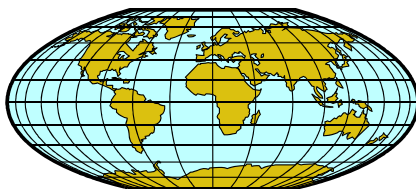


Austin County Ag News



Spring 2013

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Beef Cattle Management Seminar

The Beef and Forage Committee will be sponsoring a Beef Cattle Management Seminar on Friday, March 22nd, at Four County Auction Center in Industry. Registration is scheduled from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. with the program to follow. Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist, will be providing information on beef cattle restocking strategies and the long term outlook for the beef cattle market. J. R. Minyard, weights and measures deputy with the Austin County Sheriff's Department will be speaking on issues regarding transportation of farm machinery, and other equipment down the road. There will also be a live working demonstration that will focus on Chute Side Manners. Chute Side Manners is the concept of working cattle in a way that is less stressful both you and your livestock.

The program is scheduled to last from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Registration fee is \$10.00 per person and drinks and refreshments will be provided. Three CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators, 1 General, 1 Laws and Regulations and 1 Integrated Pest Management. There will also be 2 credits given for the Beef Quality Assurance Program. Anyone wanting to attend is asked to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County at (979) 865-2072 to pre-register.

Private Applicator Training and Testing March 27th

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 27th, 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 at (979) 865-2072. Please bring something to write with and a calculator.

Spray Permits Required for a Portion of Austin County

As a reminder to anyone that will be using state limited use or state restricted use herbicides in Austin County, a permit to apply these herbicides must be obtained through the Texas Department of Agriculture if you plan on spraying in certain portions of the county. The following areas of Austin County must acquire a permit as is specified in the Texas Agricultural code, chapter 75,

- I.)* Only the portion of Austin County lying east and south of the line beginning at the point where state highway 36 crosses the north county line, thence southerly along Highway 36 to FM 949; thence westwardly along FM 949 to the San Bernard River
- 2.)* Between March 15th and July 31st, in that portion of Austin County lying south of Interstate Highway 10, the following restrictions on the use of 2,4-D formulations shall apply:
 - (A.)* The application by aircraft is prohibited
 - (B.)* The use of all ester formulations by any method is prohibited

Permits may be obtained from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>. Forms can also be obtained by contacting the Texas Department of Agriculture Gulf Coast Regional Office in Houston at (713) 921-8200.

Pecan Field Day

The annual Pecan Management Field Day will be taking place on Friday, April 12th, at the Stephen F. Austin State Park in San Felipe. The field day is sponsored by the Horticulture Committee of Austin County and is designed to assist pecan producers and anyone wanting to grow pecans for a hobby or a cash crop with management advice. The goal of the field day is to illustrate how to get a pecan tree to produce a better or higher quality product.

The featured speaker for this year will be Monte Nesbitt, Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist from College Station. Mr. Nesbitt will be providing updates on the latest pecan pest management strategies, as well as the best management strategies for increasing production in older native orchards. He will also provide information about basic management of pecans, such as spraying and fertility requirements.

Following Mr. Nesbitt's presentation, members of the Horticulture Committee will instruct the participants in a hands-on four flap and inlay bark grafting demonstration for pecans. Pecan graftwood will also be available for sale at \$5.00 per bundle. There will be several different varieties for sale that will be suited for our area that would included Caddo, Desirable, Lakota, Nocona, Oconee, Pawnee, Podsednik and Prilop. Registration will take place from 1:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m., with the program to follow. Three CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators. A \$10.00 fee will be charged at the door per person. Drinks and refreshments will be available. For more information on grafting, visit our website <http://austin.agrilife.org> or contact the Extension Office at (979) 865-2072, for more information and to pre-register.

Master Gardener Plant Sale

The Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association's Annual plant sale will be held on Saturday, April 6, 2013 from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Austin County Fairgrounds Pavilion in Bellville. There will be directional signs to the fairgrounds on sale day. Included in the sale will be plants that are drought and heat tolerant, cold hardy, and low maintenance. Expect many Earth Kind varieties, succulents, Texas Super Stars, herbs, annuals and perennials, as well as some unique and hard to find plants. Fruit trees can also be ordered on the day of the sale with delivery at a later date. Experts will be available to give demonstrations and answer gardening and watering questions. Proceeds will advance education, scholarships and beautification for Austin, Colorado, Fayette and Washington counties.

For additional information, contact Charlene Koehler at (979) 885-4250 or visit www.bluebonnetmstergardener.org. Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association is part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A & M System.

Multi-County New Landowners Educational Series Continues

The Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington County offices of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will host their next Multi-County New Landowner educational program on **Friday, March 15th, 2013**. This program will be held at the Greenvine Emmanuel Lutheran Church at 6700 Wickel Rd, Burton, TX 77835 beginning at 1:30PM. The topics of discussion for the program include: Wildlife Management Plans, Habitat Management, and Incentive Programs. After some classroom instruction from Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologists, we will travel to a property nearby to take a tour and view some of the wildlife management practices discussed as long as the weather permits.

Participants can register at the door on the day of the program for \$20.00 per person.

Two (2) CEU's will be offered to pesticide applicators. One hour of integrated pest management credit and one hour of general credit toward recertification. Participants with special needs requiring auxiliary aid should contact the Washington County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service prior to the program in order for appropriate accommodations to be arranged

The April program will focus on Stock Pond Management. The program will be held on **Friday, April 19th**, at the Sheridan Community Center in Colorado County. The program will begin at 1:30 p.m. with registration at the site. Peter Wood, Extension Fisheries Specialist will be the featured speaker. Mr. Wood will cover several topics that would be of interest in new landowners and seasoned landowners alike, such as aquatic weed control, pond construction, stocking recommendations, management of shoreline and tank dam vegetation, and fertilization of farm ponds.

Registration for the program is \$20.00 per person. Your registration fee will include all of the handout materials and refreshments. Three (3) CEU's will be offered for all pesticide applicators, one general and two integrated pest management. Anyone wishing to have pond weeds identified is asked to bring their weeds freshly pulled and in a mason jar or zip lock bag.

May's program will focus on pasture management and forage production. This program is set for **Friday, May 17th**, at the John Howard Farm, near Kenney. The field day will include an overview of the value added hay production, information on irrigation to maximize production, and the how to's of adding value to your hay crop. The field day will begin at 1:30 p.m. with registration at the farm, with the program and field tour to

follow. The standard registration fee of \$20.00 applies for attending the program. Three (3) CEU's will be given to pesticide applicators, two general and one integrated pest management, and handouts will be provided.

Anyone interested in attending either or both of these programs is asked to contact the Extension Office and let us know you're coming. For information, contact the Extension Office at (979) 865-2072, or email us at austin-tx@tamu.edu.

Grape Growers Committee to host Blanc Du Bois Symposium

Blanc Du Bois (Blahnk-Du-Bwoh) is a hybrid bunch grape that was crossed in 1968 by John A. Mortensen at the University of Florida's Central Florida Research and Education Center in Leesburg, Fla. This variety was developed by crossing European V. vinifera selections such as Golden Muscat with native Florida grapes and was officially released by Mortensen in 1987 as a Pierce's disease-tolerant winegrape for white wine production in the humid southeast. The grape was named in honor of Emile DuBois, an influential grapegrower and winemaker in the Tallahassee, Fla., area. Since the release of Blanc Du Bois, the variety has found its way into commercial production in southeastern states such as Florida, Louisiana and Texas. Currently Texas is leading the industry in production of Blanc Du Bois with more than 150 acres in production in the eastern and southeastern parts of the state (over 30 acres in Austin County alone) and more than 20 commercial wines.

The Austin County Grape Growers Committee, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Assn. will be sponsoring a Blanc Du Bois Symposium on Friday, May 10th, at the Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall in Cat Spring. The event will be featuring growers and wine makers from all over the southeastern United States. Blanc Du Bois is one of the most popular grapes grown in the area, and the popularity of the wine made from this grape increases each year. The morning session will feature presentations about growing the Blanc Du Bois grape in south central Texas. Fritz Westover, Extension Viticulturalist and Chris Bundrant Viticulture Consultant will be the featured speakers during the morning session. The afternoon sessions will focus around making wine with the Blanc Du Bois grape. During the afternoon session, Raymond Haak, Owner of Haak Winery in Santa Fe, Jim Evans, Enologist and Genie Burgess, Vice President of Lakeridge winery in Florida will be the featured speakers.

The program is scheduled to begin with registration from 8:30-9:00 a.m. with the program beginning at 9:00 a.m. and lasting until 4:00 p.m. A registration fee of \$65.00 per person will be charged at the door. The registration fee will include all of the handouts, break refreshments and a catered meal at lunch. Anyone interested in attending this program is asked to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or email us at austin-tx@tamu.edu and register.

Wildflower Photo Contest

Do you plan to take any wildflower photos this year? If you answered yes, then please consider submitting your photos via email or drop your photos off at our office for our Wildflower Photo Contest, sponsored by the Horticulture Committee of Austin County. Winners from the contest will be selected and announced at the Wildflower Symposium this fall. Details about the symposium will be shared in subsequent newsletters. Contact the Extension Office for more information at (979) 865-2072, or check out the website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Horticulture Committee of Austin County Selling Pecan Graft Wood

If you have ever been interested in growing what most folks refer to as “paper shell” pecans, then I’ve got a deal for you. The Horticulture Committee of Austin County, which is an advisory group for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County is selling pecan graft wood and that can give you some of those “paper shelled” pecans. Paper shell is actually just a term used to describe an improved variety’s thinner, easier to crack, outer shell. Paper shells come with many different names and in all shapes and sizes. One of the more interesting things about pecans is that they do not come true from seed. In other words, if someone gives you a Pawnee pecan nut and you plant it, it will not be considered a Pawnee pecan tree. It will have some of the characteristics of a Pawnee, but not all of them. In fact, the nuts this tree produces will most likely revert back to the Pawnee parent material. The only sure fire method of getting a Pawnee pecan tree is to purchase a grafted Pawnee tree and plant it yourself or graft a stick of Pawnee wood on to an existing tree.

The Horticulture Committee currently has pecan graft wood for sale for \$5.00 per bundle, with each bundle containing roughly five 10 to 12 inch graft sticks. The following varieties are for sale: Caddo, Desirable, Lakota, Nocona, Oconee, Pawnee, Podsednik and Prilop. All of these varieties are suitable for our area and will be excellent producers once established. The graft wood and the information about how to graft pecan trees is available from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office of Austin County by calling (979) 865-2072. You can also visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org> and download the information.

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) ID Tags Available

A requirement for intact adult cattle 18 months of age or older that are being sold went into effect January 1, 2013. The TAHC rule states that all cattle that meet those criteria listed above need to be permanently identified at the time they are sold. Local auction barns will provide the service of tagging animals for a small fee. A complete list of acceptable identification devices/methods may be found at 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.

Currently the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Austin County has free USDA metal tags, and a limited number of free applicator pliers. Our office is located at 20 South Holland Street. The tags and/or pliers may also be obtained by contacting the Region 2 Office in Hempstead located at 1739 13th Street, suite 28. The Region 2 TAHC phone number is (979) 921-9481. For more information contact (979) 865-2072.

Water Testing Campaign

Are you interested in checking your well for water quality? The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin and Colorado Counties have organized a water well screening program which will be held April 1-17, 2013.

Landowners who wish to participate can pick up testing forms and water sample bottles at:

Austin County Extension Office - 20 S. Holland, Bellville, Texas (Monday – Friday; 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-5:00)

Colorado County Extension Office – 316 Spring Street, Columbus, Texas (Monday – Friday; 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-5:00)

This campaign will offer two separate water well screening, an elemental analysis and a bacteriology analysis.

The **Elemental Analysis costs \$26 per sample**, and will provide information on well water conductivity, pH, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, sulfur, chlorine, boron, nitrate, hardness, zinc, iron, copper, manganese, and phosphorus of the water sample. This analysis will be conducted by the Texas A&M University Soil and Water Testing Laboratory in College Station.

The **Bacteriology Analysis costs \$25 per sample**, and will provide information on the presence or absence of coliform bacteria. The bacteriology water sample must be taken the morning of April 17, 2013; right before you bring it to the County Extension Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 12:00 pm. This analysis will be conducted by Aqua Water Supply Corporation in Bastrop.

Please DO NOT submit samples from public water suppliers in this campaign, they will not be processed. Important information that will be required includes, the water well's physical address and well depth. Results will be mailed to the address you provide when the sample is submitted. Payment is required when you drop off your samples. If you have any questions, please contact the Austin County Extension Office at (979) 865-2072 or the Colorado County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082.

Upper Gulf Coast Ranch Expo May 10th!

The latest in pasture management, weed control and an in-depth look at Akaushi cattle will be featured at the first annual Upper Gulf Coast Ranch Expo May 10th in Simonton. The event, to be held at the Twinwood Cattle Co., 4430 Guyler Road near Simonton, will feature bus tours with several Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialists from College Station discussing beef cattle production, forage management, weed control and pecan production.

“We are anticipating a large turnout for this regional event and there will be great interest in the topics that will be discussed throughout the day,” said Dr. Greg Kaase, AgriLife Extension program specialist-risk management. “With beef cattle producers looking to capitalize on continued strength in cattle prices, there will be a variety of management practices they can take home and apply in their own operations. Also, three continuing education units will be offered to all interested pesticide applicators.”

Registration and sponsored booth exhibits open at 7 a.m. At 8:20 a.m., Dr. Doug Steele, AgriLife Extension director from College Station, will provide opening comments. At 8:45 a.m., Stephen Deiss, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service, will discuss conservation and financial assistance opportunities.

Following a break at 9:15 a.m., participants will board buses for tour stops featuring Dr. Jason Cleere, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, discussing beef cattle production; Dr. Larry Redmon, AgriLife Extension state forage specialist, forage production; Dr. Paul Baumann, AgriLife Extension weed specialist, weed control in pastures; and Monte Nesbitt, AgriLife Extension horticulturalist, will give a presentation on pecan production.

During lunch, Dr. Miles Phillips, AgriLife Extension specialist, will present a program on ranch diversification through tourism. He will be followed by Dr. David Anderson, AgriLife Extension livestock economist, who will provide a livestock marketing update; Francisco Abello, AgriLife Extension program specialist from College Station, will provide an update on the Market Maker program. Dr. Aaron Sumerall, AgriLife Extension agent in Newton County, will discuss feral hog control methods and demonstrate different trapping methods.

Cost is \$10 by May 6th or \$20 for on-site registration. For more information, call the Texas Agrilife Extension Service - Fort Bend County at 281-342-3034.

Grass-Fed Beef Conference Scheduled for May 30th -31st in College Station

With consumer interest heightening about where food comes from, grass-fed beef producers will have the opportunity to learn more about marketing opportunities as well as production trends during a May 30th -31st conference in College Station.

Dr. Rick Machen, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beef cattle specialist in Uvalde, said producers can learn about all aspects of grass-fed beef production techniques at the conference, which will be held at the Rosenthal Meat Science Building on the Texas A&M University campus.

“One of the highlights will be Dr. John Andrae, Extension forage specialist from Clemson (University),” Machen said. “Among U.S. grass-fed livestock producers, John is well-recognized for his ‘sustainable systems’ approach to forage production and grazing management. Given the ongoing drought across much of the South Central U.S., sustainable forage production is atop everyone’s items- of-interest list.

“Though we’ve talked about it before, a significant emphasis in this year’s conference will be the importance of a sustainable — both quantity and quality — forage supply. Perhaps the most difficult part of a grass-fed beef production system.”

The conference will cover a broad range of topics pertaining to grass-fed beef production and is open to both beef producers and consumers.

The following topics will be discussed: overview of the beef industry; defining natural, grass-fed and organic beef; growing forage – the fundamentals; cattle types suited for grass-fed beef; forage-based nutrition for cattle; preventive herd health; handling cattle for wholesome beef; carcass fabrication; consumers and their expectations; marketing a unique product; and economics and sustainability.

A live carcass fabrication demonstration will be featured the second day.

Cost is \$250 through May 15th and \$300 after. Three continuing education credits will be offered to Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicators license holders. To register online, visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/> and enter keyword “grassfed” or call 979-845-2604.

Upcoming Events

March	6	-	Horticulture Committee Meeting
	15	-	Multi County New Landowners Series, "Wildlife Management", Burton, 2 CEU's
	22	-	Beef Cattle Management Seminar, Four County Livestock, Industry, 3 CEU's, 2 BQC's
	27	-	Private Applicator Training and Testing
	29	-	Good Friday Holiday, Office Closed
April	5	-	Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
	10	-	Leadership Advisory Board Meeting
	12	-	Pecan Management Field Day, Stephen F. Austin State Park, San Felipe, 3 CEU's
	17	-	Well Water Testing Day
	19	-	Multi County New Landowners Educational Series, "Stock Ponds", Sheridan Community Center, 3 CEU's
	27	-	Austin County Fair Steer and Heifer Tag In
May	1	-	Horticulture Committee Meeting
	10	-	Blanc Du Bois Symposium, Cat Spring Ag Hall, 3 CEU's
		-	Twinwood Field Day, Simonton, 3 CEU's
	17	-	Multi County New Landowner Educational Series, "Pasture Management & Forage Production", John Howard Farm, 3 CEU's
	27	-	Memorial Day Holiday, Office Closed
30-31	-	Grass Fed Beef Conference, TAMU, 3 CEU's	

Sincerely,



Philip Shackelford
County Extension Agent - AG/NR
Austin County