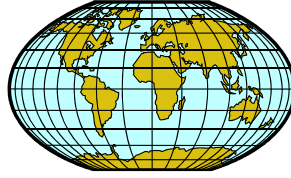


**Austin County
 Ag News**



Winter 2016

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Master Gardener Sign Up - Deadline, January 14

For anyone interested in participating in the Master Gardener training program, the deadline for signing up is Thursday, January 14th. 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 Thursday mornings beginning on January 1, 2016. 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 14, 2016, from 10:30 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>.

**Multi County New
 Landowners Program begins
 on January 15th, 2016**

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 2016 series will take place on Friday, January 15th, at the Colorado County Fairgrounds in Columbus. 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>.

23rd Annual Upper Gulf Coast Grain Handlers Conference January 19, 2016

The 23rd Annual Upper Gulf Coast Grain Handlers Conference will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at the El Campo Civic Center. Kicking off with registration at 8:00 am the program will begin at 8:25 am and should conclude around 3:30 pm. A catered lunch will be provided. Five CEUs (2 IPM; 2 L&R; 1 General) will be offered to all TDA pesticide applicators that sign in at the beginning of the meeting and remain through the closing of the program. No structural credits offered.

The cost of the program is \$20.00 per person preregistered by January 15th or \$25.00 per person at the door. To preregister, please contact the Colorado County Extension Office and we will send a form to you. A flyer and registration form can also be found on the internet at <http://colorado.agrilife.org>

Program topics and speakers include:

TDA Pesticide Laws and Regulations Update
Pesticide Disposal, Container Laws and Regs
Phosphine Fumigant Use and Stewardship
Understanding Grain Aeration
Insect ID for Stored Grains
Pesticide Modes of Action and Pesticide Resistance
Rodent Control in Stored Grain Facilities
Preparing for an OSHA Inspection

Crops Update Meeting - January 20th

Row crop farmers, please mark Wednesday, January 20th, 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. Two (2) CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators. There will be no charge for supper, however goodwill donations will be accepted. Please RSVP to the Agrilife Extension office at 979-865-2072 .

Texas Master Naturalist Training Class 2016 begins January 25th

The Texas Master Naturalist program is designed to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife serve as sponsors for the program. Many communities and organizations rely on such citizen volunteers for implementing youth education programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in

local natural resource conservation efforts. In fact, a short supply of dedicated and well-informed volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts. Trained Master Naturalists are instrumental in providing valuable educational opportunities in the counties they serve for both youth and adult learners. Come join the movement, share your passion, and extend the education of natural resource management and conservation.



The Gideon Lincecum Chapter, covering Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee, and Washington Counties, will begin its 2016 certification training course on January 25th at the Windeale Heritage Center near Round Top. Classes will be held every Monday evening from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. through April 25, 2016. Most classes are held at the Windeale Heritage Center near Round Top. In addition to the classroom training, hands-on field trips are held throughout the 5 county areas on four separate Saturdays. Registration for the course is \$175.00 per person or \$325.00 per couple sharing class materials. You will learn from expert and talented specialists and educators about Texas eco-regions; native fauna and flora identification; preservation and conservation techniques; and natural resources management in our region of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties. Have fun and learn about this diverse and intriguing Central Texas region. For more information and to view the class schedule please visit our website at <http://txmn.org/glc> or call Jerry Gips (979.378.2938), or Cindy Hobbs (979.338.9374).

Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day - February 5th

The 23rd annual Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day will be held on Friday, February 5th, 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>.

Private Applicator Training - February 8th, 2016

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 Monday, February 8th, 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: <http://www.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 .

Beef and Forage 5 Hour CEU Seminar - February 12th, 2016

The Beef and Forage Committee of Colorado County is hosting an educational seminar on Friday, February 12, 2016 at the H.E. Building within the Colorado County Fairgrounds. The program will offer 5 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for those producers who possess a private pesticide applicator's license from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

There will be a live demonstration of sprayer calibration, discussion on antibiotic use in livestock, a law and regulations update, discussion on establishment or renovation of forage fields, and more. Those interested may pre-register for \$25 per person and \$30 for couples. Registration at the event will be \$30 per person and \$35 for couples. To pre-register or for more information, call the Colorado County Extension Office at 979-732-2082.

Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar - February 19th

Do you have a fruit tree and have questions on how to get it to produce fruit? Here is your chance to answer those questions and to learn what is needed to know to have a successful and enjoyable experience. On February 19th, 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 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm and the program will run from 1:30 pm 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. 3 CEU's (2 General, 1 IPM) will be available to pesticide applicators. 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 26th

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Small Farms and Vegetable Conference on Friday, February 26, 2016, 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. 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>.

