

Austin County Ag News



Fall 2014

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All About Ants

Ants are industrious little creatures. They till more ground than earthworms, and some ants even predate on harmful insects such as scale and aphids. But, for the most part they are simply viewed as a pest, whether they are stripping an ornamental bush of its leaves, stinging us when we sit down in the grass or getting into food in our pantry. The ants that we consider to be pest go by the names Texas Leaf Cutter Ant (a/k/a Night Ants), the Red Imported Fire Ant, Pharaoh Ant (a/k/a Sugar Ant) and the new ant that has made the news in recent years, the Raspberry Crazy Ant.

In an effort to inform the public about how to manage ant pests, the Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring an All About Ants Seminar on Thursday, September 11, 2014, at the Hill Center in Sealy. Registration will take place from 6:00-6:30 p.m. with the program to follow at 6:30 p.m. and lasting until 8:30 p.m. Integrated Pest Management Agent, Dr. Paul Nester from Harris County will be the featured speaker. His presentation will include information about the biology of different ant pests as well as control options for homeowners and property managers. A registration fee of \$15.00 per person will be charged at the door, and will include a lite meal, refreshments and the handouts for the program. Two CEU's will be offered to pesticide applicators. One in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and one in the General category.

To register for the program, visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org> and click on the Registration tab, or you can simply contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office at (979) 865-2072.

Fall Forage Seminar and Hay Show

The Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County is encouraging every cattle producer to submit a hay sample for analysis at **NO CHARGE**. Hay samples may be dropped off at any one of the following locations around Austin County: Bellville - Harrison's Farm Service and Linseisen's Feed; Sealy - Adamcik's Farm Supply and Steinhauser's; Industry - Blezinger's Inc. and Lindemann's Store; New Ulm - Dudensing's Farm Supply and Schulz Store. Instructions for submitting a hay sample and entry cards are available on our website <http://austin.agrilife.org> or at any of the drop off locations. Hay that has been purchased from a source other than yourself is welcomed. Once the hay is submitted, a sample will be taken to the Texas A&M Forage Testing Lab for analysis. The analysis will detail the nutritional value of the hay that you will be feeding. The results of the analysis will be handed out during the annual Fall Forage Seminar. The deadline for submitting your sample is Wednesday, September 10th.

The Fall Forage Seminar and Austin County Hay Show, sponsored by the Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County will take place on Friday, September 26th, at the Austin County Fair Expo Building in Bellville. The seminar is scheduled to begin with registration from 8:30 - 9:00 a.m., with the program starting at 9:00 p.m. This year's seminar will cover a variety of topics, such as Rebuilding the Cow Herd, Beef Cattle Market Outlook, Weed and Brush Control Products and an Update from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Judging of the hay samples will take place prior to the seminar, with the winners of the show being named at the conclusion of the seminar. This year's Austin County Hay Show will again offer awards to the top placing entries in each category. Three CEU's will be offered to pesticide applicators. One in Integrated Pest Management, one in the General Category and one in Laws and Regulations. There is no registration fee for your participation and everyone is encouraged to contact the Extension Office to preregister at (979) 865-2072, so we can have an accurate count for food and refreshments.

87th Austin County Fair



It's time once again for the annual Austin County Fair. This year's fair will be held October 9-12, at the Fairgrounds in Bellville. A full slate of activities and events are on tap for this year's fair, including some top notch entertainment, competitions for all ages and fun for everyone. Fair catalogs are available from the Austin County Fair Office and more information is available online at <http://austincountyfair.com>.

Lone Star Water Forum

"What Is Texas Water Worth?" The 6th annual Lone Star Water Forum will attempt to answer that question on ***Saturday, October 4, 2014***. The Forum will be held at the Washington County Fair Grounds Event Center from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm.

All of our useable "supply" comes from the same source - RAIN. The problem is that "demand" has already begun to exceed available fresh water supplies and will decline even more as Texas' population doubles to an expected 50 million by 2060. Water is our most precious natural resource. The Chairman of the Texas Senate's Agriculture Committee and Co-Chair of the Senate's Natural Resources Committee, the Honorable Craig Estes, will keynote the event with a view from the top. Then State Representative Doug Miller, a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, will report on what to expect when the next legislative session starts in 2015.

