

Brazos County Agriculture News and Events

By Chadd Caperton

Brazos County Extension Agent- Ag and Natural Resources

June 2022

Greetings from the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension office!

“The farmer has to be an optimist, otherwise he wouldn’t still be a farmer.”

- Will Rogers

“But I will bless the person who puts his trust in me. He is like a tree growing near a stream and sending out roots to the water. It is not afraid when hot weather comes, because its leaves stay green; it has no worries when there is no rain; it keeps on bearing fruit.”

– *Jeremiah 17:7-8*

Bundles of Bees

By Chadd Caperton

Brazos County Extension Agent

The heat is on, but pollination must continue. Yes, the Bees are out. It’s the busy time of year for bees and they are all out collecting nectar and pollen to bring back to the hive to make honey. They also use it to feed bee larvae to replenish the hive. The average life span of a bee is only a couple of weeks, and it is spent pollinating the local flora aiding in the reproduction of thousands of plants, trees and shrubs.

But with the growth of the colony and abundance of nectar and pollen available some colonies outgrow the room they have available in the hive. This growth results in what we call “swarms”. You may have noticed them turning up lately. They will continue to do so throughout the year.

Swarming is a natural and necessary event for colonies in which the existing Queen takes a third of the colony and takes off to find a new home suitable to start a new hive. When this happens, you will often see bees balled or clumped up just sitting in one spot for a period of time.

What most people don’t realize is that in this instance the bees are generally pretty docile and non-aggressive if left undisturbed. The ball of bees is actually surrounding the queen to protect her until another home is found.

Once a suitable spot is found the ball of bees will take off and begin the process of drawing new comb, laying eggs for more bees and eventually making honey.

The site of swarms is a good sign meaning that there are healthy hives in the area which are crucial to the production of most plants.

Beekeepers love swarms and actually set out empty hives to attract and start new colonies for honey production. So, if you see these swarms, please do not try to eliminate them. There are always beekeepers who love to collect the balls of bees and try to establish new hives for honey production.

It’s usually best to just leave the swarms to their own processes, but if you find one that just can’t be avoided, please call a local beekeeper to have them removed rather than eliminate them. For more

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
4153 County Park Court | Bryan, Texas 77802

Tel. 979.823.8129 | Fax. 979.775.3768 | <http://brazos.agriLife.org>

information on Bees or any other topic related, please call the Brazos County Extension office at 979-823-0129.

Why are eggs different colors?

Eggs-ploring why chicken eggs are laid in different colors, shapes, shades

APRIL 11, 2022

Have you ever been curious about why chicken eggs can be different colors? While most eggs are white or brown, they also come in colors like cream, pink, blue and green. In addition — and this is no “yolk” — some are even speckled.



Chickens can lay different colored eggs, in which color is determined by the hen's genetics. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Laura McKenzie)

Nature has provided chickens with diverse color patterns for their feathers, skin patches and eggshells for various purposes, including camouflage, protection from predators and to signal individual identity.

According to a [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) poultry specialist, the color of an egg is mainly determined by the chicken's genetics. That means the breed of hen will usually indicate what color of egg will be produced.

For example, Leghorn chickens lay white eggs, while Orpington's lay brown eggs and Ameraucana lay blue eggs. And the “olive egger” breed lays ... wait for it ... olive-green eggs.

But appearances aside, all chicken eggs have no major differences in taste or nutritional composition. (see the full article here)

https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2022/04/11/why-are-eggs-different-colors/?fbclid=IwAR1-v2fjmrqjsjvttRVNqfllYyq_tQtj3Pkwnv_Psr-IRIkHT3nps86uHBE

Posted on Jun 6, 2022 in [Audio](#), [Editorial](#), [Featured](#), [Your Texas Agriculture Minute](#)



YOUR TEXAS AGRICULTURE MINUTE

Protecting farm and ranch practices within city limits

By Gary Joiner
Publisher

Texas has a “right to farm” law that needs to be strengthened.

The Texas House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock is studying this interim the impact on agricultural operations of governmental and regulatory requirements and practices, including those that prevent or prohibit an activity that is a normally-accepted agricultural practice.

There’s a lot to talk about.

There are several examples in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where cities are using their public nuisance ordinances to prohibit agricultural activities. In one city, grass grown for hay is not allowed to grow taller than 12 inches without the city coming in and mowing the property and sending the bill to the farmer.

Hay bales in some cases must be removed from properties within a short period of time, usually 24-48 hours, to avoid penalties—all in order to comply with city health ordinances.

