

April 2015

Notice:

The Colorado County Extension Office will be closed on May 25th for Memorial Day.

New Invasive/Poisonous Plants Found in Colorado County

By Stephen Janak, County Extension Agent - Ag/Natural Resources

I recently made a site visit down Burford Street on the north side of Columbus where local residents were claiming to have Kudzu vine taking over the riverbank. After sending pictures to our Rangeland Specialist in College Station, we have confirmed the first reported establishment of Kudzu in Colorado County. While this is not cause for panic, I want landowners to be aware of this issue and to keep an eye out for this invasive plant. Growing up to a foot per day, Kudzu can take over an area seemingly overnight. Many may recall the pictures from the southeastern US where Kudzu toppled powerlines, covered barns and houses, and killed trees. Since it is growing on the riverbank, we want to be sure that seeds have not established elsewhere along the river and that birds or other animals haven't planted the seeds elsewhere in the county. If you think you may have seen this plant, give me a call or send me a picture.

Poison Hemlock

Across the river from Kleimann Rd. south of Columbus is the confirmed site of Poison Hemlock, a non-native invasive referred to as the most poisonous plant known to man. Introduced from Europe, all parts of the plant are poisonous and should be avoided by humans. Livestock generally avoid the plant unless available forage becomes sparse. This biennial plant can be killed

with 2,4-D or similar broadleaf weed killer. It may be a good idea to remove livestock from the area after spraying, as weeds are more palatable as they wilt and die. Take care not to bale any of this plant in hay, as livestock are more likely to consume it with the rest of the hay. Again landowners, especially those downstream, should be on the lookout for this poisonous plant. It is distinguished from the wild carrot by the purple splotches along all stems. If you think you have it, give me a call or send me a picture.

Typical 2 or 3-lobed leaflets and flower.



Immature leaflets may not be lobed.



Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Colorado County

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UPCOMING EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Texas Community Futures Forum

Every 3-5 years, AgriLife Extension hosts a futures forum open to the public in which we seek input from county residents on the most important issues affecting agriculture, natural resources, families and consumers, and life sciences. The forum votes to identify the most important issues that the Extension service can address through education and will guide our programming efforts for the next 3-5 years. Important issues in the past include water conservation, bullying in schools, diabetes, economic development, and the influx of absentee landowners. We invite everyone to join us for the discussion and a lunch to be provided on **April 23rd** starting at 10am to help identify and discuss issues affecting your everyday life. Call our office for more information and to register for the event. 979-732-2082

Prairie View A&M Ag Field Day

On **April 24 & 25**, Prairie View A&M will host the annual Agriculture Field Day for only a \$10 registration fee which includes both days' programming and lunch on Saturday. Extension staff will conduct a Farm Bill workshop, and Dr. Nelson Daniels will present on the "43560 Initiative" in which he demonstrates how to gross \$43,560 on just one acre of land. The 43560 Initiative will also include field demonstrations. Day two offers workshops on goat production, sustainable agriculture, cattle production, predator control and guard dog training, medicinal plants, value-added products for farmer's market, and much more. For more information and to register, call our office: 979-732-2082

Patch Burning and Grazing Webinar

Extension Range Specialists are hosting a free webinar training titled "Patch Burning and Grazing: Why it Works and How to Do it!" This free opportunity will be held on **May 7th** starting at noon and going until 1:00pm. To join in: naturalresourcewebinars.tamu.edu

Sugarcane Aphid Turn-Row Meetings

Extension Entomologist Dr. Robert Bowling will be holding several turn-row meetings in the Upper Gulf Coast during May to assist producers in scouting and management. At the time of publication, tentative dates have been set for **May 7th** in Wharton and Jackson Counties. For more information, call our office as this will be updated in the coming days. 732-2082



Rancher Roundtable Workshop

This summer, **May 13-15**, Extension Range Specialist Dr. Morgan Russell will host a workshop focused on "Facilitating the Use of Prescribed Fire through Grazing Management." This educational event will be held in Abilene, Texas at the Taylor County Expo Center. Topics include managing grazing lands during drought, the incorporation of fire, utilizing NRCS programs, prescribed burn insurance and liability, fire and grazing and their implications to wildlife, and a ranch tour to see the results of grazing management and prescribed burning. Early registration is \$100 and after April 20 is \$150. Register at agriferegister.tamu.edu/Rancher.

Grassfed Beef Conference

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is pleased to provide a two-day workshop addressing all-natural, grassfed, and organic beef production. The conference will be held on the campus at College Station on **May 28 & 29** in the Rosenthal Meat Center. The focus is on the production and utilization of niche markets such as all-natural, grassfed, and organic beef. Professional speakers will address cattle types best suited for grassfed beef, managing nutrition in grassfed beef, herd health, a demonstration on carcass fabrication, addressing consumer expectations, marketing, sustainability, and much more. Registration cost for the two-day workshop is \$250. To register call 979-845-2604, or go to: <https://agriferegister.tamu.edu/Beef>.

New Landowner Education Series Continues

The Multi-County New Landowner Education Series has programs scheduled for **May 15th** on Forage Production, **August 21st** on Weed and Brush Control, and **July 10th** on estate planning. Most programs offer 2-3 CEU credits and the series is open to anyone who wants to attend. Fee is \$20 per program or \$125 for a full year's worth of programs. Call the office to register or for more information: 979-732-2082.

Row Crop Tour

The Colorado County Row Crop Tour, organized by the Row Crop Committee of Colorado County, has been set for **June 18th**. As more information becomes available it will be passed on to you. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend to learn of the improved varieties and hybrids planted in replicated demonstration plots and to hear from the seed company representatives.

Sugarcane Aphid Update

The insecticide **Transform** has received a Section 18 labeling good through October 31, 2015 for use on sorghum fields infested with the Sugarcane Aphid (SCA). Labeled rates range from .75 to 1.5 oz/ac but not to exceed two applications or 3 oz/ac per year. Please note there is a 14 day pre-harvest interval for grain or straw harvest, and a 7 day interval for grazing, forage, or hay use.

The insecticide **Sivanto** received a Section 2ee label from the EPA for use on SCA. Labeled rates range from 4 to 7 oz/ac and studies have shown these rates provide excellent control. Bayer CropScience indicates that this product is compatible with many beneficial insects and predatory mites. Please note there is a 21 day pre-harvest interval for grain and straw, and 7 days for forage.

Our Extension Entomologist in Corpus Christi says that studies have indicated the economic threshold for spraying SCA is an average of 50-125 aphids per plant. After these numbers are reached, populations can increase rapidly over just a few days, so scout fields often. There have been reports of SCA over-wintering on Johnsongrass and fallow sorghum fields in surrounding counties.

If you would like assistance in scouting, identifying, or counting SCA or deciding a best plan of action, feel free to call me and I will be happy to make time to come out and help you. Call me at 979-732-2082 or on my cell at 361-649-8561 to catch me outside of the office.

Pecan Nut Casebearer

Now is the time to be placing Pecan Nut Casebearer pheromone traps in orchards or at home to be on the lookout for the first flight of moths. For a list of pheromone traps suppliers, go to: <http://pecankernel.tamu.edu/suppliers/>. For a list of approved pesticides for use on PNC, visit: <http://pecan.ipmpipe.org/pesticides>. Three pheromone traps is enough for a 50-acre orchard, and orchards larger than 50 acres should use 5 traps or more. Monitor traps every 3-4 days or more often if possible. Once the first moth is found, begin scouting nut clusters for eggs in 7-10 days. Extension publication E-173 has more information on thresholds and managing considerations. If you need a paper copy, call me or come by the office.

Texas Row Crop News

AgriLife Extension publishes a monthly newsletter addressing new and emerging issues in Texas row crop production. Recent stories include herbicide resistance in palmer amaranth, waterhemp, and sunflowers, cotton seeding rates, aflatoxin of corn, 2,4-D use in small grains, the Crop Decision Aid Tool for farmers, and how insects, disease, and drought are affecting Texas wheat crops. The newsletter can be accessed at <http://agrilife.org/texasrowcrops/current-news/>. If you do not have access to the online version, give me a call and I'll be happy to print separate articles or the entire newsletter for your reading.

Want to Plant an Herb Garden?

If you've ever thought of planting an herb garden, the Bluebonnet Master Gardeners have established a small demonstration garden in front of the Ag Building (Extension office) in Columbus. To learn about herb gardening or to get ideas for your own place, come by the office. The Master Gardeners will soon have a plant list which describes the uses of each herb they have planted in the bed and how to grow them successfully.



Survey Shows 87% of Farmers Will Own a Smartphone by 2016

A recent survey in Farm Journal Media showed that 87% of farmers (who own 1000 acres or more) will own a smartphone by 2016. It was found that 99% of respondents already send or receive text messages. In 2009, only 14% of farmers surveyed said they owned a smartphone. After calling, texting, and emailing, the highest use of smartphones was for online searches; no doubt searches like "Aflatoxin control in corn" or for current cattle market prices. There are dozens of smartphone applications, or "apps" geared towards farming and ranching, and the number is steadily growing as farmers realize their real-world applications and convenience. Anything from apps to help identify weeds, to field area measuring, to weather forecasts and field scouting is available in the palm of your hand. For a listing of available ag-related apps, visit www.AgWebAppFinder.com.

Bermuda Grass Pasture Sustainability Without Fertilizer

Extension Forage Physiologist Dr. Monte Rouquette conducted a 30-year study on the sustainability of Coastal Bermuda grass pastures on East Texas sandy soils with minimal or no nitrogen fertilization. By reducing the stocking rate of pastures, nutrient cycling through animal excreta is used to keep Coastal Bermuda pastures productive, year after year, with only the overseeding of winter legumes such as Arrowleaf and crimson clover. In comparison, on neighboring pastures treated the same but which stayed at the high stocking rate, the Coastal hybrid of bermuda was slowly grazed out and out-competed by the less-desirable and lower-producing common bermuda or Bahiagrass.

This goes against the common perception that Coastal pastures must be fertilized with nitrogen yearly to sustain the stand. The study shows that this is only true under high stocking rates which often result in over-grazing. With reduced stocking rates and through nutrient cycling from animal excreta, Coastal pastures may be sustained indefinitely without the addition of nitrogen fertilizers.

While lowering your stocking rate may not seem enticing, the lowered input costs can easily offset this difference and can potentially mean net gains in profit. Not only that, but decreased stocking rates mean less overgrazing, which means less bare ground. Less bare ground means fewer weeds, which means less money spent on herbicides - once again, more money stays in your pocket. On top of all of that, since you're not spending hours applying fertilizer or spraying weeds, you have more time for something else, like reading these newsletters.

Farmer's Market Opens for Business

The Colorado County Farmer's Market is back again for another season! The market is held each Friday in the grassy area across the street from the east side of the county courthouse. Market is conducted from 4-7pm each Friday, with special live entertainment on the first Friday of the month. Come by and pick up some fresh, homegrown fruits, vegetables, hand-made crafts, breads, and much more! Or better yet, plant a few extra rows in your garden and bring the extra produce to sell to local residents, travelers, and absentee landowners who are coming into town for the weekend.

How Can we Best Contact You?

Some of you will receive this newsletter by email, and some by hard-copy mail. We would like to deliver the Ag Newsletter to you in a way that is most likely to reach you in a timely manner. If you are currently receiving a hard-copy, but would prefer to receive an electronic copy and reduce desk clutter, simply call the Extension Office and let us know. Likewise, if you receive this in an email, but sometimes miss programs or information because you don't always check your email or it gets buried under a mountain of others, we are willing to send you a hard copy in the mail. While emailing saves us money, time, and postage, we would rather be sure that our clientele receive pertinent information in a timely and useful manner that fits them best. To make a request please call the office.

As always, please feel free to contact me about your individual issues, needs or concerns.

I can be reached by phone at 979-732-2082

or email at stephen.janak@ag.tamu.edu.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Janak

County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County

colorado.agrilife.org

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082 ten (10) days prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

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