Former Houston Mayor, Bill White, will address a prudent approach from the private sector. His talk, "Balancing the Interests in Our Water Future," embraces his philosophy of fiscal responsibility in an economy that historically thrives when common sense prevails in paying our common debts. The water deficit can be solved with an economic development model that maintains fiscal solvency. Mayor White's new book, *America's Fiscal Constitution, Its Triumph and Collapse* details the history of American economic problem solving without incurring unsustainable debt.

Charles Porter, Professor of History and water expert, will draw from his new book *Sharing the Common Pool, Water Rights In The Everyday Lives Of Texans* as well. Prof. Porter will address "A Perspective on Realistic and Sustainable Water Policy: Workable Solutions for a Bright Future."

The audience will end the program with written questions answered by Prof. Porter and a panel of experts. Proceeds from the Forum help support the Brenham I.S.D. Outdoor Education project. Tickets are \$25.00; that includes a catered lunch by Mantey's if purchased before Sept. 19, and \$35.00 after that date or at the door. Register by going to www.texas-wildlife.org/resources/events/lone-star-water-forum or calling (979) 541-9803.

Multi-County New Landowners Educational Series

The Multi County New Landowners Educational Series continues during the month of September. The September program will take place on September 19th at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office in Bellville (located on the square at 20 South Holland) and will focus on laws and rural codes for property owners. Tiffany Dowell, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist on

Rural law will cover issues such as private property rights, water law and neighbor relations. There will also be presentations from the Texas Parks and Wildlife, Austin County Environmental Office, Austin County Sheriffs Department and the Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District.

The program is open to anyone that wants to attend, but it specifically targets new landowners in the Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington County areas. The program will begin at 1:30 p.m. and last until about 4:30 p.m. Registration is \$20.00 per person and includes refreshments and educational materials.

The October program will take place on **Friday, October 17th**, and begins at 1:30 p.m. The program will be held at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Brenham. The October program will focus on Equipment Selection and Fence Building. Registration is \$20.00 per person and includes refreshments and educational materials.

The final program in the 2014 series will take place on **Friday, November 21st**, and will focus on Livestock Production for Small Acreage. The program will be held at Sarofim Angus Ranch in Industry at 1:30 p.m. Registration is \$20.00 per person and includes refreshments and your educational materials. Two (2) CEU's will be offered to all pesticide applicators.

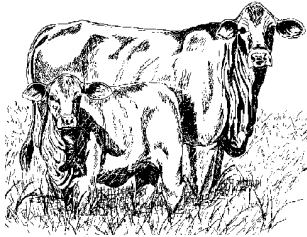
The Multi County New Landowner Educational Series is open to anyone that wants to attend, but it specifically targets new landowners in the Austin, Colorado, Fayette and Washington County areas. The agents in the four county area are currently planning for the 2015 new landowner program. Details about next year's courses will be in the Winter 2014-15 Austin County Ag News Letter.

Austin County Wine Show

The Grape Growers Committee of Austin County is putting out a call to home wine makers and inviting them to the annual Austin County Fair Non-Commercial Wine Makers Contest & Show on Saturday, October 11th, 2014 at the Turnverien Building at the Austin County Fairgrounds in Bellville. There is no entry fee and the number of samples is unlimited, however, entrants must pay an admission fee or display a season pass or life member pass to enter the grounds. Prices for admission are - Adults & Children 12 & Over \$15.00, Senior Citizens 65 & Over \$6.00, Children 6-11 \$6.00. Entry forms may be obtained from the Austin County Fair Office, or online at www.austincountyfair.com. Entries will be accepted from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Turnverien Building. The judging will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will be followed by a tasting upon the completion of the show. Gold, silver and bronze medallions will be awarded to the top placers in each category, and belt buckles will be given to the Best of Show and Runner-Up, a special award given to the highest placing Austin County produced sample. The general rules and entry cards are also available on our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org>. For more information please contact the Extension Office.

