

Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

March 2016

8 CEUs
available
inside

Seven Things Every Livestock Producer Should Know

The following was adapted from an article by Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist, Corpus Christi

The other day I was reading a paper written by Dr. Rick Machen titled “Seven Things Every Small Producer Should Know” and I thought it was worth reviewing the points he made. Size is relative in Texas. According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture almost half of the state’s cowherd is in herds of 100 head or more but they represent less than ten percent of farms and ranches. Ninety percent of us own the other half of the cows.

There are some important things all of us need to remember in this business and the first is to be good stewards of our land and its resources, namely soil, grass, water and wildlife. They are the basis for our livelihood. Ranchers probably don’t get enough credit for what they have done to improve wildlife habitat in Texas, especially improved access to water and the eradication of the screwworm. The second important thing is to have a herd health program designed with your veterinarian. They know the disease and parasite issues in your area and what works and what doesn’t.



Charolais cows and a Charolais x Brangus calf graze late winter oats.

Third is to make sure your cows get enough to eat. Body condition score, forage cover, plant selection and grazing behavior are good indicators of that. Fat cows are productive, happy cows and don’t forget the importance of providing clean water! Fourth, reproductive performance is the single most important factor in profitability. Number of calves calved and weaned is more important than weaning weight in affecting profitability. Fifth, although winter is nearly over, always get the most out of your supplements, including hay. It is expensive and we feed a lot of it. Cut it right, store it right, and have it tested. Buy it by the ton, not the bale. Ask to see a forage analysis of hay you plan to buy. Feed it to minimize waste.

Next, economy of scale works against smaller producers. Purchase products in larger quantities whenever you can if you are going to use them eventually. Consider leasing or renting equipment, bulls, or labor rather than purchasing it. Finally, remember, you never know enough. Producing beef for the world is ever-changing. Changes in public policy, property rights, weather, markets, costs, regulations, urban sprawl and land fragmentation all have an effect on the cattle business. Spend some time learning more about the business, support those organizations that look out for your interests, and learn to be a good neighbor.

For more information on any of these topics, give me a call at the office or stop by!
(979) 732-2082 — 316 Spring St.

Downtown Columbus, between the Courthouse Annex and the Colorado River.

For additional reading:

Machen, Rick. “Seven Things Every Small Producer Should Know”. 2015 TSCRA Ranching 101. http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/01/Seven-Things-Every-Small-Producer-Should-Know_2015.pdf

Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Colorado County

Stephen Janak, CEA
Agriculture/Natural
Resources

316 Spring Street
Columbus, TX 78934
979-732-2082

colorado.agrilife.org

Upcoming Events & News You Can Use

Colorado/Fayette County Pecan Field Day

Please plan to join us on **Wednesday, April 20, 2016** at Trefny Pecan Orchard at 1005 Trefny Lane near Weimar for a day of education and demonstration. Registration will begin at 8:30am and the program will run from 9:00am-12:00pm. There will be no charge (sponsors still being accepted). Dr. Larry Stein, Extension Horticulturalist, and Mr. Bill Ree Extension Program Specialist for Pecans, will be the featured speakers for the day's program. Please remember to bring a lawn chair with you for use during the programs. **Two CEUs (1 IPM, 1 General)** will be given.



New Landowner Educational Series – Bees and Trees for Homeowners – **March 18, 2016**

The Multi-County New Landowner Education program is a series of 9 informational meetings, seminars, and field days designed to make new landowners in Austin, Colorado, Fayette, & Washington Counties aware of what types of agricultural enterprises are best for their property. The 3rd meeting for the 2016 series will take place on **Friday, March 18, 2016** at the Washington County Fairgrounds Sales Facility in Brenham. This program will focus on Bees and Trees for Homeowners. Registration will begin at 1:00 with registration and the program at 1:30. The goal of the session is to provide homeowners with the tools to manage existing trees, identify common insects and diseases of trees, and help trouble shoot problems typically seen in the area as it relates to trees. In addition to information on existing trees we will cover tree selection and site selection for planting those new trees on your property. In addition to the tree topic we will hear from a local expert on getting started with bees. For anyone who has entertained the idea of establishing bee hives for Ag Valuation this will be a session you won't want to miss. **Three CEUs (2 General, 1 IPM)** will be offered.

Generation Next, Our Turn to Ranch – 12 Week Webinar Series



Participate from your computer! Second Monday of every month from noon to 1:00 p.m. **April 2016 – March 2017**. Course includes: 12 webinar classes of Expert Instruction, Generation Next t-shirt and a Generation Next School Completion Certification. Gain ideas for operations you can add to an existing ranch, learn options for setting up grazing & wildlife issues, discuss business types, tax info and insurance needs and exposure to all the latest land management tools and techniques. Series is taught by professionals in each field and topic. The fee is \$120.00. You can register at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/>

GenNextWebinar. Or call 979-845-2604 Contact: Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu or 361.265.9203

Bull Selection for Commercial and Seedstock Beef Producers, **April 22, 2016**

A bull is responsible for 50% of the herd's calf crop and a good bull is an investment that can certainly pay big dividends. This one-day, intensive workshop will discuss applied as well as advanced bull selection techniques and use live animals to aid in visual selection. Drs. Jason Cleere and Jason Banta will discuss the following topics: Cattle Breeds and Breeding Programs, Visual Selection, Individual Performance Data, EPDs, and Genetic markers Bull Fertility and Bull to Cow Ratios and Bull care and Management. This program will be held on **April 22, 2016** at 1945 CR 227, Cameron, Texas. Register before April 8th online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu>. Cost is \$60/ person. Register before April 20: \$75/person. (Includes lunch and program materials).

Fayette County Cow/Calf Clinic & Trade Show, **May 6, 2016**

Plan to attend on **Friday, May 6** at the Fayette County Fairgrounds located at 400 West Fairgrounds in La Grange. Snacks, drinks, and a catered BBQ lunch will be provided. Please contact the Fayette County Extension Office at (979) 968-5831 to RSVP by May 2. Topics to include are Pesticide Applicator CEU Requirements Changes, Veterinary Feed Directive, Farm Service Agency Updates, Breeding Programs/Systems-Utilizing, Synchronization Options for Commercial Producers, Livestock Market Update, Texas Beef Council, Feral Hogs and Strategies for Weed Management in Production. **Three CEU Hours** will be offered to Private Applicators, BQA Hours TBD.

Grassfed Beef Conference, **May 26-27, College Station**

Consumer interest in natural, grassfed and organic beef continues to rise. If you'd like to learn more about grassfed beef production and how it's different, mark your calendar for **May 26-27, 2016** to be in College Station for this year's Grassfed Beef Conference. We're excited about the interest among participants and the outstanding lineup of speakers that will come together for this information-sharing opportunity. It's a chance to learn more about beef production... from

pasture to plate. Here's a quick preview of the agenda: □ Overview of the US Beef Industry □ Defining natural, grassfed and organic □ Growing forage – the fundamentals □ Cattle types suited for grassfed beef □ Forage-based nutrition for cattle □ Preventative herd health □ Handling Cattle for Wholesome Beef □ Carcass fabrication, a demonstration □ Consumer and their expectations □ A Taste of Texas Beef □ Marketing a unique product □ Sustainability. For more information, contact: rmachen@ag.tamu.edu, 830-278-9151. To register, go to: agriliferegister.tamu.edu/Beef, or register by phone 979-845-2604. The event and flyer will also be on our website: colorado.agrilife.org



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Youth Range Workshop Accepting Applications

Join participants from across Texas **June 26 – July 1, 2016** at the Texas Tech University Campus in Junction, TX for the nation's longest running natural resources workshop for youth. Children and grandchildren of ranchers are especially suited for this opportunity. At the TSSRM Youth Range Workshop, participants gain useful knowledge and skills in the areas of ecology, inventory practices, management and evaluation of resources. Experts from across the state are recruited to teach the participants in fields ranging from watershed management, to prescribed burning, to soil health, and many areas in between. Additionally, youth are trained in the areas of public speaking, advocacy, and leadership, so that they are armed with the knowledge they need to effectively educate others in the area of rangeland management, regardless of the career path they ultimately choose. The workshop is open to youth who are 14-18 years old, and have completed the 8th grade, but have not graduated from high school. The workshop is \$350, and includes all meals, lodging, and educational materials needed during the week. Participants are encouraged to seek out sponsorships from various sources, including soil and water conservation districts or local ranches, and are then asked to go back after the workshop to present what they learned to those sponsors. Applications can be found at <http://www.texasglc.org/media/1070/youth-range-workshop-app.pdf>. For questions regarding the workshop, please contact: Hoyt Seidensticker – (210) 414-6603, Jenny Pluhar – (806) 679-8729, Paul Loeffler – (432) 386-3101.



FARM Assistance Study Shows Genetically Superior Bulls Increase Ranch Profitability

This study, completed by Extension Agriculture Economists and Livestock Specialists, illustrated the financial implications of genetically superior bull selection and an increased breeding ratio on herd performance and profitability of South Texas ranching operations. Four scenarios were evaluated: 1) 8 genetically average bulls and 200 cows (1 bull to 25 cows, 1:25); 2) 6 genetically average bulls and 200 cows (1:35); 3) 8 genetically **superior** bulls and 200 cows (1:25); and 4) 6 genetically **superior** bulls and 200 cows (1:35). When comparing Scenario 4 (**superior, 1:35**) to Scenario 1 (average, 1:25), net cash farm income increased by 105%, more than double, to \$14,020. Comparing NCFI when using genetically superior bulls but lower breeding ratio (Scenario 3) to using genetically average bulls with a higher breeding ratio (Scenario 2) shows increases of 10.6 and 86.2%, respectively. This indicates that higher valued, genetically superior bulls can be more profitable (Table 2). Scenario 4 has a net increase of \$35.90/cow and \$39.49/calf over Scenario 1. Ending cash reserves increases by \$256.90/cow

Bull selection can have a major impact on herd performance and bottom-line profits. Bulls should be more than cow fresheners, only used to produce an average performing calf crop. Higher prices for better quality genetics will normally be returned from higher returns from calf sales. Through improved genetics, calves from genetically superior bulls will out gain and out-weigh and have higher value per head than calves from genetically average quality bulls. Not only are the calves of higher quality (heavier, perhaps more uniform) and more desirable to the buyer who is willing to pay more, the replacement females from these genetically superior bulls will improve the genetics of the cow herd. If the females are crossbred, besides heterosis for fertility, milk production and growth, they will exhibit greater productive longevity too. If managed properly, these bulls can also be more widely used in the cowherd, breeding more cows than is common practice. While off-farm income, hunting, and other sources of income will continue to help sustain cattle operations, improving the quality of calves can significantly increase direct profits from actual cattle sales.



Actual results will likely vary by producer, bull selection, production region, cattle markets, and marketing efforts. Cow-calf producers should continue to implement best bull selection and other management practices that improve the bottom-line and financial performance of their operation.

Table 2: 10 -Year Average Financial Indicators for a South Texas Representative Ranch, 200 Cows

Scenario		10-Year Average Per Year					Cumulative 10-Yr Cash Flow/Cow (\$1000)
		Total Cash Receipts (\$1000)	Total Cash Costs (\$1000)	Net Cash Farm Income (\$1000)	Net Cash Farm Income/Cow (\$1000)	Net Cash Farm Income/Calf (\$1000)	
1	8 Average Bulls	153.62	146.78	6.84	0.03420	0.03800	2.31895
2	6 Average Bulls	152.91	145.39	7.53	0.03750	0.04183	2.34730
3	8 Superior Bulls	162.63	149.95	12.68	0.06340	0.07044	2.52220
4	6 Superior Bulls	161.92	147.90	14.02	0.07010	0.07789	2.57585

Bottom line: When all other things are equal, paying a little extra for a higher-quality bull can lead to increased profits.

Full copies of the study will be happily provided upon request. 979-732-2082

Grape Production News in the Gulf Coast

An update from Fran Pontash, Extension Viticulture Specialist: For now, it's important to keep in mind that last year was a perfect storm for fungal diseases. The spores of fungal diseases recurring in the Gulf Coast Region – **anthracnose, downy mildew, black rot, phomopsis** – overwinter on the wood. And these spores are dispersed by water droplets early in the growing season. A dormant spray of lime sulfur after final pruning and *before* budswell helps manage **anthracnose** and **phomopsis**. But, Lime sulfur must be applied while dormant because it will damage buds that are not fully dormant.

If you missed the lime sulfur application, then apply Dithane F45 at 1"shoot. Dithane works as a shield to protect the green shoot from **black rot, phomopsis, and downy mildew** spores that are all dispersed by water droplets. When the F45 formulation of Dithane is applied before rain, it helps Dithane adhere to the tissue and continue its protection. However, in a heavy rain of 1" or so, and more, you must reapply it since Dithane F45 washes off in heavy storms.

Dithane use does not develop resistance issues. So, continue to apply Dithane F45 every 7-10 days until fruitset to help manage **black rot, phomopsis, and downy mildew**. Adding Rally to Dithane F45 after a severe rain during years of intense black rot pressure can help manage disease, but we *must be careful* not to over use Rally. Calculate your usage, and limit Rally applications to 3 per year.

The full newsletter is available upon request: 979-732-2082

Wheat Fungicide List Updated, Available

According to Dr. Clark Neely, Extension Small Grains and Oilseed Specialist, both leaf and stripe rust are being seen in fields from the Gulf Coast and Uvalde Areas all the way up through the Rolling Plains. Reports indicate growers are already applying fungicides in some cases and this warrants close attention through the remainder of the growing season. A list of registered fungicides, rates, pre-harvest intervals, and application timings is available by request and on our website: colorado.agrilife.org, 979-732-2082

COOL Law is No More

The Drovers website cattlenetwork.com reported: On March 1st, the USDA fully repealed the law that required Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) for beef and pork products. The battle over COOL between the U.S. and its North American neighbors came to a head in early December after the World Trade Organization ruled Canada and Mexico could impose tariffs worth \$1 billion on U.S.-traded products as retaliation over COOL. Congress went on to repeal COOL in mid-December before these retaliations could take place. The USDA stopped enforcing COOL requirements for beef and pork in mid-December. Now, according to Tuesday's announcement, the final rule has officially eliminated COOL regulations from beef and pork, including muscle cuts, ground beef and ground pork. As the USDA explained in a news release, COOL regulatory requirements for chicken, lamb, goat, farm-raised and wild caught fish and shellfish, perishable agricultural commodities, peanuts, pecans, macadamia nuts and ginseng are still in effect.

Pecan Farmer Wins Water Rights Case

It was a decade in the making but Hondo pecan farmer Glenn Bragg, of the famed Bragg v Edwards Aquifer case was awarded nearly \$2.5 million dollars in missed revenue and interest. At the heart of the case was Bragg's right to the water under his land as a "historic water rights" user. In petitioning the EAA (Edwards Aquifer Authority), the water district that supplies water to cities such as San Antonio, for access to the water under his land, the EAA denied him any access under one petition and limited the other petition to half of what he had asked for. This is the first instance of an individual suing a government entity for damages and winning. The supreme court refused to hear the case and perhaps has set a precedent for years to come as individual water rights come to the forefront of a battle between water hungry public water systems and the land owners that control the rights.



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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316 Spring St.
Columbus, TX 78934
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