Just a Few Dates to Remember

- January 14 - Master Gardener Open House, Bellville
Deadline to sign up for Master Gardener
- Leadership Advisory Board Annual Meeting
- January 15 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, Columbus
- January 18 - Extension Office Closed, Martin Luther King Day
- January 19 - Upper Coast Grain Handlers Conference, El Campo
- January 20 - Crops Update Meeting, Wallis
- January 21 - Master Gardener Orientation, Bellville
- January 25 - Master Naturalist Orientation, Winedale
- February 5 - Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day, Cat Spring
- February 8 - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
- February 12 - Colorado County 5 Hour CEU Training, Colorado County
Fairgrounds, Columbus
- February 15 - Extension Office closed, Presidents Day
- February 19 - Multi Co New Landowners Series, Fruit Tree Seminar, Winedale
- February 26 - Small Farms and Vegetable Conference, Cat Spring

Sincerely,



Travis Gonzales
County Extension Agent - Ag/NR
Austin County

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Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082 prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

CENTRAL TEXAS BEEF 706

Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Lee, Waller, Washington

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The Texas Beef Council (TBC) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service have teamed up to present a special Beef 706 program, a three-part series of hands-on sessions focusing on beef quality management and marketing opportunities. This program is available to beef cattle producers from Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Lee, Waller, and Washington counties.

The checkoff-funded program is designed to help producers maximize profits and have a better understanding of the production process after their cattle enter the feedyard.

Session one will be held **January 19, 2016** at Cattlemen's Livestock Auction Center in Brenham, TX. Here industry experts will discuss factors effecting feeder calves. Producers will then choose a calf to monitor through the production system at the following two sessions.

Session two will be held **May 17, 2016** at the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Research Farm in College Station, TX. During this session producers will get an inside look into the feeding industry and see the progress of their feeder calf chosen in the first session. Producers will also learn more about factors impacting feedyard performance.

Session three will be held **June 6-7, 2016** at the meats lab at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. This two-day session will allow producers to see their finished cattle and participate in a hands-on exercise that takes their chosen fed cattle from session one through the harvest, grading and fabrication process. In the final session, industry experts will discuss the cattle's value highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of marketing cattle on a grid versus a live basis.

Beef Quality Assurance Credits will be offered over the course of the program to all interested participants. **The cost of the program will be \$50.00/participant and can be paid at the first session on January 19th.**

To RSVP and Register for this program, please contact your local County Extension Office.

For more information on this and other checkoff-funded programs, please visit www.TexasBeefCheckoff.com or call 1-800-846-4113.

Session #1 - January 19, 2016

Cattlemen's Livestock Auction - 2405 Highway 105, Brenham, Texas

Feeder Cattle Evaluation and Management

5:30 Dinner provided by Texas Beef Council

6:15 Welcome

Factors that impact the value and marketability of feeder calves

View Feeder Cattle

Auction - groups purchase feeder calf for the remainder of the series

Panel of Experts - will discuss the value of each feeder calf and answer questions from participants

Overview of remaining sessions in the series

9:00 Adjourn

Session #2 - May 17, 2016

OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex

7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy, College Station, Texas

Feeder Cattle Performance Evaluation

12:30 Lunch Provided by Texas Beef Council

1:15 Welcome to OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex

View Video from Cattlemens Livestock Auction of Sale Cattle

View Video from OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex – March/April

2:00 Cattle Feeding Performance

Live Evaluation of Finished Cattle

Tour of OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex Facilities

Overview of FINAL 706 Session in College Station at Rosenthal Meat Science Center

3:00 Adjourn

Session #3 - June 6-7, 2016

Rosenthal Meat Science Center - College Station, Texas

Day 1

9:00 Morning Session at Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center

Review of Carcass Evaluation

Review Video of the Market Finished Steers

Carcass Grading and Grid Marketing Demonstration

Harvest Floor Demonstration/Meat Cutting Instructions

Noon Lunch

1:00 Afternoon Session at Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center

Carcass Fabrication

6:00 Leave for Dinner at Pearce Pavilion and Cattle Handling Demo

8:00 Adjourn

Day 2

9:00 Beef Quality Management – Feeder Calves

Beef Quality Management Genetics and Selection

Taste Panel - Factors that Impact Beef Eating Quality

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Wrap-Up Review - Feedyard, Carcass, Boxed Beef Data

2:00 Adjourn

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved for Monday night, June 6th at:

**Ramada - College Station
(979) 846-0300**

Group Name: Beef 706
Group Rate: \$90/night

Room block/rate available until ***April 14, 2016***. If you plan to spend the night please book early as this is the week of Texas State 4-H Roundup and area hotels will be full.