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Multi County Fruit Tree Seminar Friday, March 10th

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 how to have a successful and enjoyable experience. On Friday, March 10th 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.

As an added bonus, during the training, the Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association will be selling fruit trees at the program. The trees will be available for pick up at the BMGA Plant Sale that will be held on Saturday, April 8 in Sealy from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at Liedertafel Building in Sealy (114 Lux Rd at West Main Street, Sealy, TX). 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. 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>.

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/files/2013/03/Regulated-Spray-Permit.pdf>. Forms can also be obtained by contacting the Texas Department of Agriculture Gulf Coast Regional Office in Houston at (713) 921-8200

Master Gardener Plant Sale Saturday, April 8th

The Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association's annual plant sale will be held on Saturday, April 8, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Liedertafel Building in Sealy (114 Lux Rd at West Main Street, Sealy, TX).

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 on irrigation, water catchment systems, and to 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 at 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.

Beef Management Seminar Friday, March 24

The Beef and Forage Committee of Austin County will Sponsor a Beef Cattle Management Seminar on Friday, March 24th 2017, at Four County Auction Center in Industry. Registration will begin at 1:00pm until 1:30pm with the program to follow. This year's program will be feature Dr. Joe Paschal and Mac Young. They will be discussing a cattle herd rebuilding program. The program will cover topics such as (1) Cattle Selection, (2) Economic Value of Management Practices (Calf & Reproduction Management), (3) Cow Bid or Herd Rebuilding Decision Tool, (4) Projected Replacement Cattle Values, and to wrap it up (5) a round table discussion on hot topics with questions from the audience. So bring your questions and get answers from the experts!

The program will begin with registration at 1:00 pm and the program will be from 1:30 pm until 4:30 pm. There is a \$15 registration fee. Anyone wanting to participate is asked to contact the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Office by calling 979-865-2072. Refreshments will be provided and 2 CEU's will be given to all pesticide applicators in the general category. There will also be 1.5 credit hours given for the Beef Quality Assurance Program.

For more information about Maintaining Optimal Bull Fertility, check out the following.

Bull Management for Cow Calf Producers

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-bull-mgmt.pdf>

Breeding Soundness of Bulls

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-breeding-soundness-bulls.pdf>

Bovine Trichomoniasis

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-bovine-trichomoniasis.pdf>

Maintaining Optimal Bull Fertility

Joe C. Paschal

Livestock Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Breeding season is almost here for most of us and I thought it might be a good time to relate some basic points on maintaining optimal bull fertility.

Bulls need to be fertility tested about 45-60 days prior to turnout. This allows ample time for retesting or replacement. Bulls should be vaccinated for diseases and treated for internal and external parasites at this time. Visit with your local veterinarian for specific recommendations for your area.

If you have purchased or acquired new bulls they should be trichomoniasis tested when they are fertility tested before purchase. Trich is a venereal of cattle that is carried by bulls but causes early abortion in cows. It is recommended and required by state law that breeding bulls be tested whenever they change hands. There is a vaccine labeled for use in healthy animals that reduces the effect of the disease on aborting those early pregnancies. Some veterinarians are recommending its use when a fertility test is conducted.

At turnout, bulls should be in a body condition score of 7, with no ribs showing and hips or hooks and pins rounded. Bulls will lose about 2 condition scores during a 3 month breeding season so they should begin with some fat cover. If bulls lose weight during breeding season supplement or replace them. Thin bulls produce less and a lower quality semen.

The bull to cow or breeding ratio will depend on the age of the bull as well as the pasture conditions. For young bulls, those less than 24 months of age, a good rule of thumb is a cow for every month of age. Older bulls can be turned out with 20-35 or more cows depending on pasture size, pasture conditions, and age of the bulls.

Bulls reach their sexual peak at about 4-5 years of age and begin to decline after about 7 years of age. There will be exceptions to this of course.

If you have more questions about this or other topics discussed, contact your local County Extension Agent or beef cattle veterinarian.

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New Year – Old Pest

As we begin a new year, we are faced with an old pest, the fever tick. The fever tick (actually, there are two different species) once ranged as far north as Virginia and is the host for the blood parasite that causes Cattle or Tick Fever. This disease can kill as many as 90% of the affected cattle.

Beginning in 1906, the USDA Fever Tick Eradication Program eliminated fever ticks down to a 500 mile stretch of Texas along the Rio Grande. This line runs from Del Rio to the Gulf of Mexico and is known as the Permanent Quarantine Zone. Inside the zone, actually a buffer between the US and Mexico, (which has both the ticks and the disease), fever ticks are often found since the river is not a perfect barrier. Wildlife and stray cattle from Mexico can bring ticks across. Tick riders patrol this zone on horseback to look for cattle with ticks.

Outside the zone, the fever tick is not usually found unless it is carried by wildlife or in a special case, by an exotic antelope, the Nilgai. Cattle and other livestock inside the zone must be treated for ticks with an insecticide and inspected before leaving.

Recently fever ticks (but not the disease) were found in Live Oak County requiring a Temporary Quarantine Zone to be established by the Texas Animal Health Commission, the state regulatory agency responsible for animal health. TAHC is inspecting and treating affected herds to reduce the economic impact on producers. Cattle producers have their choice of two treatment options or their pastures can be vacated for 6-9 months to starve the tick.

For more information on fever ticks or cattle ticks, contact your local county Extension agent or beef cattle veterinarian.