South Central Texas Cow Calf Clinic

The 42nd edition of the South Central Texas Cow-Calf Clinic and Trade Show is set for Friday, October 24th, 2014, starting at 7:15 a.m. at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Brenham. The program will provide area beef producers with latest information on beef cattle production. All attendees will be treated to an excellent educational program, covering topics ranging from livestock handling to forage management. Participants will be served a barbecue lunch, and have an opportunity to visit with various animal and agriculture industry representatives. The registration fee is \$20.00 per person. For more information, contact the Extension Office. ***Two CEU's will be given during the afternoon portion of the program.***



Soil Test Drive November 1-30, 2014

Growing better quality hay and pasture grass is a major goal of all hay and livestock producers. Starting with a soil test is the most important step to determine the amount of fertilizer needed each year. Producers should consider soil testing as an investment in this year's hay and pasture, because the correct amounts and timing of fertilization can greatly enhance hay quality and growth. November 1st thru November 30th, has been set as the time for all Austin County landowners to participate in the soil testing campaign for this year's hay meadows and pastureland. Soil samples submitted during this time frame, will be at a reduced price for a routine analysis, if they are turned in to one of the following locations around Austin County: Bellville - Harrison's Farm Service and Linseisen's Feed; Sealy - Adamcik's Farm Supply and Steinhauer's; Industry - Blezinger's Inc. and Lindemann's Store; New Ulm - Dudensing's Farm Supply and Schulz Store or to the Extension Office in Bellville. Soil sample bags, special information sheets and directions for sampling are available at each of the locations.



Austin County Pecan Show

It's time once again for all commercial pecan growers and home pecan tree enthusiasts with a few pecan trees to gear up for the annual Austin County Pecan Show and Bake Show. Everyone with an interest growing pecans or eating pecans is encouraged to participate. The pecan show and bake show will take place on Friday, November 21st, at the Courthouse and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Bellville. Entries for the show will be received between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. A total of 50 pecans should be submitted per contestant in the pecan show. Bake show participants are asked to bring a printed copy of the recipe and your food item. There is no limit on the number of entries. Pecans will be judged on the basis of kernel weight, fill, absence of blemishes and color. Winners in the pecan show will receive prizes compliments of the Texas Pecan Producers and the Horticulture Committee of Austin County.

Wildlife Habitat Federation Field Day

The Wildlife Habitat Federation's Third Annual Field Day will be held on Friday, November 14, 2014, at the Attwater Prairie Chicken Wildlife Reserve near Eagle Lake. Registration is slated for 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 \$20.00 per person will be charged at the door. With the registration fee, participants will be provided with refreshments, lunch and handout materials.

The purpose of the field day is to provide landowners with a better understanding of why restoring native grasses and forbs can benefit both the livestock producer and conservationists. Following the success of its first 7-mile native habitat corridor, WHF is now helping landowners restore thousands of acres to native prairie grasses and wildflowers. This interest has largely been due to a desire of landowners to reduce long-term input costs, like fertilizer and hay; to have more drought-tolerant plant species that attract wildlife and to better protect our natural resources, including soil, water, air and wildlife.

This meeting will be held at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Reserve, which has become the epicenter for WHF's rapidly expanding program. Come and learn from specialists, demonstrations and field tours how and why WHF is working with partners on sites in 12 surrounding counties to provide landowners with technical and financial assistance based on the belief that we can progress and still protect our prairies (which includes, but not limited to, wildflowers, bobwhite quail and scores of other birds, butterflies, bees, box turtles, little bluestem and other native grasses).

Three CEU's will be offered to pesticide applicators. Two in the general category and one in Integrated Pest Management (IPM). For more information about the field day, contact the Wildlife Habitat Federation. To register for the event, contact Jim Willis at (713) 201-3559, or visit the website <http://www.whf-texas.org>.

Farm Bill Update Meeting

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be conducting a Farm Bill Meeting on Tuesday, October 14th, at Knights of Columbus Hall in Wallis (703 Columbus Street Wallis, Texas 77485). The program is scheduled to begin with registration from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. with the program to follow from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Dr. Levi Russell, Extension Economist and Mac Young, Extension Risk Management Specialist will be demonstrating the tools available to producers to determine their individual program needs. To register for the program visit our website at <http://austin.agrilife.org> and click on the Registration tab, or you can call the office at (979) 865-2072 to register.

