

# Austin County Ag News



## Winter 2012

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### Five Hour CEU Conference Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

Renewal time for private pesticide applicators will be coming up shortly on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. As a reminder to anyone with a license, private applicators need 15 Continuing Education Units in order to re-certify. Two hours must be in Laws and Regulations and two hours must be in Integrated Pest Management, with the others coming in the General Category.

Anyone needing hours should mark **Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** on their calendar. On this day, the Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County, the Austin County Farm Bureau and the Sealy FFA Chapter will be co-sponsoring a 5 hour CEU course at Four County Auction Center in Industry. Registration will take place at 12:00 p.m., with the program following about 1:00 p.m.

The program topics will include Pesticide Laws and Regulations, The Seven Things Every Beef Producer Should Know, IPM for Pasture Pests, Feral Hog Control and the new Identification Requirements for Cattle. A meal and refreshments will be served following the meeting compliments of Switzer Auction Services, Positive Feed, Pfizer Animal Health, Capital Farm Credit, Tegler Chevrolet & Toyota, Washington County Tractor, Industry State Bank and Four County Auction Company. We hope to conclude around 6:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$15.00 at the door. You can pre-register by contacting the Extension Office or Sealy FFA Department by December 3rd. Credits to be given at the course include 1 hour of Laws and Regulations, 3 hours of General Credit and 1 hour of Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

## **Texas Animal Health Commission Announces Details of New Cattle Traceability Rule**

A requirement for adult cattle in Texas to have an approved form of permanent identification in place at change of ownership will go into effect January 1, 2013 according to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). The Commission amended its rules in June of this year to enhance the effective traceability of beef cattle movements in Texas, which is the cornerstone of disease control activities. Implementation of the changes was delayed by the Commission to ensure cattle producers understand the requirements and can prepare for the changes.

The amended rule permanently cancels the brucellosis test requirement for adult cattle at change of ownership, which was unofficially suspended in the summer of 2011. Although testing of adult cattle is no longer required with the rule change, all sexually intact cattle, parturient or post parturient, or 18 months of age and older changing ownership must still be officially identified with Commission approved permanent identification. This change primarily affects beef cattle, as dairy cattle in Texas have had an even more stringent identification requirement in place since 2008.

Before August of 2011, official identification devices such as eartags were applied automatically at the time a brucellosis test was performed. The inadvertent loss of the identification devices applied to cattle when brucellosis testing stopped has threatened TAHC's ability to effectively trace cattle as part of any ongoing disease investigation.

The TAHC routinely performs cattle health investigations where the identification and location of exposed/infected animals is critical to success. For example, 30 Brucellosis reactors, over 300 Bovine Trichomoniasis affected bulls and 22 bovine tuberculosis cases have been investigated by the TAHC to date in 2012. The new traceability rule will help preserve the TAHC's ability to identify and trace animal movements quickly and effectively, no matter which disease is involved.

A complete list of acceptable identification devices/methods may be found at [www.tahc.state.tx.us](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us), but the most commonly used devices include USDA metal tags, brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags, US origin 840 series Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID), and breed registration tattoos or firebrands. Producers are encouraged to contact their veterinarian or TAHC to determine which method of tagging will be best for their operation.

Free USDA metal tags, and a limited number of free applicator pliers are currently available and will be provided by the TAHC to producers wishing to use them. The tags and/or pliers may be obtained by contacting the Region 2 Office in Hempstead located at 1739 13<sup>th</sup> Street, suite 28. The Region 2 TAHC phone number is (979) 921-9481, or producers can pick up tags and pliers from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Bellville, located at 20 South Holland Street. For more information contact (979) 865-2072

## **Leadership Advisory Board to Host Annual Meeting**

The Leadership Advisory Board of Austin County was formed five years ago for the purpose of promoting Extension work in the community and strengthening the programmatic efforts of the Agents in Austin County. In 2008, the board hosted its first Extension Interpretation Event in which all of the program areas supporting Extension work in the county provided a brief look at their individual programs. This year's event will take place on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Liedertafel Hall, 116 Lux Rd. in Sealy. The event, now entitled the "Annual Meeting" is the showcase event of the year for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County. Each of the program area committees that work the agents in their respective fields of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, 4-H and Youth Development and Community Development will be represented on the program giving highlights of their activities throughout the year and highlighting the impacts made on the citizens of Austin County.

Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Doug Steele, the new director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Dr. Steele has served as a County Agent, Extension Educator and University faculty member in Texas, Indiana, Colorado and was most recently the Director for Montana State University Cooperative Extension. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Steele as our speaker. The program will kick off with registration and a social at 6:00 p.m. followed by a meal and the presentations at 6:30 p.m. Please RSVP to the Extension Office at (979)865-2072, or via email at [austin-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:austin-tx@tamu.edu).

## **Crops Update Meeting**

Row crop farmers, please mark Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, on your calendars for the crop update meeting in Wallis. The meeting will take place at the Brazos FFA building in Wallis from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Dr. Roy Parker, Extension Entomologist will be on hand to discuss the results of his latest applied research on grasshopper control for pastures and cotton, corn and grain sorghum pest applied research and demonstrations in the upper Texas Gulf Coast.

Two (2) CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators. There will be no charge for supper, however goodwill donations will be accepted. Drinks are compliments of the Brazos FFA.

## **Pecan Graft Wood Collection Field Day**

The Extension Horticulture Committee will be sponsoring a Pecan Graft Wood Collection Field Day on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Bellville. The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. with registration with the program to follow. The field day will demonstrate the proper methods for collecting, bundling and storing pecan graft wood for person's interested in collecting their own graft wood for use in grafting in the spring.

The first half of the field day will be indoors with the field demonstration at the conclusion of the event at 12:00 noon. Coffee and other refreshments will be provided at no charge. For more information on this program, contact the Extension Office at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin-co.tamu.edu>.

## **STATEWIDE REFERENDUM TO ESTABLISH A GRAIN INDEMNITY FUND FOR FARMERS**

The Texas Grain Producers Indemnity Board is holding a referendum on the statewide establishment of a grain indemnity fund. The TGPIB referendum will be held from Nov. 19, 2012, until Dec. 7, 2012 across the state.

The grain indemnity fund board may award up to 90 percent of the financial losses suffered by producers of corn, sorghum, soybean and wheat when grain buyers fail to pay for grain due to a financial failure. The TGPIB was established as the result of legislation passed by the 2011 Texas legislature and signed into law by the governor. Rep. Larry Phillips of Sherman and Sen. Craig Estes of Wichita Falls introduced the legislation after a series of grain buyer financial failures in recent years resulted in millions of dollars in losses to Texas grain producers.

Eligible voters in the referendum will vote to establish an assessment rate within a range of 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent of the final sales price of grain. The assessment, which will be set each year by the TGPIB, will be collected and remitted to the TGPIB effective Feb. 1, 2013.

Any producer who has produced corn, sorghum, soybeans or wheat within the last 36 months is eligible to vote. This includes owners of farms on which grain is produced or an owner's tenant or sharecropper engaged in the business of producing grain or causing grain to be produced for commercial purposes.

The referendum will be held by mail ballot. Ballots will be available at all Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county offices during regular business hours.

For a ballot to be valid, it must be mailed to the Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas, 78711, with a postmark date of no later than Dec. 7, 2012.

For more information regarding the referendum, please contact the Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas, 78711 or call 512-463-3285. To learn more about TGPIB and the indemnity fund, visit [www.TexasGrainIndemnity.org](http://www.TexasGrainIndemnity.org).

### **Austin County Hay Show Winners**

Congratulations go out to John and Sheila Howard and Matt Waak. They were the big winners at the Austin County Hay Show, which was held in conjunction with the Fall Forage Seminar at the Austin County Fairgrounds in Bellville. John and Sheila took home the grand champion honors with his sample of Coastal Bermuda, and Matt's sample of Tifton 85 Bermuda took home the reserve grand champion banner.

