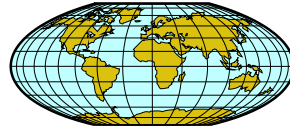


Austin County Ag News



Winter 2015

In This Issue

Private Applicator Training
 pg 2

Texas Watershed Steward
 Workshop pg 2

Aerobic Septic Systems Training
 pg 3

Leadership Advisory Board Annual
 Meeting pg 3

Multi County New Landowners
 Educational Series pg 4

Row Crop Update Meeting pg 4

Master Gardener Sign Up pg 4

Master Naturalist Class pg 5

Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field
 Day pg 5

Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar
 pg 6

Small Farms and Vegetable
 Conference pg 6

Date Night..... pg 7

Upcoming Events pg 8

Five Hour CEU Conference Friday, December 5th

Renewal time for private pesticide applicators will be coming up shortly on February 28, 2014. 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 5th** on their calendar. On this day, the Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County, 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, Water Impairments and Runoff Avoidance Issues, IPM for Pasture Pests, Weed in pastures and the new products for controlling brush. There will be no meal served as in years past, however refreshments will be served following the meeting compliments of Huff Brewing Company. We hope to conclude around 6:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$20.00 at the door. You can pre-register by going to our website <http://austin.agrilife.org> or by calling (979) 865-2072 by December 4th. 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).

Private Applicator Training December 11th

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 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County will be sponsoring a Private Applicator Training on Thursday, December 11th, at the Extension Office, located at 20 S. Holland in Bellville. The training will last from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m, and is a mandatory component in the process for acquiring a private applicator license. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) no longer does testing at County Extension Offices, instead the tests are given at centers located at one of 22 regional testing centers across the state, four of which are in Houston. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has contracted with PSI Services (PSI) to administer exams for agricultural pesticide applicator licensing.

Upon completion of the training, potential applicators must first apply for a license with TDA. Go to the TDA website at: <https://texasagriculture.gov/LicensesRegistrations.aspx>. You may also call TDA at (800) 835-5832 or (512) 463-7622 for assistance. Upon approval from TDA, you will be sent an Examination Eligibility Letter, along with instructions for paying and scheduling the examination. Potential applicators are responsible for contacting PSI to pay and schedule for the examination. You may either schedule via the Internet at www.psiexams.com, or schedule over the telephone at (800) 733-9267.

There is a \$60.00 fee to attend the training. Your registration fee includes the study materials and refreshments. You can reserve your spot at the training by going to our website <http://austin.agrilife.org> or by calling (979) 865-2072 .

Texas Watershed Steward Workshop

A Texas Watershed Steward workshop on water quality issues related to Mill Creek will be held on January 9th, 2015, from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the Courthouse basement meeting room in Bellville. The training is free and open to anyone interested in improving water quality in the region. Participants are encouraged to preregister at the Texas Watershed Steward website at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>. The workshop is presented by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Mill Creek will soon begin, and involvement by local citizens is crucial during this process. Therefore, this training is designed to help watershed residents improve and protect their water resources by becoming informed and actively involved in their local watershed protection and management activities.

The workshop will include an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas, with a focus on area water quality issues, including current efforts to help improve and protect Mill Creek. Though the workshop will address issues related to Mill Creek, the information provided will be applicable to all waters in the region. The training will include a discussion of watershed systems, types and sources of water pollution, and ways to improve and protect water quality. There also will be a group discussion on community-driven watershed protection and management.

Along with the training, participants receive a copy of the Texas Watershed Steward Handbook and a certificate of completion. The program offers four continuing education units in soil and water management for certified crop advisers, four units for professional engineers, professional geoscientists,

and certified planners, and four credits for certified teachers. It also offers three general continuing education units for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license holders, four for certified landscape architects and three for certified flood plain managers. For more information, go to <http://tws.tamu.edu> or contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Home Maintenance of Aerobic Septic Systems Training

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County will be sponsoring an Aerobic Septic Systems training for homeowners on Tuesday, January 13th, 2014, from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM at the Extension Office in Bellville. A \$100 fee will be charged per participants, which includes lunch and teaching materials. The class is limited to the first 25 participants - Minimum 10 participants for the class to make. Directed to the homeowner, this session provides a basic training in proper evaluation of structures, equipment and operation of already installed aerobic septic systems in homes. A certificate of attendance will be provided upon the completion of the course.

