

Clay County Agriculture News

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Farm Bill Meeting to be Held November 5 in Henrietta

There are many moving parts to the 2014 farm bill and farmers will have to give careful consideration electing which type of program they choose. To help farmers be prepared to make this decision, a farm bill meeting will be held at the Henrietta ISD Administration Building beginning at 9 am on Wednesday, November 5.

Another tool to help farmers make the decision about which program to choose for the new farm bill is the online decision aid tool. "The online decision aid tool will help producers and landowners choose the program option that best suits their operation," said Dr. Joe Outlaw, co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center, College Station, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist. These choices are complex, though the decision aid will help reduce some of the potential confusion by educating producers of the possible future outcomes of the numerous program options on their respective farms. The decision aid is available at <http://usda.afpc.tamu.edu>.

New programs that are part of the 2014 farm bill – Agricultural Risk Coverage, also known as ARC, and Price Loss Coverage, also known as PLC, are commodity safety net programs and take the place of direct payments. Both programs offer farmers protection when market forces cause substantial decreases in crop prices and/or revenues. Producers will have through late spring of 2015 to select which program works best for their businesses.

The online decision aids are made possible through a \$3 million education grant from the US Department of Agriculture to the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M and the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri, which co-leads the National Association of Agricultural and Food Policy, along with the University of Illinois, lead for the National Coalition for Producer Education, to develop decision aids.

Information that a producer will need to be able to plug numbers into the online decision aid include their FSA form 156-Easy, which contains base acres and yields, insurance information, which contains yield history and APH from their crop insurance agency and their crop basis information. If a producer does not have access to the internet or wants additional help, they are encouraged to visit the county extension office for assistance with the decision aid tool.

Currently, farm owners may begin visiting their local FSA offices if they want to update their yield history and/or reallocate base acres, the first step before choosing which new program best serves their risk management needs. Letters sent this summer enabled farm owners and producers to analyze their crop planting history in order to decide whether to keep their base acres or reallocate them according to recent plantings.

The next step in USDA's safety net implementation is scheduled for this winter when all producers on a farm begin making their election, which will remain in effect for the life of the current farm bill, from 2014-2018 crop years between the options offered by ARC and PLC.

Again, the 2014 farm bill has many moving parts and some critical decisions that producers will have to make that will last the life of the farm bill. To prepare producers for these decisions, a farm bill meeting will be held at the Henrietta ISD Administration Building from 9 to 11:30 am on Wednesday, November 5. Registration will begin at 8:45 am. There is no cost to attend this meeting and it is open to

the public. Stan Bevers, AgriLife Extension economist, will give an overview of the 2014 farm bill, discuss the decisions that will have to be made and give a live demonstration of the online decision making tool. Also, an FSA representative will be in attendance to answer questions on the farm bill programs, policy and procedure. To sign up, please call the extension office at 538.5042 or the FSA office at 538.4591 by Monday, November 3.

Annual Cattle Trails Conference Set for December 2 in Lawton

Getting back to the basics of fundamentally sound ranch management will be the focus of the Cattle Trails Cow-Calf Conference, a joint effort between the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

The event will be held Dec. 2 in Lawton, Oklahoma. This annual conference, with the slogan of “driving your operation to profits,” provides cow-calf producers the most up-to-date information on topics that influence cattle profits, said Stan Bevers, AgriLife Extension economist in Vernon, Texas.

The conference, which alternates between Texas and Oklahoma each year, will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Comanche County Fairgrounds Coliseum, 920 S. Sheridan in Lawton, Oklahoma. Registration is \$25 per person and includes educational materials, a noon meal and refreshments. Additional information can be obtained at <http://agrisk.tamu.edu>.

“This is probably the strongest agenda we have put together for any of our cattle conferences,” Bevers said. “We are fortunate to have Rich Roth, vice president of the IX Ranch from Big Sandy, Montana, coming down to speak.” The IX Ranch, in its current state, was created in 1955, but the history of the ranch dates back to 1879. The ranch is strictly a cow-calf operation with a current inventory of 3,500 mother cows.

“Rich is a relatively young manager who blends the old with the new,” Bevers said. “He documents most activities on the ranch, from data collection to using his smart phone to capture and post the activities. The ranch’s information system allows the management team to quickly identify and respond to any potential issues, such as low calving rates to rising fertilizer costs.

“Folks will want to come hear Rich discuss his management of this large, efficient cow-calf operation,” Bevers said.

Roth’s presentation is titled, “This Ain’t Your Daddy’s Ranch Management Anymore.”

Also on the agenda will be Bevers and Dr. Derrell Peel, Extension livestock economist with Oklahoma Cooperative Extension at Stillwater, Oklahoma, discussing cattle markets and the beef industry.

Other topics and speakers include:

- Understanding Forage Quality and Analysis for Beef Production, Dr. Ryan Reuter, assistant professor at the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

- Matching Your Supplementation Program to Your Forage, Dr. Dave Lalman, Extension beef cattle specialist from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

- Your Cow-calf Herd Health, Dr. D.L. Step, Oklahoma State University veterinary clinical sciences professor in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Industry sponsors also will have their products on display during the event.

To aid with meal count, producers are encouraged to preregister by contacting their local AgriLife Extension county agent in Texas. So if interested, contact us at 940.538.5042 or mlhodgin@ag.tamu.edu.