

Atascosa Ag Newsletter

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

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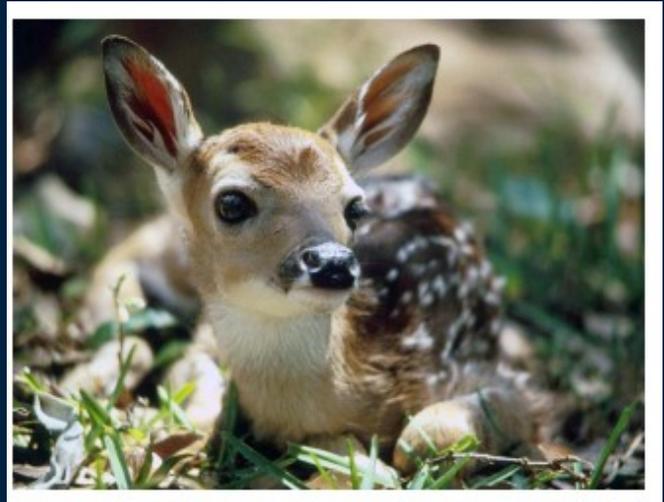
The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive 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.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOR JUNE BY TPWD

BIOLOGIST MATTHEW REIDY

In our part of South Texas June usually means the start (or maybe continuation) of hot and dry weather. We generally break into an average high above 90 most every day. Grassland and woodland nesting birds, reptiles, and amphibians are in the middle of nesting and breeding season. Also, warm season grasses are generally actively growing with abundant sunshine (and hopefully continued rain).

Towards the end of June the fawning season for white-tailed deer begins. Based on a white-tailed deer breeding chronology study conducted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, peak fawning in

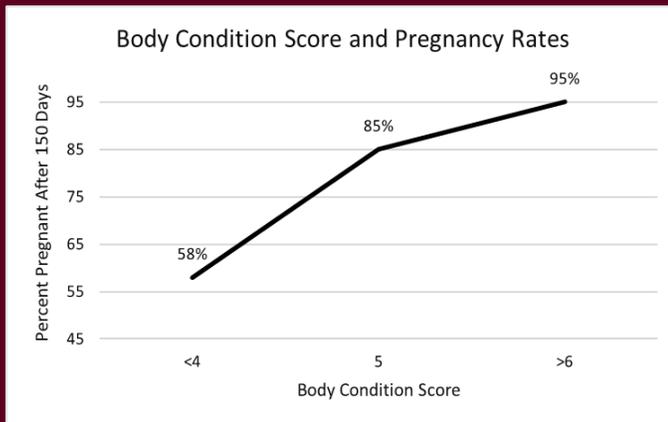


Atascosa county occurs around the 4th of July. As June progresses, pregnant does will begin to separate from groups and become solitary. Nutritional needs for pregnant does are very high in June and will continue to increase once the fawn(s) are born and begin nursing. Does will seek out secluded areas with shade and good herbaceous cover to give birth. Once born, the fawn is able to get up and walk within hours. However, the first several days of life the fawn will lay very still and rely on camouflage to avoid detection by predators. If you find a young fawn, it will remain motionless as you get near. You will also not see the mother doe nearby at all. This is a defense mechanism to protect the fawn. The doe stays away from the fawn and only returns to nurse for short periods of time throughout the day. This way predators will have a harder time finding the vulnerable and hidden fawn. If you see a fawn laying down by itself, the best thing to do is leave it alone as this is exactly where it is supposed to be.

BODY CONDITION SCORE AND PREGNANCY RATES IN CATTLE

Body condition scores (BCS) are numbers used to suggest the relative fatness or body composition of the cow. Most experts suggest using a range of 1 to 9, with a score of 1 representing very thin body condition and 9 extreme fatness.

Keep BCS evaluation of cattle simple. A thin cow looks very sharp, angular and skinny while a fat one looks smooth and boxy with bone structure hidden from sight or feel. All others fall somewhere in between.



Cows should be in good condition at calving and should maintain good body condition during the breeding period. Improper body condition at breeding can have a detrimental effect on calving interval.

