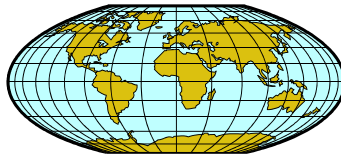


Austin County Ag News



Spring 2014

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Notice!!!Notice!!!Notice!!!

Austin County Ag News is Going Digital!

As many of you already know, the Austin County Ag Newsletter has been available on our website for many years. With the help of my staff and the various program area committees that I work with, I am constantly working to update and modernize the way Texas A&M AgriLife does business here in Austin County and get you the most timely and accurate information as I can in the quickest manner possible. It has come to my attention that our paper newsletter has simply grown to the point that it is no longer a fiscally responsible option for getting you this information and will therefore be going almost completely digital. I am strongly encouraging everyone that is currently receiving this newsletter in paper form through the mail to register to receive this newsletter, as well as weekly updates, via email. The cost of putting this newsletter together, along with the sheer volume of newsletters that are printed has made it imperative that we come up with a better solution for getting the announcements of upcoming programs and events to you.

For everyone wanting to receive the newsletter via email, simply go to our website, <http://austin.agrilife.org/> and click on the register for newsletter tab. You will be directed to the appropriate location for you to fill out your information to begin receiving the newsletter online. The information that you provide is strictly confidential and will **NOT** be given to anyone outside the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Those of you who do not wish to receive the newsletter via email can still receive a paper copy in mail as usual, but I would like for you to contact our office at (979) 865-2072 and let us know of your intentions. We realize that not everyone has a computer or an email address and we will continue to provide you with the newsletter at no charge if requested. And for those of you currently receiving the newsletter via email, you will continue to receive it as normal.

Private Applicator Training and Testing **March 26th**

A few weeks ago, I reported that there would be some big changes coming to the Private Applicator Training and Testing from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). The TDA will no longer do testing at County Extension Offices. The testing will be conducted instead at regional testing centers located across the state. Those changes were supposed to take place beginning January 1st, 2014, however, the TDA decided to move back it's anticipated roll out date for utilizing the regional testing centers to March 1st, 2014. Now it seems that the TDA has moved that back once more to **April 1st, 2014**. This means, that there is yet one more opportunity for anyone who missed the last two trainings, and you've got one final opportunity to receive the training and take the exam at one location.

The final opportunity (I think) in Austin County will take place on Wednesday, March 26th, 2014, at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, located at 20 S. Holland in Bellville. The training will last from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Following the training, lunch will be served and then a representative from the Texas Department of Agriculture will be on hand to administer the 100 question exam. 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, lunch and refreshments. You are strongly encouraged to pick up your materials early and read through them prior to coming to the training and you will need to bring something to write with and a calculator.

Anyone wanting to participate is asked to contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office via the website <http://austin.agrilife.org> and register. You may also call in with your intentions of registering for the event by calling (979) 865-2072.

Beef Cattle Management Seminar

The Beef and Forage Committee will be sponsoring a Beef Cattle Management Seminar on Friday, March 21st, 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 speaking on bull selection and other herd management topics. Dr. David Anderson, Extension Economist will be providing an update on the long term outlook for the beef cattle market.

The program is scheduled to last from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. There is no registration fee, however anyone wanting to participate is asked to contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office via the website <http://austin.agrilife.org> and register. You may also call in with your intentions of registering for the event by calling (979) 865-2072. Refreshments will be

provided, and two CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators in the General category. There will also be 2 credits given for the Beef Quality Assurance Program.

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.

Citrus and Tropical Fruits Seminar

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Citrus and Tropical Fruits Seminar at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Wallis, on Friday, April 11th, 2014. 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 citrus and tropical fruit varieties, pest management strategies, as well as the best management practices.

There will be a hands-on budding demonstration as well, illustrating a method for increasing production to native root stock by adding an improved variety. Master Gardener volunteers will also be selling citrus and tropical fruit trees prior to and during the program. A listing of the varieties that will be for sale will be posted on the Bluebonnet Master Gardener website, <http://bluebonnetmastergardener.org>.

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. Anyone wanting to participate is asked to contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office via the website <http://austin.agrilife.org> and register. You may also call in with your intentions of registering for the event by calling (979) 865-2072.

Master Gardener Plant Sale (New location)

The Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association's Annual plant sale will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. at City Hall in Sealy. 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 Renee Kofman 832-492-3293 or visit <http://www.bluebonnetmastergardener.org>. Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association is part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A & M System.

Grape Growers Committee to host Pest Management Field Day

Dr. Justin Scheiner, newly appointed Texas A&M AgriLife Viticulture Specialist will be serving as the guest speaker at the upcoming Grape Pest Management Field Day on Saturday, April 12th, 2014. The program will be held at the Cat Spring Agricultural Society meeting room (located next door to Cat Spring Hall). 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. Dr. Scheiner will be addressing grapevine diseases, insect pests, cultural control practices, fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, developing a spray program, and sprayer calibration.

The goal is to help new and experienced growers better understand the pests and disease that can affect their vineyards and how to control them in the most economically and environmentally sound manner. Field demonstrations on mixing/loading and application of recommended insecticides will also be conducted. Pesticide applicators will receive three (3) CEU's, 1 in the general category and 2 in integrated pest management.

A registration fee of \$50.00 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 wanting to participate is asked to contact Dr. Justin Scheiner at (979) 845-1870, via his email at jscheiner@tamu.edu.

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 21st, 2014**. 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. One CEU's will be offered to pesticide applicators in integrated pest management. 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 25th**, 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 to 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 16th**, at the Bill Hobson Farm, near Cat Spring. 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, followed by the program and field tour.. 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 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office via the website <http://austin.agrilife.org> and register. You may also call in with your intentions of registering for the event by calling (979) 865-2072.

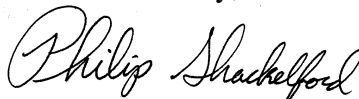
Wildflower Photo Contest

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>.

Upcoming Events

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|-------|-------|---|--|
| March | 21 | - | Beef Cattle Management Seminar, Four County Livestock, Industry, 3 CEU's, 2 BQC's |
| | | - | Multi County New Landowners Series, "Wildlife Management", Burton, 2 CEU's |
| | 26 | - | Private Applicator Training and Testing |
| April | 5 | - | Leadership Advisory Board Meeting |
| | | - | Beef and Forage Committee Meeting |
| | 11 | - | Citrus and Tropical Fruits Field Day, KC Hall in Wallis, 3 CEU's |
| | 12 | - | Master Gardener Plant Sale, Sealy |
| | | - | Grape Pest Management Field Day, Cat Spring |
| | 18 | - | Good Friday Holiday, Office Closed |
| | 25 | - | Multi County New Landowners Educational Series, "Stock Ponds", Sheridan Community Center, 3 CEU's |
| | 26 | - | Austin County Fair Steer and Heifer Tag In |
| May | 7 | - | Horticulture Committee Meeting |
| | 10 | - | Upper Gulf Coast Ranching Expo, Twinwood Farms in Simonton, 3 CEU's |
| | 16 | - | Multi County New Landowner Educational Series, "Pasture Management & Forage Production", Bill Hopson Farm, 3 CEU's |
| | 26 | - | Memorial Day Holiday, Office Closed |
| | 29-30 | - | Grass Fed Beef Conference, TAMU, 3 CEU's |

Sincerely,



Philip Shackelford
County Extension Agent - AG/NR
Austin County

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.