

Comanche County Agriculture Newsletter

After what has been a pretty rough year for farmers, ranchers and dairymen in Central Texas. It is time for a better weather report. So, I am going out on a limb and tell you it is just around the corner. Looking at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predictions and talking to the State Climatologist Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, it appears our current dry weather pattern will change as a result of El Nino this Fall. When this fall is the big question. Currently, it looks more likely to begin in the October-November timeframe. According to their predictions it is expected that wetter and cooler than normal conditions will last at least through June of next year. I hate to put lots of weight in predictions, but the science the NWS uses today is very accurate, they did predict the La Nina spell and dry conditions we have suffered through this summer.

There will be challenges presented by a wetter and cooler winter that due to the extremely dry summer, we are not really equipped to deal with this year. A wetter cooler winter means more feed and forage may be needed to meet cattle's energy requirements. Late fall and winter calving herds will have to closely monitor calf health. Muddy lots, hay feeding areas, and roads are more of a nuisance than anything, but still can be challenging. Start making plans now for how you might manage for the these and other potential challenges on your farm or ranch this winter.

The potential for some moisture in coming months is a relief and means that we are at least not going into a multi-year drought. Getting tanks filled-up, aquifers recharged and soil moisture levels back in shape makes the next year look a little brighter, and for sure improves everyone's outlook.

Armyworms and Grasshoppers

When the rains begin, and beautiful green small grains start popping up, our old friend the armyworm will most likely be ready to try and get his share of your bounty. If you remember last year's armyworm infestation on small grains it was the worst most folks had ever seen. Hopefully, we will not get a repeat of that, but it pays to be prepared. One pest we did not have last year that we will have to contend with this year is grasshoppers. Watch the borders of your small grain fields, this is where you will usually see the first grasshopper damage. The grasshoppers will often be in adjacent fields, fence rows or bar ditches and will feed out from those locations. All the products that work on armyworms also work on grasshoppers. However, you need to read your labels, several products that work well on small armyworms will not control large grasshoppers. Also, pay attention to grazing restrictions for some pesticides. Small grains are expensive and could be critical to many producers this year, so be sure to scout closely for these pests.

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Small Grains

If the El Nino participation predictions hold true, this could be the year small grains save our bacon. The only problem is if consistent rainfall does not start until mid-October or even November, it will not help get us any early grazing. While everyone would love to get small grains in the ground early for winter grazing, be leery of planting too early. Not much spells disaster for small grains faster than a ½” rain followed by hot dry conditions. If the predictions hold true a mid-October planting might be advisable this year. It will certainly delay grazing but might help you hit a better moisture timeline. Soil moisture and rain outlook should dictate your planting more than a date on the calendar.

For those of you thinking about planting some small grains, we have some excellent research to help you in making your planting decisions. We have been conducting small grain and ryegrass forage trials in the county for several years. We now have up to 4 years of data on some variety's. With 3 to 4 year of data you can feel confident the variety will preform as indicated by the research. Our research includes all classes of small grains and various ryegrass varieties. With the exception of a couple of varieties all the seed should be available locally.

2018 Comanche, TX County Cool-season Forage Variety Trial

Rank [†]	Variety	Class ¹	Developer	Dry Matter Yield (lb/a)			
				4-Year [‡] Total	3-Year Total	2-Year Total	2018 Total
1	TAM 114	HRWW	TAMU	9404	10151	10920	9843
2	Maton II	Rye	Noble Foundation	8791	9300	9860	8690
3	P-919	Winter Barley	Paramount Seed	8580	9302	9769	8159
4	SY Razor	HRWW	Syngenta	8185	9209	9347	9115
5	Prine	Ryegrass	East Texas Seed	7989	8343	9501	8997
6	Nelson	Ryegrass	TAMU	7507	7439	8763	7344
7	Heavy Grazer II	Oat	East Texas Seed		10691	11985	9933
8	NF201	Triticale	Noble Foundation		10140	10870	8573
9	Harrison	Oat	LSU			10236	7983
10	Oakes	SRWW	Syngenta			10212	10137
11	Haybet/TAM 114	Barley/HRWW	--			10007	9883
12	SY Flint	HRWW	Syngenta				10021
13	Slicktrit	Triticale	Watley Seed				9765
14	TAM 204	HRWW	TAMU				9435
15	Elbon	Rye	Noble Foundation				9315
16	TAMcale 5019	Triticale	TAMU				9282
17	BigMac/Trical 131	Oat/Triticale	--				8954
18	SY Rugged	HRWW	Syngenta				8650
19	Trical 131	Triticale	Northern Seed				7600
20	Bob	Oat	UA				6740
	Mean			8410	9340	10143	8939
	LSD			1002	1285	1555	1460
	CV			15	14	13	10