A Magical Vacation

My family and I are not big vacation goers. Our typical family vacation consists of attending the Texas County Agricultural Agents Convention in such exotic places as Wichita Falls, Amarillo or Lufkin, just to name a few. Now, we do take the occasional three day weekend trips to various places in Texas for a little get away, but those are few and far between. This year however was different, the Shackelford's loaded up in the old family wagon and headed east to the great state of Florida on that most magical of vacation journey's to "Disney World".

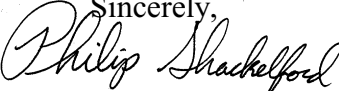
Our voyage began simply enough, I gassed up the car, changed the oil, checked the tires and very meticulously loaded the luggage. I had reviewed the map that told me exactly how long it should take to get to our destination and thought that I could make it to Pensacola the first night and then on to Orlando the next day. That was until the rain came. Just outside of Houston it began to rain and it followed us all the way down I-10 to our hotel. So we were off schedule by a good two hours, but what the heck, I'm on vacation. I hopped out of the car and went to check in, and to my surprise there was no room. Apparently the travel company that had booked our room had mistakenly booked it for the following week, so we drove to the next town, in the rain, and the same result, no rooms anywhere. After several more hours of driving, did I mention it was raining, we finally got a room in Tallahassee.

Once we arrived at Disney, I had a huge sigh of relief. We'd made it! Let the fun begin! For those of you who don't know much about Disney World, it is comprised of several different theme parks located in an area of about 42,000 acres. Our plan was to see each park on a different day. One thing that I apparently didn't know about Disney World is that it is a very popular place, I've never seen so many people in my life. And they weren't just from all 50 states, they were from around the world. I heard Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Mandarin, and a little bit of the King's English all being spoken. The rides and the attractions were all jam packed with lines of people waiting an hour or more for a 4-5 minute thrill. After each day, I was whipped! I'm sure I've walked that much before, but I think I was a lot younger when I did it. I later read that the average park goer walks up to 10 miles per day in a Disney World theme park. The climate in Orlando is exactly the same as we have here, hot and humid, with a few vital exceptions, there is no breeze, and it rains everyday!

When the day finally came to make the long trek home, I was ready. We loaded the car, with much less enthusiasm than before, and began the journey back home. After a few stops along the way, that included an over night stay, we arrived safely at our destination, "home sweet home". There's a lot that can be said about taking a family vacation like we did, the fun of seeing a new place, the thrill of getting to do something different and magic that is Disney, but nothing beats coming home and being able to sleep in your own bed. I hate to say it, but I feel like I had to go back to work just so I could rest.

Just a few Dates to Remember

- September
- 1 - Labor Day Holiday, Office Closed
 - 10 - Deadline for submitting hay samples
 - 10 - Horticulture Committee Meeting
 - 11 - All About Ants Seminar - Sealy (2 CEU's)
 - 19 - Multi County New Landowners Series - Bellville
 - 23 - Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association Board Meeting
 - 26 - Fall Forage Seminar and Austin County Hay Show - Bellville (3 CEU's)
 - 27 - Austin County Fair Shrimp Boil and Kick Off Dance (tickets available in the Extension Office)
- October
- 3 - Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
 - 4 - Lone Star Water Forum - Brenham
 - 11 - Austin County Non-Commercial Wine Show
 - 9-12 - Austin County Fair - Bellville (Extension Office will be relocated to the Fairgrounds)
 - 13 - Extension Office will be closed
 - 14 - Farm Bill Update Meeting - Wallis
 - 17 - Multi County New Landowner Tour - Brenham
 - 24 - South Central Texas Cow Calf Clinic- Washington County Fairgrounds in Brenham (2 CEU's)
 - 28 - Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association Board Meeting
 - 31 - Leadership Advisory Board Meeting
- November
- 1 - Soil Test Drive Begins
 - 6 - Mill Creek Water Shed Protection Seminar
 - 11 - Office Closed in observance of Veterans Day
 - 14 - Wildlife Habitat Federation Field Day
 - 21 - Multi County New Landowner Program - Industry (2 CEU's)
 - 21 - Austin County Pecan Show
 - 27-28 - Office Closed in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday

Sincerely,


Philip Shackelford
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Austin County

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