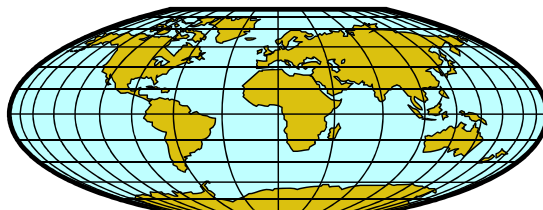


Austin County Ag News



Summer 2013

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Austin County Livestock Assn. Meeting

The annual Austin County Livestock Association meeting will take place on Thursday, June 6th. This year's meeting will be held at the Cat Spring Ag Society Hall in Cat Spring. The board of directors has again decided to offer two CEU's for pesticide applicators prior to the meeting, one in Laws and Regulations and one in IPM. The CEU program will consist of a program on Feral Hog Control, from Extension Wildlife Specialist Mark Tyson, followed by an update on pesticide laws and regulations. The CEU meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m. with registration and the program will go from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. The social will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Zach Holland, Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District Manager. He will be discussing the recent groundwater availability studies.

A registration fee of \$15.00 per person will be charged prior to the CEU meeting, which includes the annual membership fee. This money is used for the payment of the meal at the annual meeting, and coverage for a \$500.00 reward for the recovery of stolen livestock. Dues are also used in awarding college scholarships to Austin County youth. All livestock raisers are encouraged to attend and become a member of the association.

Austin County

Soil and Water Conservation District Banquet of Champions

The annual Austin County Soil and Water Conservation District will be held on Thursday, June 13th, 2013 at the Cat Spring Ag Society Hall in Cat Spring, at 7:00 p.m. Anyone receiving an invitation for the banquet is asked to RSVP by June 7th. The banquet annually recognizes youth that have participated in the coloring contest and essay contest. Also, various other conservation awards will be presented at the banquet.

Private Applicator Training and Testing August 28th

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, August 28th, at the Texas AgriLife Extension Office 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.

Big Tomato Contest and Vegetable Show

The Bluebonnet Master Gardeners Association proudly announces the 8th annual Big Tomato Contest and Vegetable Show on Saturday, June 15th at Linseisen's Feed and Supply in Bellville. Vegetable gardeners from anywhere in the world are eligible to participate in the contest, which will award prizes in several different categories, such as the Biggest Tomato, as well as prizes in many other vegetable categories. Growers are asked to drop off their entries between the hours of 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. An educational program on growing vegetables will be given at 10:00 a.m. The results



of the contest will be announced at 11:00 a.m.

There will be fresh vegetables for sale during the contest until 12:00 noon. Cash prizes and gift certificates will be given to the top prize winners. For more information and contest rules, contact the Extension Office.

Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course



The 59th annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course will be taking place on August 5-7, at the Rudder

Theater Complex on the Campus of Texas A&M University in College Station. This year's short course will include such topics as Animal Reproduction, Genetics, Range and Forages, Beef Quality Assurance Training for Cattle Producers, Cattlemen's College, Beef Industry Trade Show and as always a prime rib dinner on Tuesday night. The short course fee of \$160 per person includes three daily breakfasts, Monday and Tuesday lunch, one Prime Rib Dinner on Monday, one proceedings, trade show admittance, refreshments and access to campus shuttle service. The short course fee will be \$200 after August 1st and for onsite registration. A registration form and a copy of the tentative agenda can be accessed from the internet by going to <https://events.tamu.edu/EMSRegics/BeefCattleShortCourse2013>. You may also call the Extension Office at 979-865-2072 and we will mail the form to you.

Multi-County New Landowners Educational Series

The Multi-County New Landowners Educational Series will resume on **Friday, August 16th**, at Cooper Farms near Waldek. The August program will be an overview of Weed and Brush Control for small acreages. 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 programs are held on the third Friday of the month, and all begin at

1:30 p.m. and lasts until 5:00 p.m. Registration is \$20.00 per person and includes refreshments, an evening meal and your educational materials. Three (3) CEU's will be offered to all pesticide applicators - two general and one IPM.