Some cities are arbitrarily requiring buffer zones of up to 250 feet around the property to be mowed short. That takes significant acreage out of production.

And the list goes on.

It's imperative that farmers are given every opportunity to keep agricultural lands that are now inside the boundaries of cities due to urban sprawl in the production of commodities used to feed and clothe the world.

Common-sense changes to the state's Agriculture Code are needed to preserve current "right to farm" statutory protections.

We need to ensure all agricultural operations are protected, not just those annexed after August 31, 1981.

The current law does not require a city to prove an agricultural practice is truly a threat to public health. The standard in current law needs to be strengthened.

Cities should be required to consult expert agricultural information on generally-accepted agricultural practices that are not a threat to public health. This would be similar to Central Appraisal Districts being required to consult the Comptroller's agricultural use manual in assessing whether or not property should qualify for agricultural valuation.

Let's hope the Texas Legislature takes action next year.

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

Brazos County 5 Hour CEU Event

Date: September 23rd, 2022

Location: The Brazos County Extension Office (new location at 4153 County Park Court, Bryan 77802)

Pending TDA approval, this program will provide 5 hours of CEU's for Pesticide Applicator license holders

Topics may include the following:

- External Parasite Control on Beef Cattle
- Feral Hog Control Options
- Pesticide Laws & Regulations Updates
- Herbicide Updates

And more...

More information coming soon...

Other events:

Houston County 2022 Landowners Program Series

Date: Several (see below)

Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM CST

Location: Houston County (Crockett)

Registration: online at <https://tamuagrillifeextension.wufoo.com/forms/2022-landowner-program-series/>

Cost: \$45.00 per person / \$65.00 per couple (+ \$10.00 late fee after May 27)

Lunch will be own you own. Each class will require a minimum of 10 registrants to be held.

For additional information contact: Jo Smith jo.smith@agnet.tamu.edu (or) 936-544-7502

June 3, Forage Seminar. Topics include Weed ID, Soil Analysis, Soil Fertility, Hay Baling and Storage Spraying vs. Mowing, Sprayer calibration.

July 1, Beef Seminar. Topics include "Beef 101", Beef Quality Assurance, Herd Health Program, Bull Selection, Breeding Soundness Exam, and Marketing. *This session will include a trip to East Texas Livestock for hands on experience.*

August 5, General Seminar. Topics include Food Plots for Wildlife; Pond Management, Aquatic Weed ID, Pond Water Testing, Hog Control, Property Tax Valuations/Exemptions as it relates to Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service Programs.

September 9, 5 Hour Pesticide CEU Recertification & Pesticide License Training Class (Cost & Registration is separate)

October 28, Cow Country Congress (Cost & Registration is separate)

[Homemade Huntsville \("Hands On" Workshops\)](#)

Texas A&M AgriLife, Walker County

Remaining Events June through November 2022

Workshops will be held at the Walker Co Storm Shelter

Registration Fee includes ALL supplies, refreshments, and take-home items: \$30.00 per person for any one session.

JUNE Registration Link: [Homemade Huntsville - June 2, 2022 Pickles & Relish Workshop Tickets, Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

Walker County, Family & Consumer Health Agent, Meredith Cryer has a scheduled educational series active and “on the front burner” with eight additional upcoming workshops scheduled April through November in our [Homemade Huntsville](#) series. These events are posted under the preceding link providing specific subjects, dates, times, registration, and other information. Be sure to scroll down the page to **Homemade Huntsville** (*the Preserving the Harvest sessions at the top of page are SOLD OUT*).

- June 2 - Pickles & Relish
- July 7 – Fermentation
- August 4 – Pressure Cooking
- September 1 – Breads
- October 6 – Pies & Fillings
- November 17 – Holiday Treats

Grimes County 2022 Landowners Program Series

Date: Several (see below)

Time: 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Location: Grimes County Fairgrounds (5220 FM 3455, Navasota, TX 77868)

Registration: contact Kyla Moeller (979) 873-3907 or kyla.gladson@ag.tamu.edu

Cost: \$20.00 per person (meal included with program)

Common tree issues give homeowners lots of items to think about. Potential diseases, insects, problems caused by weather and (even) the owners, are all on the discussion table. This class will explore many of the topics which you may have wondered about. The class will be presented by Connor Murnane and Ben Plunkett with Texas A&M Forest Service.

