

Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

APRIL 2018

The Forgotten Goat

By Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Beef Specialist in Corpus Christi

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As I drive up and down the roads of South and Central Texas, I often see a pasture with goats, mostly Boers now. In the late 1980s, when I was still a young extension specialist, C. Wayne Hanselka, extension range specialist (now retired), and I decided to compile as much information about meat goat production as possible from folks in the business at that time.

Other than dairy breeds and Angoras, goats back then were called “Spanish.” The Boers (“Boer” means “farmer” in Afrikaans) – from South Africa via Australia, New Zealand and Canada – were still a few years from being imported into the U.S. Our objectives were twofold: the first to see how goats could be used to enhance and prolong mechanical or chemical brush treatments and the second to see how they could be used as an income and protein source for small landowners.

Neither one of us were “goat experts,” so we set about looking for those who were. We visited several meat goat breeders and producers in south and southwest Texas to talk about production and marketing. We also visited ranchers using goats for brush and weed control. We even visited one rancher who “grazed” 1,000 or so Angora stocker wethers north of Beeville for a fee while getting the benefit of some brush and weed control. The only youth “meat” goat shows at the time were in the counties along the southern Texas border. Hard to believe now.

We collected data on goat carcass composition, both the traditional kid as well as the more mature yearling, and spoke to goat meat processors who were buying anything that looked like a goat for markets in the north-east. We even participated in a project to see if folks would purchase goat meat from a major retailer, and to their surprise, the product was very well received. We developed a meat goat management calendar and even conducted a marketing survey to determine the best goat size to be marketed at various holidays. We held a few meat goat conferences, one at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (it was Texas A&I University at the time) and another in Laredo. We were surprised at the huge number of folks who either were raising meat goats or were interested in raising them. At both conferences we had folks who cooked goat meat using a variety of methods, and we even published a meat goat recipe book.

In the early 1990s, the Boer goats were beginning to arrive in the U.S., primarily as frozen embryos. Speculation drove the prices of these and live goats to exorbitant values. Now, after 25 years, the Boer influence is seen both in the pasture as well as the show ring, and prices of good breeding stock are in line with commercial meat goat production. There is still some Spanish stock around, but there is concern their unique genetics for adaptability to South Texas could be lost. A former classmate, now a researcher involved in collecting and saving genetics of what are called “heritage breeds,” called the other day looking for Spanish goats to collect DNA, eggs and semen to freeze and store in case they become extinct.

Meat goats, either Boer or Spanish or perhaps another breed or cross, are much more prevalent now. Protection from predators, herd health management, and marketing are much better than they once were, and there is the added benefit of weed and brush suppression. Goats make an ideal livestock operation for small and novice landowners.

Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Colorado County

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Upcoming Events & News You Can Use

Colorado/Fayette Pecan Field Day **April 23, 2018**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Colorado & Fayette counties will host a pecan field day on Tuesday, **April 23, 2018** at the Trefny Pecan Orchards, 1045 Trefny Lane, Weimar starting at 9:00 a.m. with registration and conclude at noon. Dr. Larry Stein (Associate Professor and Extension Horticulturist and Mr. Bill Ree (Extension Pecan Entomologist) will be guest speakers. **2 CEU's (1 IPM, 1 General)**, will be offered to private applicators. Bring lawn chairs for seating in the orchard. For more information call 979-732-2082.



Fayette County Cow/Calf Clinic & Trade Show **May 4, 2018**

Mark your calendars for **May 4th** to attend the Fayette County Cow/Calf Clinic & Trade Show to be held at the Fayette County Fairgrounds in La Grange. Topics to include: Texas Beef Council, Herd Health and Breeding Vaccination, Common Sense Pen Design, Forage & Hay Analysis and Mineral Supplementation, Real World Applications: Synchronization in the Commercial Cow Herd.

One (1) General CEU available for licensed pesticide applicators. BQA hours to be determined. Registration is \$20.00 per person and begins at 7:30 a.m. Lunch, refreshments and handouts will be included. RSVP by **May 1st** at 979-968-5831.

Enology Workshop **May 4, 2018**

Have you recently opened your own winery or are you considering going into the winemaking business? Do you know anyone who is thinking about this? Join us on **May 4** at Texas A&M University, College Station for a full-day workshop covering various aspects of interest to new winery owners, from legal and permitting requirements, to equipment selection, winery design, varietal selections, marketing tips and lessons learned.



The workshop will be held in the Horticulture and Forestry Science Building on the TAMU Campus. Cost is \$175 per person or \$275 per couple. Seating is limited. To register please go to:

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/Horticulture>. For more information contact Dr. Andreea Botezatu at abotezatu@tamu.edu to find out about parking for the event and finding the workshop room.

Brush Management Day **May 16, 2018** - Port Lavaca

Calhoun County AgriLife Extension and the Calhoun County Soil and Water Conservation District are hosting a brush management day on May 16, 2018. The program will be held at the Bauer Exhibit Building, 186 Henry Barber Way, in Port Lavaca, TX. **Five (5) CEUs** will be awarded (**1 Laws & Regs, 1 Drift, 1 IPM, 1 General**) to those with a pesticide license who complete the program. Cost is \$30, which includes a catered lunch. Registration is from 7:30am - 8:00am.



Management of invasive bluestems will be discussed at this meeting.

Topics include Laws and Regulations update, Chemical control of difficult brush, mitigating drift, management of invasive species such as KR Bluestem, and sprayer calibration. Please RSVP to the Calhoun County Extension office so they can get an accurate count for lunch: 361-552-9747.

Grass-fed beef conference set for May 31-June 1 at Texas A&M

Producers interested in learning more about grass-fed beef as well as potential marketing opportunities will receive in-depth instruction at a May 31-June 1 conference at Texas A&M University in College Station. We will discuss cattle types best suited for grass-fed beef options as well as sustainable production systems. There will also be information and demonstrations presented on carcass fabrication and determining beef cutout value. Topics to be discussed include: Understanding niche markets: What really constitutes natural, grass-fed and organic beef production; Forage-based nutrition for cattle: The fundamentals of growing forage in Texas; Bridging nutritional gaps in Texas due to deficiencies in forage quality or quantity; Managing pastures for improved cattle performance; Cattle types suited for grass-fed beef; Preventative herd health: Managing the health of cattle targeted for niche markets; Carcass fabrication ... a demonstration; Consumers and their expectations and A Taste of Texas Beef: Marketing a unique product. Registration is \$250 through April 15 and \$275 after. To register online, visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu> and enter keyword "grassfed" or call 979-845-2604.



What does the County Agent read? I read many different publications constantly, but here are just a couple different newsletter that help keep me up to date. You may find them useful as well:

Wild Pig Newsletter

Are you having issues with wild pigs? Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute has released their Spring 2018 Newsletter discussing effects of abatement efforts on wild pig behavior, how wild pigs negatively impact water quality and more. This is a quarterly newsletter available to anyone. Sign up to receive the newsletters directly to your inbox to stay up to date on all things related to feral hogs. Go to his website to view the newsletter and future newsletters <http://ow.ly/FG2r30jr6Hq> or visit feralhogs.tamu.edu.

Texas Row Crops Newsletter

The objective of this newsletter is to provide timely and multi-discipline crop management information to Texas' producers, consultants, and allied industry. The information provided within each issue is provided by crop scientists, soil scientists, pathologists, and entomologists and will be based on the relevant research from across Texas and the nation. Each issue will contain multiple articles from crops across the state, including the cotton, corn, sorghum, wheat, and other row crops. As appropriate, regional management articles will also be included. Read the newsletter and sign up to receive it by email at: agrilife.org/texasrowcrops.

E-Gardens Newsletter

While Neil Sperry's "E-Gardens" newsletter is not technically affiliated with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Mr. Sperry is a Texas A&M graduate, and has been providing science-based gardening solutions for many years. His weekly email newsletter contains timely advice on lawn care, trees, landscape design, care of landscape plants, vegetables, fruit trees, and much more. Also, he has a good reputation for refusing to promote any product that is not proven to work and he never tries to sell you a product. Sign up for the newsletter by visiting: neilsperry.com/e-gardens.

Texas Winegrower Newsletter

Our Extension Viticulture specialists (grape specialists) put together an extremely thorough quarterly newsletter as well. Their newsletter contains detailed information on essentials of vineyard management, as well as suggestions for vineyard practices during that time of year. To receive the newsletter, email your request to Laura Nelson at: l.nelson@tamu.edu

Texas Pecan IPM Newsletter

Extension Pecan Entomologist (insect specialist) Mr. Bill Ree publishes a monthly newsletter during the pecan production season (March-October/November). He includes timely information on Pecan nut casebearer, hickory shuckworm, and any other topic related to pecans and insects. The information is useful both for homeowners and for commercial producers. Sign up to receive the newsletter by emailing Mr. Ree:

w-ree@tamu.edu

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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