The introduction to aerobic treatment units program provides homeowners with the knowledge about aerobic treatment of wastewater and the activities needed to maintain an onsite wastewater treatment system. The goal of the training is to provide a basic outline of operation and maintenance activities for an Aerobic Treatment Unit, make homeowners better consumers in the onsite wastewater treatment industry, and help homeowners develop a professional relationship with their maintenance provider.

To register for the training, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Leadership Advisory Board to Host Annual Meeting

The Leadership Advisory Board of Austin County was formed six 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 it's 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, January 15th, 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 with 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 at the program giving highlights of their activities throughout the year and highlighting the impacts made on the citizens of Austin County.

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. RSVP by going to our website <http://austin.agrilife.org> or by calling (979) 865-2072 by January 9th.

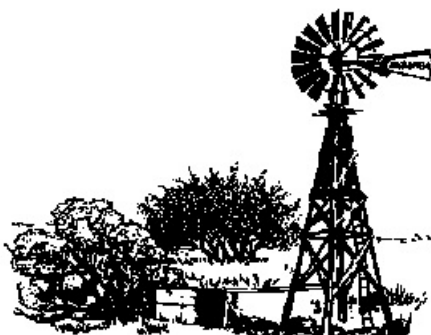
Multi County New Landowners Program begins on January 16th, 2015

The Multi-County New Landowner Education program is a series of nine 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, 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 2014 series will take place on Friday, January 16th, at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Brenham. Cost is \$125.00 per person or \$200.00 per couple for all nine meetings or \$20.00 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 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Crops Update Meeting

Row crop farmers, please mark Thursday, January 22nd, 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. Levi Russell will discuss the implications of the Farm Bill. Also on the program will be new District Extension Entomologist Dr. Robert Bowling and new District Extension Agronomist Dr. Josh McGinty.

Two (2) CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators. There will be no charge for supper, however goodwill donations will be accepted.

Master Gardener Sign Up



For anyone interested in participating in the Master Gardener training program, the deadline for signing up is Thursday, January 22nd. 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 27, 2015.

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 22, 2015, 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 or visit the Bluebonnet Master Gardener Website at <http://bluebonnetmastergardener.org>.

Texas Master Naturalist Training Class 2015

The Gideon Lincecum Chapter invites anyone interested in learning land stewardship in our diverse Central Texas region of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties to join our 2015 certification course beginning January 26, 2015. Classes will be taught by university experts and entertaining specialists in topics including: Texas eco-regions, native fauna and flora, and natural resources management. The objective is to educate a corps of well-informed citizen volunteers who will demonstrate to their communities an active participation in the management of natural resources and conservation. The class schedule and registration is available on our website txmn.org/glc or call Cindy Rodibaugh at (281-382-4028) if you need additional information. To secure your class syllabus, please register prior to Jan. 15, 2015.



Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day, February 6th

The 23rd annual Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day will be held on Friday, February 6th, 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 Extension Viticulture Specialist Dr. Justin Scheiner, Pierce’s Disease Researchers Jim Kamas & Andrew Labay, Texas A&M Associate Professor Dr. Greg Cobb, Viticulture Advisor Fritz Westover, State Viticulture Specialist Dr. Ed Hellman and long time Professor and former 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 are 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 \$35.00 per person will be required at the door, but anyone that plans on coming is asked to contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or register online at our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar February 20th

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 20th, at the Winedale Historical Complex at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History in Winedale we will discuss these topics and many more. 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. Anyone wanting fruit trees are encouraged to order them prior to the meeting. Order forms will be available on the county Master Gardener website at <http://bluebonnetmastergardener.org>. 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 5:00 pm. A registration fee of \$20.00 will be charged at the door to help defer the cost of refreshments and materials. To register, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>. 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 FM 2714, four miles from Round Top, Texas. Take FM 1457 to FM 2714. You can visit the website at, <http://www.winedale.org>.

Small Farms & Vegetable Conference scheduled for February 27th

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Small Farms and Vegetable Conference on Friday, February 27, 2014, at Cat Spring Ag Society Hall. Registration will take place from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. with the program to follow. This year's program will focus on vegetable production for South Central Texas, and strategies related to marketing, irrigation and the economics of production. Tomi Beth Drabb, owner of Farm to Market will also be on hand to discuss plans for the upcoming Farmers Market Project in Bellville, and Brad Kieschnik with the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be discussing cost share programs available through the USDA.

The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. and last until about 3:00 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 visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>.