Calving interval is defined as the period from the birth of one calf to the next. To have a 12-month calving interval, a cow must rebreed within 80 days after the birth of her calf. Cows that do, produce a pound of weaned calf cheaper

than cows that take longer than 80 days to rebreed.

Some producers may believe long breeding seasons are necessary to achieve good reproductive performance. Even after five and six months of breeding, cows scoring less than 5 at calving and during breeding do not conceive at an acceptable level. Until they have regained

Table 1. Description of Body Condition Scores in Beef Cattle. (after Sprott and Herd, undated)

1	Severely emaciated - no fat observed, backbone, tail head and ribs are prominently visible.
2	Emaciated - little visible muscle tissue, backbone, tail head and ribs less visible.
3	Very thin - no fat over ribs or brisket, backbone still easily visible (about 0.05 inches of fat cover).
4	Borderline - individual ribs noticeable, overall fat cover is lacking, there is increased musculature over shoulders and hindquarters, hips and backbone slightly rounded (about 0.10 inches fat cover).
5	Moderate - increased fat cover over ribs, only 12th and 13th ribs visible, tail head full or flat but not rounded (about 0.20 inches fat cover).
6	Good - back, ribs and tail head slightly rounded and spongy when palpated, fat deposition in brisket (about 0.30 inches fat cover).
7	Fat - cow appears fleshy and carries fat on back, tail head and brisket, ribs are not visible, some udder fat (about 0.40 inches fat cover).
8	Very fat - squared appearance due to excess fat over back, tail head and hindquarters, fat deposition in brisket and along ribs and in udder (about 0.55 inches of fat cover).
9	Obese - fatter than BCS 8 with more fat in udder (about 0.70 inches of fat cover).

DO THE TEXAS TWO STEP TO CONTROL FIRE ANTS

Right now is the time of the year fire ants are building their mounds, it is also the perfect time to control them as the fire ants are easier to locate once on the move. Texas A&M AgriLife entomologist Mike Merchant, Ph.D. recommends the “Texas Two-Step Method” to control fire ants.

Step One: Use fire ant bait. As ants are on the move collecting food for the mounds, they will pick up the bait and bring it back to the colony. “Fire ant colonies can be difficult to locate, especially over a large area, so using a bait is less costly in terms of time and the amount of product needed for treating larger areas... with baits, ants pick up the bait and return it to the nest, so they do most of the work for you.” Said Robert Puckett PhD. A Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Entomologist. Baits can be applied directly to a fire ant mound, but they usually work best when scattered lightly over the entire yard or area to be treated with either a handheld or push spreader. This controls visible as well as hidden fire ant nests. Baits do not kill fire ants overnight, so be patient. Faster acting bait products include indoxacarb (works in 3-10 days), hydramethylnon (works in 7-14 days for mound treatment and in 2-3 weeks when broadcast), and Spinosad (works in several weeks). They may need to be reapplied more often than slower acting/longer lasting products such as abamectin, fenoxycarb, methoprene or pyriproxyfen, which work in 1-2 months when applied in the spring and 6 months when applied in the fall. Products that combine fast and slow acting ingredients may work better.

Step Two: Treat problem mounds The second step is to directly treat any ant colony that needs immediate control. Applying an insecticide or other treatment directly to a fire ant mound is the fastest way to get rid of most fire ant colonies. Because broadcast bait treatments provide slower control of most of the fire ants in your yard, limit Step 2 treatments to mounds located next to the house foundation, in high-traffic areas or in other sensitive spots where you want fast control. Treating individual mounds takes more time than does broadcasting baits; however it may be all you need if your yard has only a few mounds. Options include:

Granular products: These contain an insecticide that releases into the soil when water is applied. Sprinkle the recommended amount of insecticide on top and around the mound. Most products should then be watered into the mound with at least 1 to 2 gallons of water. A sprinkling can is best for gently washing chemicals into the nest without washing the granules off the mound. Do not use a hose for this purpose.