Algal Blooms (webinar)

Date: June 21, 2022

6:00 PM CST

Location: online

Cost: \$35.00

Registration: <https://tamu.estore.flywire.com/products/algal-blooms-june-21-24927>

For additional information contact Brittany Chesser at brittany.chesser@tamu.edu

Join us for a how-to educational program on all thing's algae and cyanobacteria. We will cover how to identify the main groups of algae, from micro to macro forms, as well as cyanobacteria and other harmful algal blooms. Once identified, we will briefly discuss their biology and how that plays a role in the pond's ecosystem and management. Specific management strategies, including mechanical, biological, and chemical options, when applicable, will be covered for each grouping. Finally, we will discuss the importance of correctly calculating copper by using the label for effective control and treatment timing.

Other Items of Interest...

<https://beefcattleshortcourse.com/>



Registration is open now.

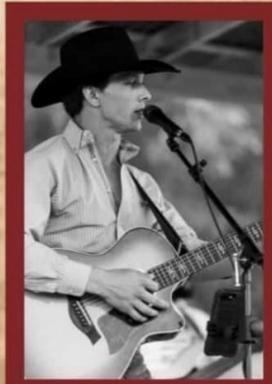
BRAZOS VALLEY CATTLEWOMEN

STEAK DINNER & DANCE

SUNDAY, JULY 31, 2022
6:00-10:00 P.M.

In conjunction with the Beef Cattle Short Course
Sponsored by Nolan Ryan Beef and cooked by Graham
Land & Cattle.

Texas A&M Hotel &
Conference Center
177 Joe Routt Blvd.
College Station, Tx.
77840



Tickets: \$65 TYE COLEMAN MUSIC

Table of 10: \$600

Online tickets thru June 30th

Remaining tickets will be sold at the door





For Immediate Release
April 3, 2022

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Pheasants in Texas

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a commercial pheasant flock (poultry) in Erath County, Texas. This is the first confirmation of HPAI in Texas.

Following an increase in bird deaths, samples from the flock were tested at the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and confirmed at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

The TAHC is working closely with federal animal health officials on a joint incident response. State officials quarantined the affected premises, and birds on the property have been depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. The plan for the control of avian influenza includes coordination of resources and response, and protocols for quarantine, testing, disposal, cleaning, disinfection and monitoring.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections [do not present an immediate public health concern](#). No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of all poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F is recommended as a general food safety precaution.

"Texas has been actively preparing alongside the USDA to respond to HPAI," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian. "We'd like to encourage Texas poultry owners to educate themselves on this disease and be vigilant in taking steps to protect their flocks from avian influenza."

As part of existing avian influenza response plans, Federal and State partners are working jointly on additional surveillance and testing in areas around the affected flock. The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, and the TAHC and USDA is working to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations.

Anyone involved with poultry production from the small backyard to the large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds. Owners of commercial and backyard poultry flocks are encouraged to closely observe their birds.

- Report a sudden increase in the number of sick birds or bird deaths to the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242 and/or USDA at 1-866-536-7593.
- Prevent contact with wild birds.
- Practice good [biosecurity](#) with your poultry flock.
- For the latest on the Texas HPAI response, visit https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/poultry/.



In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should create barriers between their birds and wild birds and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials. Producers are encouraged to consider bringing birds indoors, when possible, to further prevent exposures, and avoid visits to other premises that also have birds. Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks can be found at https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_AI-BiosecurityPoultry.pdf.

Additional poultry resources:

- TAHC Poultry Health page: https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/poultry/#AI
- 2022 United States detections of HPAI: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai>
- USDA Defend the Flock biosecurity: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/!ut/p/z1/04_iUIDgAgL9CCADyIQSuGj9qLzEssz0x|LM_LzEHP0l_cg0s3hPlyNnQ0MTQx93L0sLg0BnYwPT0AB342BDc30v_Sj8CsKd9CNTvdxd8sv1C7KjHAE3qyCA/

Additional background:

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and is carried by free flying waterfowl such as ducks, geese and shorebirds. AI viruses are classified by a combination of two groups of proteins: hemagglutinin or “H” proteins, of which there are 16 (H1–H16), and neuraminidase or “N” proteins, of which there are 9 (N1–N9). Many different combinations of “H” and “N” proteins are possible. Each combination is considered a different subtype and can be further broken down into different strains which circulate within flyways/geographic regions. AI viruses are further classified by their pathogenicity (low or high)—the ability of a particular virus strain to produce disease in domestic poultry.

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.