The program for September will focus on Horticulture, in particular, growing wine grapes, fruit orchards, pecans and landscape trees. This program is set for **Friday, September 20th**, in Colorado County. This will be a tour of different farms devoted to small scale horticulture type crops such as Grapes and Pecans. The field day will begin at 1:30 p.m. with registration at the farm, with the program and field tour to follow. The \$20.00 registration fee applies. Anyone interested in coming is asked to contact the Extension Office prior to coming so we can know how many to plan for. Three (3) CEU's will be offered for all pesticide applicators. Two general and one IPM

Wildflower Symposium and Photo Contest

This region of Central Texas is known for its beautiful wildflowers. Spring time in Austin County is as good as it gets. Bluebonnets, Indian Paintbrushes and a whole litany of other varieties of wildflowers dot the country side, but have you ever tried planting your own wildflowers and it just didn't work? It could have been the soil, it could have been the time of the year you planted or it could be that you just have a brown thumb.

Wildflowers add a special kind of flare to a property and make it come alive in the spring. If you would like to learn more about planting wildflowers and how to grow them on your property, then you won't want to miss the Wildflower Symposium, sponsored by the Horticulture Committee of Austin County. The seminar will take place on Thursday, September 12th, at the Hill Center in Sealy, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Henry Flowers will be the featured speaker. Topics of interest to be discussed will include: site selection, soil fertility, seed bed preparation, varieties for the area and photography.

The second half of the program will be devoted to anyone interested in raising bees. In some recent legislative action, bee keeping now qualifies as an ag enterprise and can be used to obtain an ag

valuation on property, as small as 5 acres.

Two CEU's will be offered to anyone with a pesticide applicator's license. There is a \$15.00 registration fee for anyone wanting to attend that can be paid at the door. Please contact the Extension Office to pre-register in order to get an accurate head count for the meal.

The Horticulture Committee is also sponsoring a Wildflower Photo Contest. Photos will be displayed at the Wildflower Seminar and everyone will have an opportunity to judge the photos and pick out their favorite. Photos can be dropped off at the Extension Office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. 8X10's are preferred, but any size will be accepted. Contact the Extension Office for more information.

New Tax Valuation for BEEKEEPING



Deborah Cartwright, director of the Property Tax Assistance Division from the state comptroller's office (<http://www.window.state.tx.us/>), announced the Texas Legislature added beekeeping as another agricultural use for purposes of open-space land appraisal. Tax Code Section 23.51(2) was amended to include in the definition of agricultural use "the use of land to raise or keep bees for pollination or for the production of human food or other tangible products having a commercial value, provided that the land used is not less than five or more than 20 acres."

Bee Keeping now officially joins the other forms of recognized agriculture tax value operations such as the raising of livestock, crops and wildlife, as methods to obtain an ag valuation on a property.

South Central Texas is considered the optimum for beekeeping because of the consistent pollen and nectar sources.

The Austin County Appraisal District recently adopted the following policy regarding bee keeping as it pertains to meeting the minimum ag guidelines;

- * Land must be no less than 5 acres and no more than 20 acres.
- * The number of hives would typically be between 6 and 12 mainframe hives which would be used for the production of honey, wax or for the bees themselves.
- * The hives are placed in groups in an open pasture and must be maintained and kept alive.
- * The agricultural valuation will apply to all acreage regardless of land type.
- * Beekeeping can be used to establish agricultural history.

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service has put together an informative and beneficial website on how to manage bees. You can visit that website at the following address; <http://www.ent.uga.edu/bees/pollination/managing-bees-pollination.html> .

The Value of Land; Water, Oil and Gas Leasing and Estate Planning Seminar

Water has been a hot topic in Austin County the past few months, with the proposed well field in the Wallis area. Many residents have been asking how does this affect my availability of water now and down the road? What are the current aquifer levels and who really owns the water that lies just beneath our feet? Just to the west of Austin County however, there are other issues associated with water that are very different. The residents of the south central plains want to know how oil and gas activity, especially fracking, affects water quality and quantity in the areas where the Barnett Shale has made once poor dirt farmers into overnight millionaires.

So, what does the future hold for our area? Will we see more individuals or companies that wish to purchase water rights from landowners? Is there an oil and gas boom in our future? How does the fracking process work? And how will we best plan for such events?

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin, Colorado, Fayette and Washington Counties will be sponsoring a Seminar on Issues Affecting Land Owners, on Friday, July 19th, 2013, at the Cat Spring Ag Society Hall in Cat Spring. The focus of the program is make landowners aware of issues that could be affecting them in the near future with regards to oil & gas lease negotiations, pipeline negotiations, water law, access easements, estate planning, the fracking process, and groundwater.

The program will feature some very highly respected speakers that have dealt with these issues for many years. Speakers include, Judon Fambro with the Texas A&M Real Estate Center, Susan Struber with the Texas Center for Applied Technology, Dr. Wayne Hayenga, attorney and certified estate planner with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Zach Holland with the Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District.