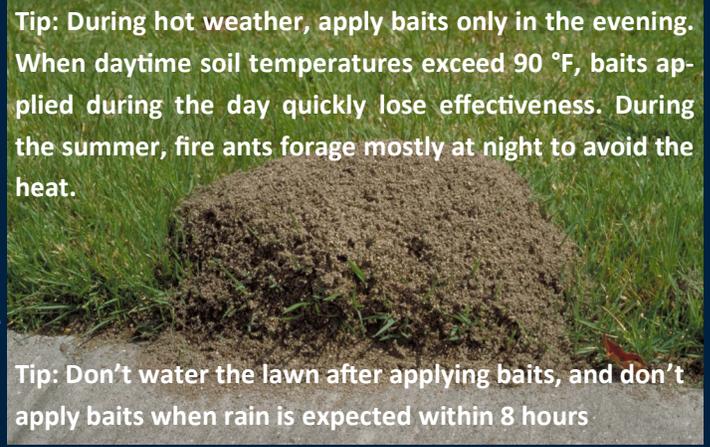
Liquid concentrates: These are mixed with water and applied to a mound. As with granules, always use 1 to 2 gallons of water per mound to get enough solution deep into the nest where the queen lives.

Insecticide dusts: These are designed to be sprinkled lightly over the entire mound. Avoid disturbing the mound during the application, as this can disturb and disperse the ants. It’s best to keep children and pets away from treated mounds until the dust is gone.

Naturally derived insecticides: These are available in a number of different formulations and using different natural ingredients. As with other treatments, be sure to apply enough water when using liquids or granules.

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Today. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Publication L-5070 “The Texas Two-Step Method”

To view this publication in full: <https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/L-5070-1.pdf>



Tip: During hot weather, apply baits only in the evening. When daytime soil temperatures exceed 90 °F, baits applied during the day quickly lose effectiveness. During the summer, fire ants forage mostly at night to avoid the heat.

Tip: Don't water the lawn after applying baits, and don't apply baits when rain is expected within 8 hours

DETAILS OF THE CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CFAP), WHICH WILL PROVIDE UP TO \$16 BILLION IN DIRECT PAYMENTS TO DELIVER RELIEF TO AMERICA'S FARMERS AND RANCHERS IMPACTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

Beginning May 26, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), will be accepting applications from agricultural producers who have suffered losses.

Non-Specialty Crops and Wool, Livestock, Dairy, Specialty Crops are eligible to receive assistance, for more details on eligibility visit https://www.farmers.gov/cfap?fbclid=IwAR3_7bkc2BrJ0q5H8jDUncNPI57kOt8fzKHq1IQQCZ11oCgqQ4kcj1ITMsY

CFAP provides vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

Farmers and ranchers will receive direct support, drawn from two possible funding sources. The first source of funding is \$9.5 billion in appropriated funding provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stability (CARES) Act to compensate farmers for losses due to price declines that occurred between mid-January 2020, and mid-April 2020 and provides support for specialty crops for product that had been shipped from the farm between the same time period but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channels. The second funding source uses the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act to compensate producers for \$6.5 billion in losses due to on-going market disruptions.

There is a payment limitation of \$250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies or limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits where members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. Producers will also have to certify they meet the Adjusted Gross Income limitation of \$900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.

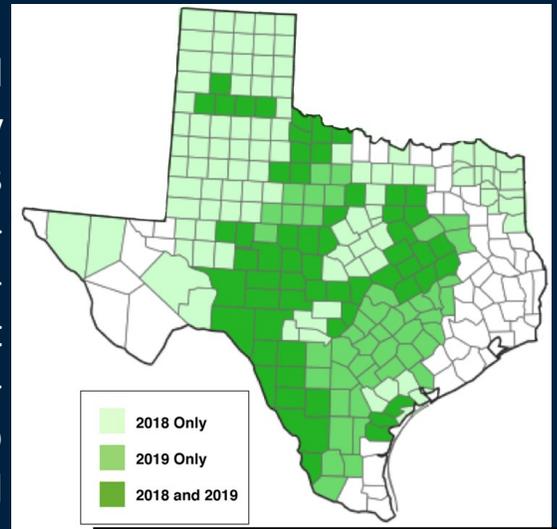
Producers can apply for assistance beginning on May 26, 2020. Additional information and application forms can be found at farmers.gov/cfap. Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed. Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020.