This year's show was the biggest in the history of the Austin County Hay Show, with a total of 94 samples submitted. Both the Howard's and Matt were awarded custom made belt buckles, and each first and second place participant in this year's show was awarded \$50.00 and \$25.00 gift card, complements of the many hay show sponsors.

## Master Gardener Sign Up

For anyone interested in participating in the Master Gardener training program, the deadline for signing up is Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>. Participants need only come by the Extension Office to register. There is a fee of \$175.00 per participant, which will cover the cost of materials, and defray speaker expenses. The classes will be held on Tuesdays mornings beginning on January 29, 2012.



The Master Gardener program is a unique opportunity for individuals who are interested in horticulture and serving their community. Master Gardeners are trained in all facets of horticulture such as plant & soil science, entomology, plant pathology, landscape design, vegetable gardening and much more. Upon completion of their training, Master Gardeners will be required to give at least 50 hours of volunteer service time in their local community in order to receive the title of “*Master Gardener*”.

An open house will be held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Bellville on Thursday, January 24, 2012, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. For more information on the Master Gardener program, contact the Extension office at (979) 865-2072, visit the Bluebonnet Master Gardener Website at <http://bluebonnetmastergardener.org>.

## Texas Master Naturalist Training Class 2013

Texas Master Naturalist™ is a state-wide organization sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Forty-four chapters of well-informed volunteers have partnered with other organizations throughout the state to develop service projects that educate, restore, and demonstrate conservation techniques to preserve, protect and help create native habitat for wildlife.



The Gideon Lincecum Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program is very proud of the many project start-ups our membership realized in 2012: conducting informal lectures on a variety of subjects at the Round Top Library, beginning an invasive plant identification and removal project at the Festival Institute, helping out at the Brenham Elementary and High schools in the outdoor learning and greenhouse facilities and Adopt a Highway cleanups. We anticipate to be soon assisting the staff of Stephen F. Austin State Park in a variety of interesting projects aimed at expanding the amenities available to the public, all of which, in addition to our other ongoing ventures, will keep our members active and involved for some time.

The Chapter has established a good working relationship with our partner organizations participating in several Citizen Scientist programs, supporting Prescribed Burn education and proactively identifying and working to preserve the remaining Texas prairie land.

So now is the time to join our 100-strong community workforce.

The Gideon Lincecum Chapter (Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington counties) will hold classes from **January 28th to April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**. Texas A&M professors and other professionals will give lectures on Monday evenings from **6-9pm** at the Meadows Conference Center of the Winedale Historical Complex near Round Top. Instruction topics include geology, soil science, hydrology, weather and climate, forest ecology, rangeland ecology, botany, herpetology, entomology, ornithology, and mammals. Two or three field trips, normally on Saturdays, are an integral part of the course.

To learn more about Texas Master Naturalist™ visit the main organization website at <http://txmn.org> or our chapter website at <http://txmn.org/glc>.

**For questions about the program or course please contact:**

**Outreach Coordinator for Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties: Judy Deaton at 936-878-9900 or email [judithdeaton@gmail.com](mailto:judithdeaton@gmail.com)**

**Outreach Coordinator for Austin and Colorado Counties: Bill Dudley at (979) 725-9086 or email [billedudley@gmail.com](mailto:billedudley@gmail.com)**

## **Multi County New Landowners Program starts in January 2013**

Multi-County New Landowner Education program is a series of 10 informational meetings/seminars/field days designed to make new landowners in Austin Colorado, Fayette & Washington Counties aware of what types of agricultural enterprises are best for their property. Participants in the program will hear from experts in certain fields of agriculture about the best management practices that they can implement on their own property. This innovative program assists new landowners in understanding the concepts of rural living. Participants in the program are given exposure to ideas on raising livestock and horses, plant identification, fence building, applying pesticides, soil testing, stock pond management, pond construction, fruit and nut production, and much more. The program also serves as a way for new residents of the four counties to network and meet new people in their communities, find out what can be done on their land, what operations can be profitable, and possibly what opportunities they have to serve the community.

The program will be held on the third Friday of the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November. Each month's meeting will be held at different locations in each county. The meetings begin at 1:30 p.m., and last about 4 hours. The first meeting for the 2013 series will take place on Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Washington County Sales Facility. Cost is \$100.00 per person or \$150.00 per couple for all ten meetings or \$15.00 per person per individual meeting. CEU's for Pesticide Applicators will be given at each meeting, and refreshments will be served at each program session. Participants will receive a notebook full of timely and useful information. For more information on the program, contact the Extension Office.



**Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar**

**February 1st**

Do you have a fruit tree, and have questions on how to get it to produce fruit? Here is your chance answer those questions and to learn what is needed to know to have a successful and enjoyable experience. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, at Winedale Historical Complex at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History in Winedale.

Monte Nesbitt, Extension Horticulture Associate, will be the main speaker and will cover a wide range of topics, including varieties, selection, pruning and planting demonstrations. The agenda will also include some visual demonstrations of these practices in Winedale's orchard.

As an added bonus during the training, the Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association will be selling fruit trees at the program. There will be a variety of different types of trees available for sale at very reasonable prices. All of the varieties sold are specially selected to grow and thrive in South Central Texas.

This program is a multi-county effort that includes Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington counties. Refreshments and handouts will be provided. Registration is from 1-1:30 pm and the program will run from 1:30 to approximately 5 pm. A registration fee of \$15.00 will be charged at the door to help defer the cost of refreshments and materials. To register, contact the Extension Office at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin-co.tamu.edu>. Winedale Historical Complex is a division of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin. Winedale is located at 3738 FM2714, 4 miles from Round Top, Texas. Take FM 1457 to FM 2714. You can visit the website at, <http://www.winedale.org>.

## **Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day, February 8<sup>th</sup>**

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day will be held on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Cat Spring Ag Society building in Cat Spring. The day will begin with registration from 8:30-9:00 a.m., with the program beginning at 9:00 a.m. The field day will conclude around 4:00 p.m.

Featured speakers will be Regional Extension Viticulture Associate, Fritz Westover, State program leader for viticulture, Dr. Ed Hellman, Pierce's Disease Researcher Jim Kamas, and long time Professor and Extension Specialist, Dr. George Ray McEachern. There will be several topics of interest to those in the Wine Grape production business as well as those who thinking about getting started growing grapes.

There will also be an update from the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association and a social at the end of the evening.

A minimum of 3 CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators. A registration fee of \$20.00 per person will be required at the door, but anyone that plans on coming is asked to call the Extension Office at (979) 865-2072.



## **Small Farms & Vegetable Conference scheduled for February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Small Farms and Vegetable Conference on Friday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, at Cat Spring Ag Society Hall. Registration will take place from 8:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. with the program to follow. This year's program will focus on several issues affecting vegetable growers, including pest management, water availability and climate changes, as well as crop diversification to increase profits. Dr. Joe Masabni, Extension Vegetable Specialist will be the featured speaker for the event. The agenda for the day will be as follows;

- \* Sustainable and Organic Production
- \* Practical Vegetable Gardening
- \* Dealing with Plant Pests in Vegetable Crops
- \* Diversifying your crop for increased profit
- \* Water/Climate Factors

The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. and last until about 2:00 p.m. Lunch will be served and there will also be several snack breaks built-in to help get the blood flowing again. There will be **5 CEU's** offered to pesticide applicators, 3 hours in General, 1 IPM and 1 Laws and Regulations. Cost for the event is \$30.00 per person, which goes to cover speaker materials, meal cost and the handouts. To pre-register for the event, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or email us at [austin-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:austin-tx@tamu.edu).

## **Private Applicator Training and Testing March 27<sup>th</sup>**

If you are planning on using a state limited use or state restricted use pesticide, such as Grazon P+D, 2 4-D, Weedmaster, etc... and need a license, the Extension Service will be sponsoring a Private Applicator Training and Testing on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, at the Extension Office, 20 S. Holland in Bellville. The training will last from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. A representative from the Texas Department of Agriculture will be on hand to administer the 100 question exam following the training. If you complete the training portion and then score a 70 or above on your examination, you will be eligible to apply for your Private Applicator License, which will allow you to purchase all state limited use and restricted use pesticides used in agriculture.

There is a \$50.00 fee to attend the training. Your registration fee includes the study materials and refreshments. You are strongly encouraged to pick up your materials early and read through them prior to coming to the training. To reserve your spot at the training, contact the Extension Office. Please bring something to write with and a calculator.

## **Here We Go Again!!!** **Texas “A&M” AgriLife Extension Service**

Here’s a bit of trivia for those of you who have grown up around 4-H, county agents, or some other Extension programs, the question is “What was the original name given to the Extension Service here in Texas after the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 that set in motion the creation of what we know today as the Texas AgriLife Extension Service? ..... If you said the “Texas Agricultural Extension Service” you would be correct! But in 2001, the Extension Administration decided our organization needed a face lift and our name was changed to Texas Cooperative Extension. There it remained until 2008 when a new Texas A&M president decided that we needed to have a stand alone brand and it was again changed to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Well, here we go again, our official name has now been changed by the Vice Chancellor’s office in an effort to brand all state agencies under the Texas A&M system with the A&M name, therefore our new name is the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This change not only affects our agency but also the Texas Forrest Service (now the Texas A&M Forrest Service), the Texas Transportation Institute (now the Texas A&M Transportation Institute), the Texas Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (now the Texas A&M Veterinary Diagnostic Lab), and several more entities under the Texas A&M System.

The good news is that the programs and services offered by the County Agents will not change. The mission of our agency is and will remain the same as its always has been, providing the best in the way of research based educational programs and information to the citizens of our great state. And just in case you get confused, you can still call the courthouse and ask for the county agents office and we’ll still answer.



*Improving Lives. Improving Texas.*



## Just a Few Dates to Remember

- December 6 - Leadership Advisory Board Annual Meeting- Sealy
- December 7 - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
  - Five Hour CEU program, 4 Co. Auction Center - Industry
  - Bluebonnet Master Gardener Annual Meeting
- December 11 - Coastal Bend Commissioners and Judges Conf. - Edna
- December 24-25 - Extension Office Closed, Christmas Holiday
- December 31-January 1 - Extension Office Closed, New Year's Holiday
- January 2 - Horticulture Committee Meeting
- January 16 - Leadership Advisory Board Meeting
- January 17 - Beef and Forage Committee Annual Meeting - Sealy
- January 18 - Multi Co New Landowners Series - Brenham
- January 21 - Extension Office Closed, Martin Luther King Day
- January 24 - Master Gardener Open House, Bellville
  - Crops Update Meeting, Wallis
  - Deadline to sign up for Master Gardener Class
- January 26 - Graft Wood Collection Field Day - Bellville
- January 28 - Master Naturalist Orientation, Winedale
- January 29 - Master Gardener Orientation, Bellville
- February 1 - Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar, Winedale
  - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
- February 8 - Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day, Cat Spring
- February 15 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, TBA
- February 18 - Extension Office closed, Presidents Day
- February 22 - Small Farms and Vegetable Conference, Cat Spring
- March 6 - Horticulture Committee Meeting
- March 15 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, TBA
- March 27 - Private Applicator Training & Testing

Sincerely,



Philip Shackelford  
County Extension Agent - Ag/NR  
Austin County

Austin County  
Courthouse, 1 East Main  
Bellville, Texas 77418  
Tel. 979-865-2072  
Fax. 979-865-2065  
<http://austin-co.tamu.edu>

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A & M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating