

Bee County Agriculture Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 2

December 2018

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2018

PLACE: BEE COUNTY AGRILIFE EXTENSION OFFICE

TIME: 9:00AM – 12:00PM

PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING COURSE COST \$50 WHICH INCLUDES THE COST OF STUDY MANUALS. PLEASE CONTACT EXTENSION OFFICE AT 361-621-1552 TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT

BEEF CATTLE FIELD DAY

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2018

PLACE: BEEVILLE LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

TIME: 8:00AM – 11:00 AM, REGISTRATION AT 7:30AM

WE WILL BE SPONSORING A CEU SEMINAR. WE ARE OFFERING 2 CEU HOURS; IPM & GENERAL

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2018 Developments in Boll Weevil Eradication in the Coastal Bend

A total of 268 boll weevils have been captured in five different locations of the Coastal Bend of Texas since mid-July. These captures occurred near Kingsville, Bishop, Banquette, Alice and Odem. The initial infestation of weevils most likely came into the area via wind movement or were transported on equipment moving out of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Zone (LRGV).

In 2018, over 94,000 weevils have been captured in the LRGV zone. Under state quarantine laws regulated by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the LRGV is under quarantine. This quarantine protects the rest of the state by prohibiting the movement of raw cotton (cotton not ginned) from being moved into the other cotton growing areas such as the East Texas Maintenance Area (ETMA) or West Texas Maintenance Area (WTMA). It also regulates the movement of cotton harvest equipment (EX: pickers, module builders, boll buggies, module trucks, etc.) from being moved into other parts of the state without being properly cleaned and inspected.

Now with weevils present in the southern portion of the ETMA, it is very important that producers take the following actions to limit the spread of weevils to clean areas.

1. Destroy all cotton plants after harvest and make sure there is no hostable cotton (cotton containing squares, blooms or bolls) in or around fields.
2. Make sure all cotton equipment is clean prior to arriving to your farm or at local gins.
3. If weevils are captured on or near your farm, clean harvest equipment prior to moving to other field locations.
4. Report all your cotton acres as soon as possible in the spring.
5. Report cotton plants growing outside of cotton fields to Foundation personnel.
6. Communicate with your local boll weevil eradication personnel if you have any questions.

It is extremely important that we all work together to stop the spread of boll weevils into weevil-free areas.

Contact information:

TBWEF Robstown – Darrell Dusek, Regional Manager – 361-767-7708

TBWEF Abilene – Larry Smith, Program Director – 325-672-2800

Expert: Few Options to Salvage Late-Season Hay Amid Wet Weather

*information by Adam Russell, AgriLife Extension, Overton.

Warm-season grasses are plentiful in hay producing areas, but the rain that helped move improve growing conditions following an extended period of drought is hurting their chances for more round bales, said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Puddles of water gather in low spots of pasture west of Tyler. Rains have created soggy conditions for farmers trying to harvest warm-season grasses for hay before the first frost. Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, AgriLife Extension forage specialist, Overton, said late-season rains created good growing conditions for warm-season grasses over the last 60 days following months of drought that left hay supplies low around the state.

She said while grasses might be abundant in pastures and hay meadows, producers are having difficulty harvesting between rains. Corriher-Olson said many producers are counting on a final cutting, but weather conditions have been against them as the first freezing temperatures rapidly approach. Producers would ideally make the final cutting now when the grass is green and before the first frost, but continuous rains over the last 60 days have allowed few opportunities for producers to harvest.

“Accessing the pastures with equipment was a problem, but even once the ground dried out enough to get in, producers had to consider if there was a window between rains where the hay could be cut, cured and baled before another rain,” she said. “It’s been difficult, and producers need the hay.” Corriher-Olson said producing hay bales is heavily dependent on weather and there are risks associated with any decision when it comes to harvesting hay at this point in the season amid unfavorable weather conditions.

The best option is to move cattle onto the field for grazing if there is fencing and water is available. “Livestock are much better harvesters than we are with machines,” she said. “But grazing isn’t an option for a lot of producers because many East Texas hay meadows don’t have fences or water.” If hay is cut and remains on the ground when it rains, Corriher-Olson said it will begin to lose nutritive value due to leaching of non-structural carbohydrates. Rain can also shatter leaves off harvested forage and reduce both the crude protein and energy levels of the hay.

Harvesting hay after a frost is an option, she said. However, producers still need to be cautious of weather conditions. “With cooler temperatures and cloudy days, curing hay can be even more challenging,” she said. Extra forage can also be allowed to remain standing in the field for grazing, Corriher-Olson said. Maintaining some substantial Bermuda grass or Bahia grass stubble height could provide shade that could reduce volunteer ryegrass as well as other weed seed germination.

This might not provide 100 percent control, however competition can help reduce undesired plant growth, she said. Maintaining a higher stubble height can also be beneficial for the future growth of warm-season perennials. Higher stubble height means more substantial root structure to capture deeper soil moisture and nutrients. “Cooler spring temperatures, drought, fall armyworms and late fall rains have added extra challenges for hay production, so late season utilization, whether harvesting, grazing or maintaining stubble, could impact forage production this year and next,” she said.

Seasonal Rainbow Trout Stocking Begins Statewide Nov. 30

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - media

After a long, hot summer, many Texans are looking forward to going outside and enjoying the long-awaited cool weather this holiday season. Starting Nov. 30, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be stocking thousands of cold weather-loving rainbow trout at ponds, lakes and rivers statewide so that family members of all ages can enjoy the crisp seasonal air and catch a feisty, colorful sport fish for fun or to prepare a tasty meal.

With 170 locations being stocked throughout the state, from El Paso to Texarkana and everywhere in between, most Texas anglers are likely to find a place close to home to enjoy catching these fish and spending time in the outdoors.

For urban and suburban families in major cities, Neighborhood Fishin' lakes offer some of the best opportunities to catch rainbow trout this winter. TPWD manages 19 Neighborhood Fishin' lakes statewide in most major urban centers, including Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. These lakes are stocked with rainbow trout every two weeks and offer plenty of amenities so that family members of all ages can enjoy a fun and relaxing day fishing and connecting in nature.

Families looking to spend a day or weekend exploring a Texas State Park can add fishing to their list of activities, as 22 state parks throughout the state will receive periodic stockings of rainbow trout this winter. Many state parks offer excellent fishing amenities such as fishing piers and shoreline access, cleaning stations, and equipment rentals for tackle and kayaks or canoes. As a bonus, state parks are the only locations in Texas that anglers can fish for free without a fishing license.

For anglers interested in tailrace fishing, TPWD will be stocking rainbow trout below several dams and spillways, which often have very cool water and provide excellent conditions for trout fishing. This year, TPWD will stock rainbow trout into the Canyon Tailrace on the Guadalupe River below Canyon Lake, the Lewisville Tailrace located on the Elm Fork of the Trinity River below Lake Lewisville, and the Possum Kingdom Tailrace on the Brazos River below Possum Kingdom Lake.

Other stocking locations include dozens of local city and county managed park ponds, the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center casting pond, and several rivers including the Frio, South Llano and Guadalupe rivers and the Clear Fork of the Trinity River.

Rainbow trout can be caught on a variety of baits and lures. Depending on an angler's experience level and interest, they can be caught using simple, light tackle or on hand-tied flies using a fly rod. Other tips to consider when trout fishing include arriving early to stocking sites on stocking days, maintaining a safe and courteous distance from fellow anglers, keeping an array of baits and lures nearby and having ice available when harvesting trout to keep fish fresh.

TPWD will be stocking a total of 322,568 rainbow trout at all locations from Nov. 30 through the beginning of March. Because rainbow trout are unable to survive in Texas after the winter, anglers are encouraged to keep up to their daily bag limit of five trout. Rainbow trout are an attractive, tasty fish found on many restaurant menus, and anglers can easily find recipes to prepare these fish online.

In Texas, children under 17 fish for free, but a fishing license is required for adults in the family.

An angler fishing in a Community Fishing Lake or from a dock, pier or jetty within a Texas State Park may use no more than two poles. The statewide bag limit is five trout, except on parts of the Guadalupe River where special limits are in effect.

Bee County Wildlife Management Association: Banquet

You are invited to attend the annual banquet hosted by the Bee County Wildlife Management Association.

January 26, 2019, 6:00pm

Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$25 – Steak dinner with fixings will be served

Located at the Bee County Expo Center, 214 S. FM 351, Beeville, TX.

**10 Gun raffle ticket winners will be drawn during the banquet

For more information, contact Frank Massey (210) 771-8551

www.bee-county-wildlife.org

BQA Tip of the Month – Management of Horns

Management of horns in beef cattle is important for animal welfare, animal handling, handler safety, and animal value. The easiest way to manage horns is using polled genetics; quality polled genetics can be found in all major beef breeds. Using homozygous polled bulls in *Bos Taurus* cattle will result in a 100% polled calf crop even if the cows have horns; in *Bos indicus* influenced cattle the expression pattern is sometimes different, but most calves will be polled. Stocker and feeder cattle with horns should be dehorned or tipped as early as possible using methods that minimize stress.



AgriLife Extension economist: Expect Farm Bill by Christmas

Somehow, someday, there will be a new farm bill in the next few days, according to Dr. Joe Outlaw, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist who spoke during the Texas Wheat Producers Symposium at the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

“Over the last couple of days, they (lawmakers) are getting really close, so unless someone gets really stubborn, we’re going to get a bill in the next couple of days,” said Outlaw, also co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Getting a farm bill passed is not just good news for agriculture, he said. It is important to both lenders and consumers. The overall economy is linked to agriculture, and the farm bill programs keep more people farming and consumer food prices lower. “A strong ag economy makes for a strong national economy,” Outlaw said.

Without going into the details of what will be in the bill, he said no new money or programs have been added and only adjustments have been made to deal with issues that have arisen. But the passage of even what is expected to be a baseline farm bill is important to providing structure to the farm programs for next year’s crop.

Outlaw said it is a good thing the seed cotton coverage and dairy enhancement were included in the earlier Bipartisan Budget Act, because “I can’t imagine trying to get those two things done in the current D.C. climate.” But he did say he thinks wheat producers will like some additions being talked about in the latest version in terms of wheat’s safety net.

Outlaw said much of his role is educational, because people don’t understand the farm bill and the role it plays. He said the average person may think the farm bill is about farmers getting rich, but what tends to get lost in the understanding of the farm bill role is that farmers and lenders need the farm bill for certainty.

Most producers have to go to a lender and work through the process to get an annual production loan, Outlaw said. Without the security and stability of the farm bill, the lenders, who have regulators monitoring their actions as well, would find it very difficult to lend to agriculture.

“In this price environment, producers will not get operating loans without strong crop insurance and commodity programs,” Outlaw said. “The farm bill is about the security and stability of having a safety net when it is really needed.”

The safety net in the form of crop insurance or Title I programs will not make the producer whole, he said.

“I hear it every day, we are lining the pockets of farmers,” Outlaw said. “That is probably the thing that sets me off more than anything else, because what we are really doing with this safety net program is trying to replace a little bit of what is lost.”

The farmer may start out the year wanting to make a certain amount of money, but they have to hope the price and yield holds up, and often they don’t, he said.

“Right now, we are at a deficit, and the government is making up some of the loss, so the producer has the financial wherewithal to go back to his lender next year to get the opportunity to try again,” Outlaw said.

Preparing Your Trees and Garden Beds for The Winter

*East Texas Gardening website

In Texas with its lovely fall weather, it is hard to think of preparing our flower beds and garden for winter. However, it is easier to start now than doing it on a cold day or even trying to do in spring when you are wanting to plant. Having an established plan will make gardening much more pleasant and easier.

Trees and Shrubs: Make sure you clean out debris from around the trunks so as not to provide a winter home for rodents and other pests. Keep the plants watered well and as it will be easier for them to go through a freeze if they have plenty of moisture. Look for dead limbs or other areas that will need pruning once they have lost their leaves and gone dormant. After the leaves are gone would be a good time to select prune crape myrtles of ONLY branches that rub together, grow to the middle or are broken. **DO NOT TOP THEM!**

If you are thinking of planting a new tree or shrubs, the best time is after they have lost their leaves. It will give the root system time to develop over the winter that will stand up to the Texas heat next summer.

Vegetable garden: Clean out and compost plants as they stop producing. If not diseased, cut them up some and put them in your compost pile. If you are still mowing your yard put the grass clippings on the bed along with any mulched fall leaves. If you run over your leaves first with your lawnmower, it will help them decompose faster. If you have access to cottonseed meal, composed cow manure, alfalfa meal, or composed chicken manure, now would be a good time to add them to the soil. Once you have prepared the soil, cover the soil with plastic, weed block cloth or just another thick layer of leaves to keep weeds out. I like using the black plastic because it helps the soil warm faster in the spring.

Your beds are now ready for the early crops of onions, spinach, strawberries and peas.

Flower beds: Select deadheading of perennials and annuals can be done now if you want to save seeds for next year. Plants that provide a winter interest or food for birds, such as coneflowers, can be left until later. Clean any debris from around plants that might overwinter pests or diseases. It is especially necessary for roses that any debris be removed to prevent black spot or other fungus and daylilies to prevent rust. Cannas, elephant ears and other frost tender plants need to be cut back to ground level after first light frost.

Spring bulbs can be planted now. Drop a little plant food in the hole as you plant them. Remember the pointed side up. Believe it or not, I once had a friend plant her entire bed with the pointed end down. If not done in October, you can still plant in November. They can still be planted after that but the flower production may be diminished.

Any beds that are thick with weeds can be covered with cardboard or a thick layer of newspaper and then covered with a thick layer of mulch. When spring planting time comes you can just dig down and plant right through the covering. Newspaper makes a great weed barrier any time and will decompose during the planting season. No supply of newspaper? Stacks of old newspapers can be purchased from the newspaper office at an inexpensive price.

When the winter days are cold or rainy days you can be snug indoors knowing that your fall efforts have made the garden and flower beds ready and waiting for the next growing season.

Overwintering Plants

*East Texas Gardening website

We always have plants that are special which we hope to carry through the colder parts of the winter. Sometimes just keeping frost off is enough, sometimes keeping the ground from freezing (have we had to worry in years?), or protecting pots of plants all winter is our goal. Here are some things I have tried and had success with.

The plans you make now can help protect your plants. Choices for plants extremely sensitive to freezing are limited: move the plants to a protected area or try to bring some protection to the plant.

Tomato cages can be used as hot caps. Cover the cage with plastic, if it doesn't touch the leaves, or frost cloth. You can even stuff these cages with straw or wadded up newspaper for even more protection. Do not use newspaper if it is going to rain.

Large glass jars, bowls, trash cans, or cardboard boxes make excellent plant covers. Just don't leave them over the plant once the weather warms up during the day or you will have steamed plants!

For very large plants or large areas, hay bales with a plastic top make a good makeshift greenhouse.

Pots can be nestled down into wood chips, leaves, or pine straw and completely covered until the 'spell' is over.

Move the plant into an enclosed patio, the greenhouse, the garage, anywhere out of the weather. Water deeply to help the plant tolerate this move. Or you can wrap the plant with cloth, not plastic film. Cover will help protect the plant from frost, but not from freezing. Layer the cover to ensure no part of the plant touches cover material that is directly exposed to the elements. A light bulb on an outdoor extension cord, or some other heat source, inside the cover will provide some degree of protection.

Your other defenses are to ensure your plants are watered regularly and mulched heavily. Water deeply on a regular basis and pile on extra mulch. If winter brings a hard freeze your plants will have a better chance of surviving.

AGRI-NEWS TRIVIA

- The millennial generation includes 257,454 farmers. More than 20% of all farmers are beginning farmers.
- About 8% of U.S. farms market food locally, through direct-to –consumer or intermediate sales.
- One-third of the U.S. or 750 million acres, is covered with trees.
- The Fertile Crescent is the site of the earliest planned sowing and harvesting of plants.
- In 2012, U.S. Farms and ranches spent \$329 billion to produce \$388 billion in goods.

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Newsletter by E-Mail

Due to increased postage costs, we would like to make future newsletters and announcements available to you electronically. If you would like to receive future information by email send an email to robbin.reininger@ag.tamu.edu. Benefits of having your newsletter sent through e-mail are: pictures and graphs will be in color, easy to store on your computer, no papers to mess with, click-able links to other internet sites, and sooner access.

Check out and ‘Like’ the Bee County Agriculture and Natural Resources Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/beecountyag

We’re on the Web! <http://bee.agrilife.org>

Robbin L. Reininger, CEA-Ag/NR

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