To ensure the availability of funding throughout the application period, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date as funds remain available.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus

WHIP+ OFFERS DISASTER RELIEF TO TEXAS CROP PRODUCERS AFFECTED BY EXTREME DROUGHT

Producers in Texas counties who suffered drought losses in 2018 and 2019, may be eligible for Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) payments. In response to several destructive hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters that occurred in 2017, Congress approved a \$2.36 billion support package which was used, in part to create the WHIP+ program. An appropriations bill passed in 2019, extended the WHIP+ program to crop production losses due to drought. These payments are a potential way for eligible producers to find some financial relief in the midst of dealing with COVID-19.



Texas Counties Eligible for Potential WHIP+ Extreme Drought Relief Payments

Losses due to drought are restricted to counties rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D3 (Extreme Drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the applicable calendar years. Drought severity rankings range from D0 (Abnormally Dry) to D4 (Exceptional Drought). Dr. Bart Fischer and his colleagues at the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M estimate producers in as many as 97 Texas counties in 2018, 45 in 2019, and 60 in both 2018 and 2019 could be eligible for assistance (see map). The AFPC report can be read at <https://afpc.tamu.edu/research/publications/files/695/BP-20-01-web.pdf>.

Signup for WHIP+ is currently underway. Contact your county FSA office to signup. USDA recently issued a reminder with further information. It can be found at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/fsa-reminds-producers-of-ongoing-disaster-assistance-program-signup>.

AFPC's Dr. Fischer notes that WHIP+ covers a variety of other causes of loss in addition to drought. Additionally, livestock losses are not covered by WHIP+ as they are covered by other disaster recovery programs. Details about these and other programs are available at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/>.

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.

ONLINE FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES– Interested on learning more about canning your fruits, and veggies? Then sign up for the four part series held on **June 2nd, 4th, 9th, and 11th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** Topics covered will be Introduction & Equipment, Water Bath Basics & Salsa, Jams, Jellies, & Pickles, ending with Pressure Canning Basics & Vegetables. The cost for the four part series is \$20 or \$5 per session. All classes are held online, sign up for the entire series at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/food-preservation-series-tickets-105543066152> or for each individual session at



June 2nd (Introduction and Equipment): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/introduction-to-food-preservation-equipment-tickets-105545168440>

June 4th (Water Bath Basics & Salsa): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/water-bath-basics-canning-salsa-tickets-105545577664>

June 9th (Jams, Jellies, & Pickles): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jams-jellies-pickles-tickets-105545776258>

June 11th (Pressure Canning Basics & Vegetables): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pressure-canning-basics-canning-vegetables-tickets-105545896618>

SOUTHEAST REGION BEEF AND FORAGE INITIATIVE TEAM ONLINE WORKSHOP– an online workshop is to be held on **June 3rd, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.** This is the first in a two-part series. Topics covered will

be long term weather outlook and preparing the ranch for drought. Topics also include management for pasture, wildlife, and rangeland from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Specialists. The cost of the event is \$10 and registration will be online at agriliferegister.tamu.edu/beef



SOUTHEAST REGIONAL ROW CROP INITIATIVE GRAIN & COTTON MARKETING UPDATE- Each month Extension

Economists from Texas A&M Agrilife Extension will provide commodity marketing updates for cotton, grain sorghum and corn. There will also have special guests to assist with the discussion. The event is free as it is being sponsored by the cotton, grain sorghum and corn commodity groups. It will be live at 7AM the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The next update is **June 17th**. You can go back later and review a recording of the event. They should be short, concise and full of information. We hope to be done after 30 minutes. On the morning of to watch live go to Zoom and plug in the Meeting ID: 937 0559 2814 and Password: 118219, or the link attached to this newsletter via [agrilifezoom](https://agrilifezoom.com)



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

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

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://agrillifeextension.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. Also visit USDA CFAP page for information on Corona Virus relief payments for farmers

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.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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

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