a cute fuzzy creature may seem tempting. “A good rule of thumb is if a caterpillar looks ‘fuzzy’ — don’t touch it,” said Molly Keck, AgriLife Extension specialist in integrated pest management and entomologist, Bexar County.

If you are stung, you may feel immediate pain and reddish colored spots may appear where spines entered the skin. Some people may not feel pain until several minutes after they are stung, while others can experience intense throbbing or radiating pain. If the caterpillar is still on you, immediately brush it off if possible and then use tape to remove the spines that may still be in your skin, said Wizzie Brown, AgriLife Extension specialist in integrated pest management for Travis County. Washing the area with soap and water and applying an ice pack to the sting may offer some relief, and an oral antihistamine may help to relieve itching. Over-the-counter insect sting and bite relief products can also help. Since reactions to the toxins from stinging caterpillars can vary, seek medical advice or treatment immediately or go to an emergency room if you are concerned. (Source: AgriLife Today)



Puss caterpillar. (AgriLife photo by Wizzie Brown)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

During these unprecedented times we are faced with the unique challenge of finding new ways to deliver educational material to our constituents to achieve Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's vision to "Help Texans Better Their Lives." With that we are offering some distance learning opportunities so you can learn more, but in the safety and comfort of our own home.

May 15 ONLINE BEEF CATTLE AND FORAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM will be held from 9 a.m.-noon on May 15. The program, presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices in Atascosa, Bexar, Guadalupe and Wilson counties, will offer one general Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education unit for attendees. The cost is \$10. Attendees will need a laptop or desktop computer and internet access. To register, email Chris Lambert at christopher.lambert@ag.tamu.edu. Once registered, attendees will be provided the link for participation. Make checks payable to Bexar County Ag and Natural Resources Committee and mail to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 212, San Antonio, TX 78230.



PROGRAM TOPICS and presenters will be:

COVID-19 and Its Potential Impact on the Cattle Market, David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist.

Purchasing Replacement Females - How to Invest My Dollars, Joe Paschal, Ph.D. AgriLife Extension livestock specialist.

Tips for Getting the Most Return out of Pastures, Josh McGinty, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist.

Cost-Saving Tips for Managing Brush, Bob Lyons, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension range specialist.

Biosecurity with Animal Issues During and After a Disaster, Bryan Davis, AgriLife Extension disaster assessment and recovery agent.



May 19th WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT SERIES This session will cover "Skunks, Coons, Opossums, and More." Presenters are Dr. Maureen Frank and Dr. John Tomecek, Extension Wildlife Specialists. The series will be conducted online from 12:00-1:00pm. Cost is \$10.00 per session. Checks should be made payable and mailed to Atascosa Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, P.O. Box 379, Leming, Texas 78050. Each session will offer one (1.0) I.P.M. continuing education credit for Private, Commercial and Non-Commercial Applicators. Certificates of

completion will be mailed after participant attendance is verified and payment is processed. Please RSVP by the Friday prior to each event by calling 830-569-0034.

REPRODUCTION MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 20 POSTPONED TO OCTOBER 2020

CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU NEED CEU HOURS FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATOR LICENSE HOLDERS

2020 Beef Management & Economics Series presented online via Zoom

All Programs 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (central time)

One time \$10.00 pre-registration fee (attend one or all sessions)

CC/Debit/PayPal ONLY (\$10 + \$2.24 one-time payment fee per participant)

Register Here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/102698491954>

Upon registration, participants will receive email confirmation with additional instructions

HEALTH & REPRODUCTION

Tuesday, May 5th

Reproductive development & herd health
Breeding Soundness Exams and Bull Fertility
Preventative Herd Health Management for
Reproduction

Economics of reproduction decisions

Thursday, May 7th

Keep / Cull Decisions / Body
Condition Scores

Potential Predator Issues
and Control Options

Economics of management
decisions

FORAGE HEALTH & GRAZING CONSIDERATIONS

Tuesday, May 19th

Integration of livestock into farming practices
cover crops / water conservation / water management
soil health / weed management
opportunities and challenges

crops, and livestock diversification

Thursday, May 21st

Creating a Better Grazing Management Plan
Using supplementation to strategically
influence grazing distribution

Risks associated with prussic acid in forages

Economic decisions impacting forage
availability

NUTRITION & SUPPLEMENTATION

Tuesday, May 12th

Meeting the nutrient requirements of
beef cattle in a forage-based setting

Making economical supplementation
decisions

Economics and risk involved with
nutrition decisions and
supplementation decisions

BEEF QUALITY & EFFICIENCIES

Tuesday, May 26th

A look at the efficiencies of a
dairy farm

Research and Carcass Data
Dairy/Beef Cross Calves

Update on quality and management to improve
carcass quality

Beef/ Industry Panel – Opportunities
and Challenges

Market outlooks for 2020 and
economics of quality beef

improvement through genetics

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

AGRILIFE LEARN OFFERING FREE COURSES ONLINE

Texas A&M AgriLife Learn Online is full of free and low cost educational courses available to the public. Head to <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/> and check out courses on Animals and Livestock, Plants and Garden, and Wildlife. The following courses below are free or low cost. Simply select a course, create an account and check out! If the course is free, no payment information is needed.



ANIMALS AND LIVESTOCK:

Beef Quality Assurance– best management practices, safe handling of cattle, environmental stewardship

Basic Beef Cattle Production- genetics, ruminant nutrition, USDA beef grading, marketing and more

Beef Literacy– feeding cattle, antibiotic use, technologies in beef production, feedyards, the nutritional value of beef in the diet, and environmental considerations, covers the path of beef from the ranch to the plate

Environmental Quality Management of Animal Feeding Operations– this course meets the requirements of TCEQ for CAFO operators located in the dairy outreach program area (DOPA).

Drought Cattle Management- learn about healthy and adequate water and forage availability, destocking, and nutrition programs for your beef program.

Cattle Reproduction (advanced course)- covers AI, embryo transfer, sexed semen, and more

Master Cattle Transporter– covers every aspect of the transportation industry including cattle behavior, handling, loading issues, and more. You will learn how to minimize risk and lower stress to minimize profit loss

PLANTS AND GARDEN:

Gardening 101– basics of gardening, from plant development, landscaping for conservation, and creating a garden suited for your wants and needs

Intro to Plant Disease Diagnostics- how to detect pathogens and pests, and plant pathology basics

WILDLIFE:

Private Land Stewardship Lessons -This course will help you find and navigate resources available to private land stewards

Wildlife Lessons- learn about wildlife conservation and mitigation, including game, non-game, endangered and threatened species, and habitats

COMMON CONVERSIONS FOR PRODUCERS

As many of local producers start spraying for brush, crops, and miscellaneous things, conversions and measurement are important to make sure you are properly applying anything. Remember when applying chemicals the label is the law.

Area

1 acre = 43,560 square feet, 209 feet X 209 feet, 69.5 X 69.5 yards
1/10 acre = 4,356 square feet, 66 feet X 66 feet, 22 yards X 22 yards
1/100 acre = 436 square feet, 21 feet X 21 feet, 7 yards X 7 yards
1 section = 640 acres or 1 square mile
1 hectare = 2.471 acres

Length

1 mile = 5,280 feet. 1,760 yards or 1.61 kilometers
1 rod = 16.5 feet
1 chain = 66 feet
1 kilometer = 0.62 miles
1 roll barbed wire = 1/4 mile or 1320 ft.
1 roll net wire = 330 feet or 20 rods

Weight

1 short ton = 2,000 pounds
1 long ton = 2,240 pounds
1 pound = 453.6 grams or 16 ounces
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

Liquid Measure

1 gallon = 128 ounces, 3,785.4 milliliters, 16 cups, 4 quarts, 8.355 pounds or 256 tablespoons
1 quart = 0.946 liters, 2 pints or 32 ounces
1 pint = 16 ounces or 2 cups
1 cup = 8 ounces
1 milliliter = 1 cubic centimeter (cc)
1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
1 teaspoon = 5 milliliters
1 cubic foot of water = 62.43 pounds or 7.48 gallons
1 acre inch of water = 27,154 gallons
1 barrel of water = 55 gallons
1 barrel of oil = 40 gallons

Water Storage Capacity

Round tank (gallons) = 3.1416 X radius squared (ft.) X height (ft.) X 7.48
Rectangular tank (gallons) = height (ft.) X width (ft.) X length (ft.) X 7.48

Pressure

1 foot lift of water = 0.433 psi
1 psi will lift water 2.31 feet

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION COVID-19 UPDATE AND RESOURCES

While all face to face events regarding AgriLife Extension are cancelled or postponed until May 4th, we still are upholding our commitment to Helping Texans Better Their Lives. Here at the Extension office we deal with three of some of the most important things in your life: Your Food, Your Health, and Your Children. For a complete list of available resources check out <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/coronavirus/>

FOOD: Our local farmers and food producers are working hard to ensure a safe wholesome food product from their fields to your table. For our beef producers here in the county <https://beeffax.tamu.edu/> is a great resource for cattle market updates.

HEALTH: As we adjust to our new normal our FCH Agent Dru Benavides has some awesome resources on our Facebook page to help stay active, manage stress, adhering to guidelines on social distancing, and how to safely shop at the grocery store. When out shopping for essential items it is important to remember the following tips:

1. If possible go by yourself, the less people out minimizes the chance of exposure and spread
2. Only touch products you will buy
3. Sanitize cart and cart handles before shopping
4. Keep your distance from others, CDC Guidelines say 6 feet apart at all times
5. Go with a paper grocery list, be prepared so you minimize the amount of time at the store, and throw away your list when you're done shopping
6. After you get home thoroughly wash produce and disinfect items such as boxes and cans with sanitizing wipes, or make your own sanitizing solution with 1/3 of a cup of bleach to a gallon of water.
7. Sanitize commonly touched items such as, door knobs, light switches, refrigerator door handle, faucets, car keys, and counter tops. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using cleaning products.

CHILDREN: As home becomes school and school becomes home, 4-H has some amazing educational resources to help facilitate school lessons with agriculture, learn about 4-H projects, and some at home projects to help the community. Join District 12 4-H with 12 at 12. A Facebook Live event every Tuesday and Thursday at noon. There will be quizzes, project exploration, and interaction with other 4-H'ers. Also Check out the Texas 4-H Facebook page for daily activities and videos! Contact Ashlie Stayton at the extension office for even more 4-H resources.

COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus