

# Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

January 2017

32+ CEUs  
Inside

## Maintaining Optimal Bull Fertility

Breeding season is almost here for most of us and I thought it might be a good time to relate some basic points on maintaining optimal bull fertility.

Bulls need to be fertility tested about 45-60 days prior to turnout. This allows ample time for retesting or replacement. Bulls should be vaccinated for diseases and treated for internal and external parasites at this time. Visit with your local veterinarian for specific recommendations for your area.

If you have purchased or acquired new bulls they should be trichomoniasis tested when they are fertility tested before purchase. Trich is a venereal disease of cattle that is carried by bulls but causes early abortion in cows. It is recommended and required by state law that breeding bulls be tested whenever they change hands. There is a vaccine labeled for use in healthy animals that reduces the effect of the disease on aborting those early pregnancies. Some veterinarians are recommending its use when a fertility test is conducted.



At turnout, bulls should be in a body condition score of 7, with no ribs showing and hips (hooks and pins) rounded. Bulls will lose about 2 condition scores during a 3 month breeding season so they should begin with some fat cover. If bulls lose weight during breeding season supplement or replace them. Thin bulls produce less and a lower quality semen.

The bull to cow or breeding ratio will depend on the age of the bull as well as the pasture conditions. For young bulls, those less than 24 months of age, a good rule of thumb is a cow for every month of age. Older bulls can be turned out with 20-35 or more cows depending on pasture size, pasture conditions, and age of the bulls. Keep in mind that bulls reach their sexual peak at about 4-5 years of age and begin to decline after about 7 years of age. There will be exceptions to this of course.

For more information, contact us or you local large animal veterinarian.

## Corrections and Clarifications

In the most recent Agriculture Newsletter (November 2016), incorrect dates were given for two upcoming programs. Please note the correct dates which are listed below:

**2017 Western Rice Belt Production Conference - Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

El Campo Civic Center, 8:00am-2:30pm, **2.5 TDA CEUs** available

**24th Upper Gulf Coast Grain Handlers Conference - Thursday, January 19, 2017**

El Campo Civic Cntr, 8:00am-3:30pm, **5 TDA CEUs** available, \$25 at the door, \$20 pre-reg.

Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension Service  
Colorado County

Stephen Janak, CEA  
Agriculture/Natural  
Resources

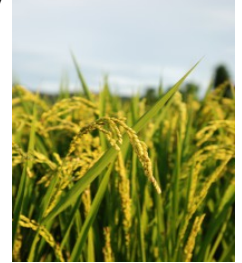
316 Spring Street  
Columbus, TX 78934  
979-732-2082

[colorado.agrilife.org](http://colorado.agrilife.org)

# Upcoming Events & News You Can Use

## 2017 Western Rice Belt Production Conference - [January 18, 2017](#)

The Conference is scheduled for **January 18, 2017** at the El Campo Civic Center. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. Program will be from 8:15 a.m.– 2:30 p.m. **2.5 TDA CEUs** for those with a private pesticide applicators' license will be offered. Topics include Disease Management Update, Laws and Regs, Weed Control, Insect Management, Financial Risk Management, Market Inventory and Outlook, Rice Policy Update, Price Risk Management Tools. For more information call 979-532-3310.



## 24th Annual Upper Gulf Coast Grain Handlers Conference - [January 19, 2017](#)

The Conference will be held on **Thursday, January 19, 2017** at the El Campo Civic Center. Registration will begin at 8:00 am, the program will begin at 8:25 am and should conclude around 3:30 pm. A catered lunch will be provided. **Five CEUs (2 IPM; 1 L&R; 2 General)** will be offered to all TDA pesticide applicators that sign in at the beginning of the meeting and remain through the closing of the program. No structural credits offered.

The cost of the program is \$20.00 per person preregistered by January 13th or \$25.00 per person at the door. To preregister, please contact the Colorado County Extension Office and we will send a form to you. Program Topics: Fumigation Equipment Usage and Safety, Man-lift Safety and Fall Protection Safety, TDA Pesticide Laws and Regulations Update, Fumigation and Protectants for Use with Stored Grain, Insect ID for Stored Grains, and an IPM-based speaker panel on keeping facilities and grain “bug-free.” For more information, call 979-732-2082.

## Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain & Cotton Production Conference - [January 26, 2017](#)

The Conference is scheduled for **January 26, 2017** at the Wharton County Fairgrounds. Registration will begin at 8:30am. The feed grain conference will run from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Topics include Southern Rust, Precision Ag, Grain Economics, and Sugarcane Aphid. Cotton Conference will begin at 1:00 and will end at 3:30 p.m. Topics include Nitrogen Management, Bollworm Outbreak, Weed Management, and Disease Update. A total of **4 TDA CEUs** will be offered and **6 CCA hours**. For more information call 979-732-2082.

## Wharton County 5 CEU Event - [February 2, 2017](#)

The Wharton County Extension Office will be hosting a **5 CEU** event for Private Applicator license holders on **February 2nd, 2017** at the Wharton County Fairgrounds. Registration will begin at 8:30am and the program will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, contact Stacey at 979-532-3310 or go to [wharton.agrilife.org](http://wharton.agrilife.org) and click on events for the flyer and registration form.



## 32nd Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference - [February 2, 2017](#)

The 32nd annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference is a celebration of vegetable production along the upper Gulf Coast region. Counties of Waller, Wharton, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, Colorado, and Austin join with Fort Bend to put on this event focusing on teaching sustainable practices to help producers maximize efficiencies and profitability. We have something for every producer, and as always, we will offer **5 continuing education credits for TDA** license holders.

Register online at [agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend](http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend) or register by phone at 979-845-2604. For general questions, please contact Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034.

## Colorado County Beef and Forage 5 CEU Conference - State Climatologist to Present

The Beef and Forage Committee of Colorado County is hosting an educational seminar on Friday, **February 3rd, 2017** at the Exhibit Hall within the Colorado County Fairgrounds. The program will offer **5 CEU credits** for those producers who possess a private pesticide applicator's license. This year we are most excited to have the Texas State Climatologist, Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, speaking at the event. His presentation will include how to read the weather and forecast for applying pesticides, better understanding your local forecast, and his long-term weather and climate outlook. There will also be a live demonstration of sprayer equipment, spray tips, booms, pressure regulation, pesticide mixing, and more. Other topics include Understanding Pesticide Labels, Being the Voice for Pesticide Stewardship, and a Laws and Regulations Update. Those interested may pre-register by January 30th, 2017 for \$25 per person and \$30 for couples. Registration at the event will be \$30 per person and \$35 for couples. To pre-register or for more information, call the Colorado County Extension Office at 979-732-2082.



Texas State Climatologist,  
Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon

## Farmer Scholarship Available to Attend Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Conference

The 3-day conference will include a day of pre-conference workshops and farm tours, and two days of learning sessions that will cover diverse topics including pest management techniques, marketing and distribution strategies, livestock and crop management, and food policy. The Friday night banquet will feature Mark Kastel of the Cornucopia Institute and a delicious locally-sourced dinner. Hundreds of farmers, farm supporters, and gardening enthusiasts are expected to attend from all over Texas to share ideas, network, build community, and have fun! This 3 day event will be held at the Mesquite Convention Center in Mesquite starting on **January 12th**. For more information and program details go to <http://tofga.org/2017-Conference>.

The Sustainable Food Center, in cooperation with USDA and the Texas Department of Agriculture, will issue up to 18 travel stipends of **\$150** for farmers and ranchers to attend the preconference workshop and full conference. Applications are reviewed as they are received. Additional information and the stipend application can be found at: <https://tiny.cc/FarmtoSchool>



**Texas  
Master Gardener** <sup>SM</sup> 

## Bluebonnet Master Gardeners 2017 Training Class Starting in January

The Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association is offering a training program with weekly classes running from **January 19, 2017 to graduation on April 25, 2017**. Classes will be held on Thursday mornings at the Fayette County Agriculture Building in LaGrange. The Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association spans four counties: Austin, Colorado, Fayette and Washington. Two open houses are scheduled to answer questions and provide more information about the Master Gardener Training Course.

**January 10, 2017.** 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Washington County Fairgrounds Sales Facility, 1305 E Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, TX 77833. 979-277-6212

**January 12, 2017.** 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Fayette County Agriculture Building, 255 Svoboda Lane, LaGrange, TX 78945. 979-968-5831

For more information and to reserve your spot in the 2017 Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association Training Class please contact the Fayette County Extension Office at 979-968-5831. Space is limited and seats will not be reserved without payment so don't delay, call today!

## **Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist Training Course To Begin – January 23, 2017**

The Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists will begin its 2017 certification training course on **January 23, 2017** at the Winedale Heritage Center near Round Top. Classes will be held every Monday evening from 6:00 to 9:00pm through April 24, 2017. Most classes are held at the Winedale Heritage Center near Round Top. In addition to the classroom training, hands-on field trips are held throughout the 5 county areas on four separate Saturdays.

Registration for the course is \$175.00 per person or \$325.00 per couple sharing class materials. You will learn from expert and talented specialists and educators about Texas eco-regions; native fauna and flora identification; preservation and conservation techniques; and natural resources management in our region of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties. Have fun and learn about this diverse and intriguing Central Texas region. Space is LIMITED so be sure to sign up soon! For more information and to view the class schedule please visit our website at <http://txmn.org/glc> or call Jerry Gips (979.378.2938), Cindy Hobbs (979.338.9374), or Karen Woods (218.682.2810) .

## **Various Gulf Coast Grape Growers Events**

### **25th Annual Gulf Coast Grape Growers Field Day @ Cat Spring**

This event will be held on **February 3rd** at the Cat Spring Ag Society Hall, 13035 Hall Road, Cat Spring. Registration is \$35.00 per person which includes lunch and wine social. Registration starts at 8:30am, program ends at 3:30pm. Topics include: Soil, water, and tissue analysis, grapevine viruses, preventing trunk disease, pruning, winery harvesting, harvest chemistry, and enology report. **Three (3) CEUs** will be available to all licensed pesticide applicators. To RSVP contact Fran Pontasch at 979-458-0131 or [fmPontasch@tamu.edu](mailto:fmPontasch@tamu.edu).

Pruning workshops will be held on the following dates:

### **Basic Pruning Blanc Du Bois, Lenoir (spur pruning on Watson trellis)**

**January 13th**, 10:00 am-noon at Austin County Vineyard, Jerry Watson, 13302 FM 1094, Cat Spring, TX 78933

### **Pruning and Young Vine Training Blanc Du Bois, Lenoir (spur pruning on Watson trellis)**

**January 16th**, 1-3pm at the Smith Family Farm & Vineyard. Dr. Leon & Patricia Smith, 1016 County Road 275, Moulton, TX 77975

For more info about any of these events, contact Fran Pontasch: 979-458-0131 or [fmPontasch@tamu.edu](mailto:fmPontasch@tamu.edu)

## **Austin County Small Farms and Vegetable Conference - 24 February 2017**

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Small Farms and Vegetable Conference on **Friday, February 24, 2017**, at Cat Spring Ag Society Hall. Registration will take place from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. with the program to follow.

Topics include: Pecan Tree Management Calendar, Olive Production in Texas, Preserving and Canning for the Homeowner, Raising Bees, and Berry Production in Texas. The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. and last until about 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served and there will also be several snack breaks.

Licensed pesticide applicators are guaranteed **Three (3) CEUs**, with a total of **Five (5) CEUs** pending TDA approval. Cost for the event is \$30.00 per person, which goes to cover speaker materials, meal cost and the handouts. To pre-register for the event, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit [austin.agrilife.org/events/](http://austin.agrilife.org/events/)



## **Colorado Valley Independent Cattlemen's Association Annual Fund Raiser and Trade Show**

The 2017 Annual Fund Raiser Barbecue and Trade Show will be held **Saturday, February 18th, 2017** at the K.C. Hall in La Grange. Trade Show and social hour are 4:00-6:00pm, with a meal served at 6:00pm. An auction will follow the meal. Cash door prizes of \$110, \$75, \$50, and \$25 will be given away. Cost is \$35. For more information: [contact@coloradovalleyica.org](mailto:contact@coloradovalleyica.org) or 979-732-2082.

## **Veterinary Feed Directive is Now in Place; Can Affect Captive Wildlife Breeders Also**

The original VFD took effect on October 1, 2015 regulating three antibiotics used in feed: Avilamycin, Florfenicol, and Tilmicosin. Of those, only Tilmicosin is used as a feed-grade drug in cattle. On January 1, 2017, the list of VFD drugs expanded to include all medically important antibiotics used in feed and water. Cattle drugs affected at that time will include: Neomycin, Tylosin, Virginiamycin, Chlortetracycline, and Oxy-tetracycline. This means that over-the-counter sales of antibiotics for use in feed and water will no longer be allowed and producers will need to work through their veterinarian to obtain a VFD order. In order to do so, you must have a valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). If you are unsure if you have a valid VCPR, contact your local veterinarian.

Products in Feed **NOT** Requiring a VFD: •Amprolium (Corid) •Bacitracin (Albac, BMD) •Bambermycin (Gainpro) •Decoquinatate (Deccox) •Fenbendazole (Safe-Guard) •Laidlomycin (Cattlyst) •Lasalocid (Bovatec) •Melengestrol acetate (MGA) •Methoprene (Altosid) •Monensin (Rumensin) •Morantel (Rumatel) •Poloxalene (Bloat Guard) •Ractopamine (Optaflexx, Actogain) •Tetraclovinphos (Rabon)

## **Worker Protection Standard Regulations Update**

Owners of farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses that use pesticides in agricultural plant production now have access to a new manual that outlines the new regulations and safeguards under the revised 2015 Worker Protection Standard. The new manual, called "How to Comply With the 2015 Revised WPS for Agricultural Pesticides," was recently released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and details the important new rules that impact employers of agricultural workers.

Compliance with most of the new rules will be required by January 2017. However, new training content, centrally displayed information, and application exclusion zone restrictions will not be required until January 2018. Another change for growers is that the family exemption under WPS has been expanded to include in-laws, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and first cousins.

The new compliance manual can be downloaded for free at [pesticideresources.org/index.html](http://pesticideresources.org/index.html)

## **Unwanted Pesticide Disposal Bill has been Pre-Filed (Re-Filed)**

Once again, Representative Phil Stephenson has pre-filed H.B. No. 572 relating to the disposal of pesticides. For several years now, pesticide and pesticide container collections have ceased, and AgriLife Extension Offices around the state have been receiving questions about pesticide disposal. A similar bill was put forward during the last legislative session, but did not make it through. It has been filed again, and would establish a pesticide disposal fund to be used to set up pesticide collection events, although not to exceed \$400,000 each year. The bill puts forward that TDA and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension would organize collection activities statewide. If passed, the Act would take effect on September 1, 2017.



**Texas Corn Town Hall - January 31, 2017**

Texas Corn Producers is hosting a “Town Hall” in Victoria on **January 31, 2017**. This is a regional event open to all producers. This event is **FREE** of charge, **one (1) CEU (General)** will be provided, and a noon meal will also be provided.



This is an excellent opportunity for producers to discuss what they would like to see on the next farm bill, voice any issues with farm bill implementation, crop insurance, or other regulation. Attend to hear where checkoff dollars are going and to express top priorities for checkoff dollars. It will be held at the Victoria County 4-H Activity Center, 259 Bachelor Drive, at the Victoria Regional Airport. RSVP by January 27 at 361-575-4581.

**2017 Crop and Livestock Budgets Now Available**

Each year, Extension economists develop and update budget worksheets for producers to utilize. There are budgets for forage crops, all field crops (irrigated and not), conventional, no-till, organic, and livestock cow-calf operations. They are designed for individual farmers and ranchers to use on their home computer. These budgets are specific to our region of the state and basically give an example of the average producer’s input costs, income, and net income. There are also Excel spreadsheet budgets where producers can utilize the framework of the budget sheets, but input their own numbers for their specific operation. In this way, farmers and ranchers can try inputting different scenarios to find out which will be most profitable. As input costs continue to rise and commodity prices stay low, having a budget in mind will be valuable. There are Extension economists willing to help you with your budget worksheet for free, so don’t let the complexity scare you. Budgets and worksheets can be accessed at: <https://goo.gl/m0wioF> Call for help: 979-732-2082

Below is an example of the cow/calf budget. Also available in Excel for you to enter your own numbers.

*Projections for Planning Purposes Only -- Not to be Used without Updating*  
 2017 Estimated Costs and Returns per Animal Unit  
 Cow-Calf Improved Pasture - 100 Cows  
 Coastal Bend Extension District - 11

REVENUE	Head	Quantity Per Head	Units	\$/Unit	Total	Enterprise Total
Animal Units (AU)	100					
Breeding Females	100					
Steer	0.430	4.80	CWT	\$165.00	\$34,056.00	
Heifer	0.430	4.50	CWT	\$145.00	\$28,057.50	
Cull Cow	0.150	9.00	CWT	\$72.00	\$9,720.00	
Cull Bull	0.010	16.00	CWT	\$100.00	\$1,600.00	
<b>Total Revenue</b>					<b>\$73,433.50</b>	

VARIABLE COSTS	Quantity	Units	\$/Unit	Total	Enterprise Total
<b>Production Costs</b>					
Marketing Expense	1.00	AU	\$11.08	\$11.08	\$1,107.60
<b>Feed</b>					
Salt and Mineral	40	Pound	\$0.59	\$23.60	\$2,360.00
Bermuda Hay	1.5	Roll	\$50.00	\$75.00	\$7,500.00
40% Cottonseed Meal Cubes	1	CWT	\$33.98	\$33.98	\$3,398.00
<b>Vet. Medicine</b>					
Bull Exam	0.04	Head	\$50.00	\$2.00	\$200.00
Fly Control	1	Head	\$3.60	\$3.60	\$360.00
IBR/PI-3/BD/ERSV	2.76	Head	\$2.00	\$5.52	\$552.00
8-Way Clostridials	2.94	Head	\$0.77	\$2.26	\$226.38
Dewormer-Avermectin	1.49	Head	\$4.85	\$7.23	\$722.85
Vibrio	1.04	Head	\$0.75	\$0.78	\$78.00
Implants	0.86	Head	\$1.75	\$1.51	\$150.50
Pregnancy Check	1	Head	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$500.00
Pasturella+8way Clostridials	0.86	Head	\$3.02	\$2.60	\$259.72
Lepto-5	1.04	Head	\$0.75	\$0.78	\$78.00
Dewormer-Albendazole	1.06	Head	\$2.89	\$3.06	\$306.34
Fuel	1.0	AU	\$4.29	\$4.29	\$429.40
Lube (As a % of fuel)	10.0%	Percent	\$4.29	\$0.43	\$42.94
Repairs	1	AU	\$1.86	\$1.86	\$186.03
Labor	0.40	Hours	\$12.00	\$4.80	\$480.00
Interest on Credit Line			5.00%	\$10.56	\$1,055.61
<b>Total Variable Costs</b>				<b>\$199.93</b>	<b>\$19,993.17</b>
<b>Planned Returns Above Variable Costs:</b>				<b>\$534.40</b>	<b>\$53,440.33</b>
<b>Average Calf Breakeven Price to Cover Variable Costs</b>				<b>\$21.69</b>	<b>CWT</b>

FIXED COSTS	Quantity	Units	Total	Enterprise Total
Depreciation - Equipment	1	AU	\$5.97	\$597.47
Depreciation - Livestock	1	AU	\$186.43	\$18,642.86
Equipment Investment	\$22.43	dollars	\$1.57	\$157.02
Management Fee, Owner/Operator	1	AU	\$30.38	\$3,037.50
Pasture Cost	8	Acres	\$20.00	\$160.00
<b>Total Fixed Costs</b>			<b>\$384.35</b>	<b>\$38,434.84</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>			<b>\$584.28</b>	<b>\$58,428.01</b>
<b>Planned Returns to Management, Risk, and Profit:</b>			<b>\$150.05</b>	<b>\$15,005.49</b>
<b>Average Calf Breakeven Price to Cover Total Costs</b>			<b>\$117.80</b>	<b>CWT</b>

Sensitivity Analysis for Example				
Example Wearing Percent	Example Gross Sales per Animal Unit	Example Breakeven Pounds Produced per AU	Calf Pay Weight to Cover Total Cost	Example Average Breakeven Price to Cover Total Cost
92%	\$777.67	579	394	\$110.12
89%	\$756.00	565	410	\$113.83
86%	\$734.34	551	427	\$117.80
83%	\$712.67	537	446	\$122.06
80%	\$691.00	523	467	\$126.83
	Example Male Calf Price			\$165.00
	Example Female Calf Price			\$145.00
	Example Weighted Average Calf Price (\$/cwt)			\$155.32

Developed by Extension Economists, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

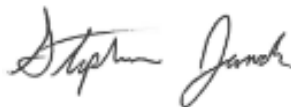
*Information presented is prepared solely as a general guide and not intended to recognize or predict the costs and returns from any one operation. Brand names are mentioned only as examples and imply no endorsement.*

**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](mailto:stephen.janak@ag.tamu.edu).

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Janak

County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County

**[colorado.agrilife.org](http://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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