

Comanche County Agriculture Newsletter

Soil Testing

Now is an excellent time to pull soil test to get ready for the upcoming season. This is probably one of the most economical viable management tools available. With the good yields reported on most hay meadows last spring and the leeching associated with all the rainfall, we have probably removed more nutrients from our soils than we realize. With the potential for low rainfall this year and the potential shortage of hay and grazing, you will want to be ready to take advantage of what rainfall we do get. 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 only way to find out what your soil really needs is with a soil test. These tests are pretty cheap \$10.00 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 you receive.

Small Grains and Spider Mites

With the dry fall it has been a particularly tough year to get small grains up and going. There is finally some grazing to be had on grain fields, but most dryland fields are not where we would like to see them this time of year. To make matters worse, a pest we seldom see in large enough numbers to be an issue, seems to be having a good year. The Winter Grain Mite has two generations the first arrives as conditions become favorable for the hatching of over-summering eggs. The populations from this hatch reach peak numbers in December and January. The next population will reach maximum numbers in the Spring (March-April) as a result of eggs from the 1st generation hatching. Eggs from the second generation will over-summer and produce next fall's mite pest. Typically, we never see economic damage from this pest, but this year populations are large enough to cause considerable damage and losses of whole fields. (Continued on next page)

Comanche County

Small Grains and Spider Mites

When scouting for the mite look at the leaf sheaths and shoots near the ground. They typically move down the plant during the heat of the day. This mite is dark brown with reddish-orange legs, it also has an anal pore on the upper side of the abdomen. They can be very hard to see; you will have to get down on your hands and knees to find them and a hand lens is helpful. A sure sign you have the mites is if you see patches of grain with a silver-grey sheen, you will want to check areas bordering these spots for infestations. Mite activity is greatest between 40 and 70 degrees, dry conditions are beneficial to the development of large populations and increased plant damage. Frozen ground and cold temperatures and ice seem to have little effect on the mite, heavy rainfall is the only weather-related deterrent. If you find the mite and can see visual damage, then you need to consider treatment. I have not heard of any recent reports of the mite, but since we did have a large fall population, I do expect another hatch sometime in the spring. Perhaps we will have received some good rainfall by that time which is an excellent natural deterrent for the mite. It will pay to keep an eye out and scout your fields periodically the rest of the growing season.

Upcoming Programs

Industrial Hemp Program, Nothing but the Facts

Texas producers and those interested in industrial hemp production can attend a “First Things” meeting to learn about potential opportunities and pitfalls of regional hemp production. The program will be conducted at the DeLeon City Auditorium, 125 South Texas St. DeLeon, TX 76444, Wednesday, January 15th. Registration will begin at 9:00 AM, the program commences at 9:30 AM, and will conclude at 2:30 PM. Topics will include opportunities in hemp fiber, grain, and CBD; planting seed quality; preliminary agronomic considerations; economic considerations and risks, and question and answer sessions. Speakers will include Dr. Calvin Trostle, AgriLife Extension agronomist, Lubbock; Dan Hunter, Texas Department of Agriculture, Jason Johnson, AgriLife Extension Economist. Trostle notes that Texas licenses should become available by early spring. Texas A&M AgriLife is working to understand the proposed Texas Dept. of Agriculture rules for hemp in Texas. (Continued on next page)

Industrial Hemp Program, Nothing but the Facts

“An overarching concern for would-be Texas growers, especially if you are interested the CBD oil aspect of hemp—that’s where the hype is at, is the confluence of greatly increased acreage, greatly decreased price, and the uncertainties of a first-time crop in Texas that none of us have grown. The economics of even 2019 hemp production in nearby states may be out the window for 2020.” The meal is covered by our great local sponsors; I am required to charge for speakers travel and cost recovery on this program. The on-site registration fee is \$20.00. Pre-registration is requested at the Comanche County Agents office at 325-356-2539. For Texas A&M AgriLife hemp resources visit <http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/hemp>.

