

Comanche County Agriculture Newsletter

It is hard to believe we are now in the second month of 2019. 2018 was not a stellar year for agriculture producers in the county and area. We had probably the wettest drought year ever, if you can wrap your mind around that. The summer was one of the driest we have had followed by an extremely wet late summer and fall. Armyworms were waiting for something green, as soon as the rains came, so did the armyworms. We have had two record fall armyworm outbreak years in a row. Let us hope next year will not be as bad.

As if Mother Nature did not throw enough curves, the agriculture economy was tough on several of our top commodities. Milk prices have been really rough, with dairy producers operating at below break-even prices for most of the year. Pecan producers have not had it any better this past year. Despite low production in the U.S., pecan prices have been very low, at least the price paid to the producer has been low. With the extremely dry conditions a lot of calves went to the market early and a lot of good cattle were culled to help save grass and lower feeding cost. These factors had a negative effect on prices for both cattle and calves.

I better interject some positive news or risk a revolt. Despite, the havoc all the rainfall created for fall harvest and small grain planting, it has provided some excellent soil moisture going into spring and summer of 2019. This rainfall has also filled tanks, lakes and ground water levels. The soil moisture and irrigation potential for the 2019 growing season is the best it has been in many years. We should see some excellent grazing conditions this spring and early summer. Forage production should be very good for at least the first portion of the growing season. The current forecast is for wetter than average conditions through early July. I realize these forecasts do sometimes miss the mark, however it is much better than a predication of dry weather. They have been pretty accurate this fall and winter, let us hope their predictions are accurate through July this year.

While just the potential of having good moisture to grow a crop and your own feed is at the top of the list for most farmers, there is also the potential for better prices for some crops this year. While the rest of the world sometimes seems a long way off, the price we get on everything we grow is in a large part dependent on the world market. Some of the trade negotiations and outright trade wars have been very hard on the agriculture economy. We can only hope that the long-term affects of these events will be beneficial not only for us, but perhaps our children as we look down the road. If good trade deals are made with China this year, it will have an immediate and positive impact on our local and national ag economy.

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Soil Testing

I really want to encourage folks to get out and pull soil test to get ready for the upcoming season. This is probably one of the most economical viable management tools available. With the potential this growing season holds, you want to be ready to take advantage of the moisture and get good yields from whatever you are growing. The only way to know what your soils need for either high yields or just maintenance is through soil testing.

This is also the time to be applying some nutrients. If you need lime you will want to get it out as soon as possible. Depending on rainfall lime can take several months to breakdown and go to work in the soil. The same can be said for phosphorus. If during last year's drought you skimmed on fertilizer, then grew lots of grass following the late rains, you can bet you will be short on some if not most nutrients.

The only way to find out what your soil really needs is with a soil test. These tests are pretty cheap \$12.00 from the Texas A&M Soils Lab, and even free from many of the fertilizer dealers in the area. Who knows when the water spigot will cut off, being informed will help you get the most from the moisture while it is available.

Forage Sorghums and Haygrazers

With the very short forage supplies in the area, this maybe the year to consider planting some haygrazer or forage sorghum. Many fields that were destined to be planted in small grains, never got planted due to the continued rainfall at planting time. These fields would be prime candidates for these crops. Despite the threat of the Sugar Cane Aphid (SCA), you may want to consider these as a forage crop this year. The sorghum's have always been a low maintenance, drought hardy crop with good value. Before SCA there were very few insect pests to worry about with the crop. We now know a little more about managing for the SCA, this helps to make it a viable crop for the area.

In the last few years there has been a lot of research done on sorghums and the SCA. The result is we now have some identified sorghum and sorghum crosses that are more tolerant to SCA. This offers you a good option if you are considering a summer annual forage crop. Here is a list of sorghum sudan hybrid varieties that have shown resistance to the SCA: Sweeter N Honey II, Sweeter N Honey BMR both from Richardson Seed, Super Sugar DM from Gayland Ward Seeds and Gro-N-Graze by Warner Seed. All Pearl Millet varieties that I have seen, have also shown excellent resistance to the SCA. Your seed salesman may know of other varieties that have been tested and shown resistance.

Remember resistance is not immunity, and the SCA may still be a problem on resistant hybrids, you will still need to monitor your fields and apply an insecticide or take an early harvest if infestations increase to where leaf damage is occurring.

Cotton Production

Cotton Production has become a major crop in the county with over 7000 acres planted this past year. This past year we planted a replicated state cotton trial in the county. The results are very interesting. If you would be interested in the complete 2018 Replicated Agronomic Cotton Evaluation that includes several sets of trials from throughout the state, just come by the office and we can get you a copy.

Table 26. Comanche County RACE Trial, 2018
Cooperator: Rodney Stephens
Michael Berry, County Extension Agent
Dr. Gaylon D. Morgan, Extension Cotton Agronomist
Dale A. Mott, Extension Program Specialist

Variety	Yield (lbs/acre)	Turnout %	Micronaire	Length (inches)	Strength (g/tex)	Uniformity	Loan Value (¢/lbs)	Lint Value (\$/Ac) ¹
DP	212 a	46.8	3.8 d	1.21 a	30.0 a	79. c	53.45 a	113 a
NG	210 a	44.5	4.1 b	1.15 b	29.1 a	80. b	54.00 a	113 a
ST	205 a	43.8	4.1 b	1.15 b	29.1 a	80. b	54.00 a	111 ab
ST	205 a	40.5	4.1 b	1.14 c	28.8 a	80. b	53.63 a	110 ab
CL	193 a	45.3	4.0 b	1.15 b	29.3 a	79. c	53.72 a	103 ab
DP	185 b	46.2	4.1 b	1.15 b	29.1 a	80. b	54.00 a	100 bc
FM	179 c	40.5	4.5 a	1.14 b	29.4 a	79. b	53.72 a	963 c
PHY 330	176 c	41.9	4.1 b	1.16 b	30.3 a	80. a	54.13 a	955 c
DG	148 d	41.7	4.1 b	1.13 d	29.0 a	80. b	53.57 a	797 d
PHY 480	142 d	39.4	3.9 c	1.15 b	30.0 a	81. a	54.17 a	773 d
Mean	1861	43.1	4.07	1.15	29.4	80.3	53.84	1002
P>F	0.0001	--	0.0004	0.0009	0.5663	0.034	0.1008	0.0001
LSD	206.3	--	0.176	0.0217	1.327	0.901	0.4362	111.07
STD DEV	145.70	--	0.13	0.02	0.94	0.64	0.31	78.45
CV%	7.83	--	3.06	1.33	3.19	0.79	0.57	7.83

¹ Lint values were calculated using the 2018 Upland Cotton Loan Valuation Model from Cotton Incorporated.

CL=Croplan, DG= Dyna-Gro, DP=DeltaPine, FM=FiberMax, NG=NexGen, PHY=Phytogen, ST=Stoneville

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Pecan Floor Herbicides

Pecan producers have a pretty daunting task of trying to keep the orchard floors clean without damaging their pecan trees. Producers have to be cautious in product selection to avoid potentially harming or killing their pecan trees. Glyphosate has been the product of choice for many years and it has been an excellent inexpensive tool that gets the job done. Unfortunately, we are now getting weeds that are resistant to glyphosate. In order to help identify some products that might be effective and safe for orchards we put in a set of herbicide trials in 2018. In the trials Rely 280 with the active ingredient Glufosinate was the by far the most effective product we had in the trials. Unfortunately, even the generic versions of Glufosinate cost approximately \$28.00/acre just for the product. We plan to run the trials again this year with different rates and some other products. Below is a chart of the research trial data.

Plot No.	Herbicide and Formulation	Oz/A	Material/Plot	Total Spray Volume	1 MAT %Control 22 May 2018	2 MAT %Control 15 June 2018	4 MAT %Control 24 July 2018
1	RoundUp PoweMax	16	4.37 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-0	MT-0	MT -
					GW-100	GW-95	GW-100
					BL-85	BL-85	BL -
2	Rely 280	56	11.48 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-98	MT-98	MT -
					GW-98	GW-95	GW-98
					BL-98	BL-98	BL -
3	RoundUp PoweMax	16	4.37 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-50	MT-50	MT -
	Pindar GT	48	13.12 Oz		GW-100	GW-100	GW-100
					BL-95	BL-90	BL -
4	Pindar GT	48	13.12 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-55	MT-50	MT -
					GW-75	GW-75	GW-60
					BL-90	BL-90	BL -
5	Simazine 4L	96	26.19 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-10	MT-10	MT -
					GW-50	GW-40	GW-30
					BL-80	BL-80	BL -
6	Venue	4	1.10 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-0	MT-0	MT -
					GW-30	GW-30	GW-30
					BL-20	BL-20	BL -
7	Simazine 4L	96	26.19 Oz	4.40 Gal	MT-0	MT-0	MT -
	RoundUp PoweMax	16	4.37 Oz		GW-100	GW-100	GW-95
					BL-95	BL-90	BL -
							**
	MT= Marestail						
	GW= grassy weeds						
	BL= all other broadleaf weeds						
	**= Shredded; No data on MT & BL						

Upcoming Programs

Corn Preplant Meeting-Thursday, January 31, 10:00-12:00 at Matt Daddy's Meeting Room. 2 CEU's, 1 DOPA. We will have Dr. Ronnie Schnell Texas A&M AgriLife State Extension Corn Specialist talking about nutrient management and general management of your corn crop. We also have Dr. Scott Nolte the State Extension Weed Specialist talking about weed control and resistance management. There is no charge for the program, and we will offer 2 CEU's and 1 DOPA credit. Lunch will be provided for program attendees by our great local sponsors.

Auxin Training- The two-hour 2019 mandated Auxin Training will include the following topics: 1) why do auxin herbicides require additional precautions, 2) label requirements for approved auxin formulations, 3) understanding temperature inversions, 4) spray system hygiene, 5) record keeping, and 6) using dicamba and 2,4-D in a weed management system. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be providing a 2-hour in-person course, approved by TDA, that will fulfill the training requirements for Dicamba and 2,4-D Choline products and will include 2 hours of Laws and Regs. We will be offering the 2-hour Auxin Training locally on Thursday, January 31st from 1:00 until 3:00 following the Corn Program at Matt Daddy's on the Comanche Square. There is a \$10:00 fee for this training.

Private Applicator Training- The Comanche County Texas AgriLife Extension office will be hosting a Private Applicator Training on Friday, February 8th from 8:00 AM until 12:00 PM at the Comanche County Community Center. This training is only for folks that need to get a private applicator license to use restricted use herbicides on their property. You are required to purchase the training manual for \$40.00, and the training will cost \$15.00. Please call the office if you have questions. No CEU's will be offered for this program

Forage Production Program- Thursday, February 21st. The program will also be held at the Comanche Community Center and will run from 10:00 until 2:00. We have a couple of excellent speakers presenting, Dr. James Rogers, Forage and Soil specialist at the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation and James Jackson Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Weed and Range Specialist. We will be offering 3 CEU's at this program and Lunch will be provided by our excellent local ag businesses. If you have questions or would like to preregister for these programs, please call the Comanche County Agents office: 325-356-2539.

American Pecan Council Federal Pecan Marketing Standards Meeting- This meeting is being held by the APC to discuss the new Federal marketing order Standards for pecans. If you grow pecans you will want to come to this one. The meeting will be Wednesday, February 27th 1:00 PM at the DeLeon City Auditorium.

Pecan Scab and Nutrient Management Program- The meeting will be held Friday March 8th, from 10:00 until 2:00 at the Comanche Community Center. We will have Monte Nesbit Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Pecan Specialist covering scab prevention and management, and Dr. Charles Graham from the Noble Foundation covering nutrient management. 2 or 3 CEU's will be offered.

Yard and Landscape Program-The program will be Friday March 29th, 10:00-2:00 at the DeLeon City Hall. We have an excellent line-up of speakers: Dr. Becky Grubs Extension Turfgrass Specialist will be discussing turfgrass management, Extension Horticulturist Kate Whitney will be talking about Texas Superstar and EarthKind landscaping and Texas Forest Service Renee Burks will be talking about yard trees. 2 or 3 CEU's will be offered.

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