Date Night

Its about anniversary time again for me and Mrs Shackelford, and I figured it's time to write another article about my lovely wife. I can't tell you how many compliments that I received from my female friends about last years article. I heard comments like, "That was such a sweet article you put in the paper about your wife", or "I read this out loud to my husband just so he could hear it," and "I asked my husband why he never writes things like this about me!" Of course, I also heard a few derogatory comments from my male friends. Comments like "you know you got me in trouble with that stupid article you wrote" and "Shackelford, what were you thinking!" The article I'm referencing was entitled, "The Day You Should Not Forget" and it stirred up a lot of reaction from different folks. Perhaps the most important person in that mix, who shall remain nameless, has asked that I forgo my ode to her this year, so in lieu of writing my traditional prose about my amazing, beautiful and talented wife, I've decided instead to write about our most recent, "Date Night".

I was feeling the pressure to take my lovely bride out on a date a few weeks back (after numerous gentle hints that I hadn't done so in quite some time), so I decided to mark off a Saturday evening and reserve it for just the two of us. I consulted with my wife just to make sure neither one of us had anything planned and we picked an evening where nothing would get in the way. I lined out a baby sitter, got my necessary chores done a little early that day and even took one extra shower just prior to the big event so I wouldn't smell bad. Now I'm sure that everyone can remember back to when you were courting your significant other, date nights just happened. There was no real planning involved, you just picked a time to go, and away you went. Well, that's not exactly how our date went. After getting the babysitter and the kids situated, my wife and I gleefully hopped in the car and started to drive. "Where are we going," I asked? Her reply, "I don't know", to which I replied, "Well, were do you want to eat?" to which she replied, "I don't care." Hmm, quite the quandary, where to go and what to eat. So away we went to I DON'T KNOW, to eat some I DON'T CARE.

After a nice quite dinner, we pondered what to do with the rest of our evening. We talked about going to see a movie, so we drove by the cinema, and scanned the feature movies on the marquee. Every movie had either already started by a good hour or so, or wouldn't be showing again for another hour. To compound the situation, we had never heard of any of the movies showing. We both looked at each other and with a slow yawn determined that it would just be too late to watch the late show, after all, 11:00 p.m. is bedtime. So we thought we might drive down the road to familiar hang out and listen to some music. Like a couple of CIA agents, we carefully scoped out the vehicles in the parking lot of the establishment just to see if we recognized anyone that could possibly be inside. Nope, nobody here that we knew, and it really wasn't our kinda place anyway, so we moved on down the road. After about 30 minutes of pondering our situation and driving around in circles, we just decided to head back home.

What happened to me? Why couldn't I think of something cool to do and some neat place to go eat? Honestly, how much planning has to go into a date night. The next day I was on the phone with my Dad, and I told him about my date night woes. As most good fathers do, he just quietly listened for a few minutes and then offered some fatherly advice. He suggested doing what he and my mom do. Every Friday night, they go out on a date, first to dinner and then they go somewhere interesting together. Inquisitive I asked "Well tell me, where do you go!" Then he replied, "Oh, usually to Luby's and then to Wal Mart." I guess I'll try that next time.

Just a Few Dates to Remember

- December 5 - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
- Five Hour CEU program, 4 Co. Auction Center, Industry
- December 9 - Bluebonnet Master Gardener Annual Meeting, Brenham
- December 11 - Private Applicator Training and Testing, Bellville
- December 24-26 - Extension Office Closed, Christmas Holiday
- January 1 - Extension Office Closed, New Year's Holiday
- January 9 - Texas Watershed Steward Workshop
- January 13 - Aerobic Septic Systems Training, Bellville
- January 14 - Horticulture Committee Meeting
- January 15 - Leadership Advisory Board Annual Meeting
- January 16 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, Brenham
- January 19 - Extension Office Closed, Martin Luther King Day
- January 22 - Master Gardener Open House, Bellville
- Crops Update Meeting, Wallis
- Deadline to sign up for Master Gardener Class
- January 26 - Master Naturalist Orientation, Winedale
- January 27 - Master Gardener Orientation, Bellville
- February 6 - Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day, Cat Spring
- February 13 - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
- February 16 - Extension Office closed, Presidents Day
- February 20 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, Fruit Tree Seminar, Winedale
- February 27 - Small Farms and Vegetable Conference, Cat Spring

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Sincerely,



Philip Shackelford
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Austin County