[†]Varieties ranked according to 2018 total yield.

*Experimental Lines

[‡]4-year average based on 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 yields.

¹Hard Red Winter Wheat (HRWW); Soft Red Winter Wheat (SRWW)

Hay Feeding Management Options

There are no two ways about it, trying to feed your cattle through the rest of the summer, fall and winter is going to be tough and most likely very expensive. Here are a few tips from David Lalman, OSU Extension cattle specialist that might help beef producers cut their hay feeding at least a little. I have included these in the past newsletters but thought the information unfortunately very pertinent once again.

Feed an ionophore. In an OSU study, cows receiving common prairie hay and 2 lbs./day of supplement (30% crude protein) with 200 mg/day of Rumensin® – the only ionophore labeled for use in breeding cows – gained 30 lbs., or about a half of one body condition score (BCS), over 58 days. The cost of feeding the ionophore was 2¢/day. In previous research, Rumensin in cow rations reduced feed intake by about 10% without affecting performance. But be careful as Rumensin is very toxic to horses.

Limit feed hay. Cows need to be in a minimum BCS (body condition score) of 4-5 to limit feed hay. This limit-feeding strategy, which is often used in growing cattle, improves feed efficiency, increases digestibility and decreases waste. Based on previous research, giving cows access to hay for six hours/day – fencing off hay feeders as an example – rather than unlimited access, reduces intake by 20%. If access can't be restricted, Lalman suggests estimating the amount of hay cows require daily and then reducing it by 20%. Across 85-90 days, research indicates that cows limit-fed hay will lose 20-40 lbs., or about half of one BCS. If your cattle still have adequate BCS then it is a viable option, Lalman emphasizes that utilizing the strategy can reduce hay needs by 20%.

Reduce hay waste. Any type of hay feeder is more efficient than using none at all, but the specific type of feeder used makes a huge difference in waste. For instance, an open-bottom bale ring – no sheeting around the bottom – means about 21% of the hay put into it is wasted, according to OSU research. “Losing 21% of prairie hay that costs more than \$150/ton gets expensive”. Compare that to a modified-cone feeder. Waste associated with this design is about 5%. Just adding sheeting to the bottom of an open-bottom bale ring reduces waste from 21% to about 13%.

Most everyone has removed all calves that were 350 lbs. or greater and have culled hard. If you have any hay left, this might be a next step option. Lalman says that by combining two of these three strategies, you can save 30% of your hay cost.

Upcoming Program:

Cotton Turn-Row Meeting

For the first time this year we put in an extensive set of replicated cotton trials. We are planning a turn-row meeting sometime the first two weeks of September to evaluate all the varieties. Despite the dry summer the trials do look very good. It is very interesting to be able to see all the different varieties side-by-side. I will have more information on exact day and time as we get closer to the event, be sure to watch the newspaper for future information.

Insecticides Labeled for Armyworm Control in Pastures and Hayfields

Always read and follow all label instructions on pesticide use and restrictions. Information below is provided for educational purposes only. Read current label before use.

Karate Z. 13.1% lambda cyhalothrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture and rangeland grass, grass grown for hay and silage and grass grown for seed. Pasture and rangeland grass may be used for used for grazing or cut for forage 0 days after application. Do not cut grass to be dried and harvested for hay until 7 days after the last application. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains for forage production.

Lambda-Cy. 11.4% lambda cyhalothrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture and rangeland grass, grass grown for hay and silage and grass grown for seed. Pasture and rangeland grass may be used for used for grazing or cut for forage 0 days after application. Do not cut grass to be dried and harvested for hay until 7 days after the last application. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Mustang Max. 9.6% zeta-cypermethrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Applications may be made up to 0 days for forage and hay, 7 days for straw and seed screenings. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Tombstone Helios. 25% cyfluthrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture, rangeland, grass grown for hay and seed. Zero days to grazing or harvesting hay. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Warrior II. 22.8% lambda cyhalothrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture and rangeland grass, grass grown for hay and silage and grass grown for seed. Pasture and rangeland grass may be used for used for grazing or cut for forage 0 days after application. Do not cut grass to be dried and harvested for hay until 7 days after the last application. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Baythroid XL. 12.07% cyfluthrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture, rangeland, grass grown for hay and seed. Zero days to grazing or harvesting hay. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Dimilin 2L. 22% diflubenzuron. Fall armyworm and immature grasshoppers. Dimilin must be applied before armyworm larvae reach ½ inch or larger. Provides residual control for up to 2-3 weeks, as long as forage is not removed from the field. Label does not list a restriction on grazing. Not labeled for small grains.

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Prevathon. 5% chlorantraniliprole. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Prevathon has a 0 day waiting period for harvest or grazing and is not a restricted use insecticide. It is the most expensive product, but will provide very good residual, may be worth the extra cost this year. Labeled for small grains.

Besiege. 9.26% chlorantraniliprole and 4.63% lambda cyhalothrin. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Pasture and rangeland grass may be used for grazing or cut for forage 0 days after application. Do not cut grass to be dried and harvested for hay until 7 days after the last application. Restricted use insecticide. Labeled for small grains.

Sevin 4F, Sevin XLR, Sevin 80S, Generic Carbaryl. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. When applied to pastures, there is a 14 day waiting period before grazing or harvesting. Labeled for small grains.

Malathion 57% and Malathion ULV. Fall armyworm and grasshoppers. Zero days to harvest or grazing. No small grain label for armyworms.

Intrepid 2F. Fall armyworm (not grasshoppers). Begin applications when first signs of armyworm feedings appear. Use higher rates for heavier infestations. Do not harvest hay within 7 days of application. No pre-harvest interval for forage. 0 days to grazing. Labeled for small grains.

Tracer. Treat when armyworm eggs hatch or when larvae are small. Use higher rates for larger larvae. Do not graze until spray is dry. Do not harvest hay or fodder for 3 days after treatment. Do not allow cattle to graze until spray has dried. Labeled for small grains.

Upcoming Program:

Tri-County Cattle Gathering

This is a new multi-county program we will be offering with Erath and Hamilton counties. The program will be held at the Dublin Sale Barn on Tuesday, October 23rd from 12:00 until 3:00. Topics and speakers include: Dr. Ron Gill Associate Department Head for Extension Animal Science and Dr. Jason Cleere Associate Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist. These fellows will be covering Chute-Side Manners and What are buyers looking for?

Upcoming Programs:

Produce Safety Rule Program

This program is a requirement for larger vegetable producers. It is associated with the “Food Safety Modernization Act” FSMA and will cover food safety rules and requirements. The program will be held at the Comanche Community center on Tuesday, September 11th, 2018 from 8:30 until 5:30. The cost for the program is \$30.00. Lunch will be provided. You must register online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ProduceSafety>, or call 979-845-2604.

Rainwater Harvesting

I am optimistic, it is going to rain again and some of you may be so proud that you will want to harvest some rain. If you have considered rainwater harvesting in the past this will be the class for you to attend. Dr. Woodson Rain Water Harvesting Specialist with Texas A&M will be presenting the program at the Comanche County Museum on Friday, September 27th from 9:00 until 12:00.

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