The program is scheduled to begin with registration from 8:30-9:00 a.m., with the program beginning at 9:00 a.m. The registration fee is \$50.00 per person or \$75.00 per couple, and can be paid at the door. Please contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072 to pre-register so we will have an accurate head count for the meal.

Fall Forage Seminar and Austin County Hay Show

This year's show will be held in conjunction with the annual Fall Forage Seminar, sponsored by the Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County. The Seminar and Show will take place on Friday, September 27th, at the Austin County Fairgrounds in Bellville. The seminar is scheduled to begin with



registration from 8:30 - 9:00 a.m., with the program starting at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 3:00 p.m. This year's seminar will cover such topics as water availability, climate prediction, utilizing a soil

test for proper fertilization, cool season forages and weed control product updates. A new addition this year will be a trade show, with local and area vendors. A total of three (3) CEU's will be given to pesticide applicators. Lunch will be served at the conclusion of the seminar, all compliments of the Beef and Forage Committee and their sponsors.

Judging of the hay samples will take place during the event, with the winners of the show being named at the conclusion of the seminar. Anyone feeding hay is encouraged to submit a sample of their hay for analysis. The Beef and Forage Committee is encouraging beef cattle producers to simply turn in a sample of their hay for analysis. The analysis will be done by the Texas A&M Forage testing lab and the results will be handed out during the meeting.

The Hay Show will allow any hay producer from Austin, or a surrounding county to enter forage samples in the show. The focus of the show is to emphasize the importance of utilizing high quality hay. Producers may submit as many samples as they wish for the show, in each of the following categories; Coastal Bermudagrass, Other Bermudagrasses, Other Perennial Warm-Season Grasses, Annual Warm Season Grasses, Cool Season Grasses, Legume-Grass Mix and Legumes. There is no entry fee, however the deadline for entering the show is September 6th. Please refer to the Austin County Hay Show Guidelines which are available online at <http://austin.agrilife.org/> and at each of the drop off locations.

Hay samples may be turned in at the Austin County Extension Office, Harrison's Farm Service and Linseisen's Feed in Bellville, Steinhauser's in Sealy, Dudensing Farm Service and Schulz General Store in New Ulm, and Lindemann's Store and

Blezinger's Inc. in Industry by September 6, 2013.

Please contact the Extension Office to preregister at (979) 865-2072, so we can have an accurate count for food and refreshments.

Food Preservation in the 21st Century

EEA (Extension Education Association) of Austin County and the Austin County Horticulture Committee will be sponsoring a Food Preservation program and workshop on Thursday, June



18th at Sealy High School in Sealy, Texas. Food preservation concepts from canning to dehydration will be covered in detail.

The educational program will be instructed by Dr. Jenna Anding, Associate Department Head and Extension Program Leader for Nutrition and Food Sciences with Texas AgriLife Extension Service in College Station. The workshop session will begin at 8:30 with registration, with the program beginning at 9:00 a.m. and will conclude at 4:30. Registration is \$50.00 and will include the "So Easy to Preserve" book, a class binder, recipes, tips and tasting.

Call the Extension Office if you would like to register to participate at (979)865-2072 for more information.

Upcoming Events

June	6	-	Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
		-	CEU Program Opportunity - Austin County Livestock Assoc
		-	Austin County Livestock Assn. Meeting
	13	-	S.W.C.D. Banquet of Champions
	15	-	Big Tomato Contest & Vegetable Show
	18	-	Food Preservation Workshop
	21-22	-	Austin County Fair, Summer Music Fest
July	4	-	Independence Day Holiday, Office Closed
	10	-	Horticulture Committee Meeting
	17	-	Leadership Advisory Board Meeting
	19	-	The Value of Land Seminar
August	2	-	Beef and Forage Committee Meeting
	5-7	-	Beef Cattle Short course, TAMU
	16	-	Multi County New Landowners Series
	28	-	Private Applicator Training and Testing
Sept.	2	-	Labor Day Holiday, Office Closed
	4	-	Horticulture Committee Meeting
	6	-	Hay Show Entry Deadline
	12	-	Wildflower Symposium and Photo Contest
	20	-	Multi County New Landowners Series
	27	-	Fall Forage Seminar and Austin County Hay Show

Sincerely,



Philip Shackelford
County Extension Agent-Ag
Austin County