Comanche County CEU Program

The Comanche County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be hosting a 3-hour morning CEU program and a 2-hour afternoon CEU program on Friday, February 7th at the DeLeon City Auditorium located at 125 South Texas St., DeLeon, Texas. The cost is \$25.00 per session. Registration for the morning program will begin at 8:30 and the program will begin at 9:00 AM and run until 12:00 PM. The morning program will offer 1 law and regulation, 1 drift and 1 general CEU for a total of 3 CEU’s. For those needing the Auxin Training it will be available in the morning session. Speakers in the morning session will include Scott Nolte Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Weed Specialist- “Auxin Training” and “Pesticides from the Ground Up” and James Jackson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Weed and Brush Specialist- “Application Technologies”. Registration for the afternoon session will begin at 12:45 and the program will start at 1:00 and finish-up at 3:00. The afternoon session will offer 1-hour IPM and 1-hour drift for a total of 2 CEU’s. Speakers and topics will include Thomas Isakeit, Texas A&M Professor Plant Pathology- “Treatments and Management of Cotton Root Rot and other Cotton and Peanut Diseases” and Jason Jones, Texas Department of Agriculture- “Drift Management”.

By attending both sessions commercial applicators will be able to fulfill their CEU requirements for the year. Applicators will also be able to complete the Auxin Training required when spraying dicamba products on cotton at this training. Preregistration is requested by calling the Comanche County Agents office at 325-356-2539.

Spring Pecan Production Program

To help support the nearly \$13M production of pecan sales in the County, the Comanche County Agents office and Comanche County Pecan Committee will be hosting the Early Season Pecan Program on Friday, March 6 at 10:00 AM at the Comanche Community Center. We will have some excellent speakers and presentations planned. Current speakers scheduled include Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M Pecan Specialist, and Charlie Graham, Noble Foundation Pecan Specialist. Stay tuned for more information on this event.

Agriculture Program Supporters

As we begin the New Year and new decade it is important to recognize the many sponsors, cooperators, committee members and supporters that help to plan and support agriculture programming and research in the county. We are all lucky to live and work in such a strong and diverse agriculture county. There are several agriculture committees that help provide direction for trainings and research in the county. These committees include Field Crops, Pecan, Dairy, Livestock and Range and Women in Agriculture. Thanks to all the folks that serve on these committees. We have a very extensive set of research and result demonstration projects in the county that would not be possible without some great cooperators. These cooperators not only have to deal with small plots in the middle of their fields, they usually help in planting, fertilizing and harvesting these plots. Here are the cooperators that helped with these research projects in 2019: Indian Creek Farms, Wildcat Dairy, Sorrells Farms, Bingham Farm, Grissom Farm. There is also local ag business that contribute seed, fertilizer, chemical and other products that make these research projects possible, they include: Ferti-Tex Ag Services, Farley Farm Supply, Sure Grow Ag Products, WWC Enterprises.

Finally, we have the sponsors that help pay for educational programs, meals and venues. It cost several thousand dollars a year to do the agriculture programming and research that is done in the county, this would not be possible without the following sponsors: American Plant Food, Ag Texas, AgriTech Crop insurance, Central Texas Farm Credit, Comanche Electric Cooperative, Circle K irrigation, Durham Pecan, Farley Farm Supply, Ferti-Tex Ag Services, Gore Brothers Agri Services, Heartland Crop Insurance, PPI/SNT, Sorrells Farms Retail, Spirit of Texas Bank, Womack Nursery and WWC Enterprises. Please be sure to thank and support these great local agriculture businesses and supporters.

2019 Cotton Trials

Table 24. Comanche County RACE Trial, 2019
Cooperator: Rodney Stephens
Michael Berry, County Extension Agent
Dale A. Mott - Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, College Station

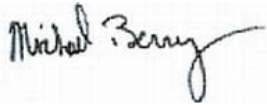
Variety	Yield	Turnout %		Micronaire		Length		Strength		Uniformity		Loan Value (¢/lbs)	Lint Value (\$/Ac) ¹		
	(lbs/acre)					(inches)		(g/tex)							
PHY 400 W3FE	2017	a	45.6	a	4.28	b	1.21	c	34.5	a	84.0	bc	54.40	1097	a
DG 3421 B3XF	1946	ab	42.7	bc	4.31	b	1.25	ab	31.9	cd	85.0	a	54.38	1058	ab
DP 1646 B2XF	1880	abc	45.8	a	4.31	b	1.25	ab	30.7	d	83.6	cd	54.17	1018	bc
NG 4936 B3XF	1830	bcd	44.9	a	4.40	b	1.17	e	32.6	c	83.2	d	54.13	991	bcd
ST 5471GLTP	1789	cde	41.6	c	4.35	b	1.18	de	33.3	abc	83.2	d	54.30	971	cde
NG 5711 B3XF	1781	cde	43.0	bc	4.39	b	1.23	bc	32.6	c	83.8	bc	54.28	967	cde
ST 4848GLT	1753	cde	44.9	a	4.57	ab	1.16	e	32.9	bc	84.2	ab	54.15	949	cde
PHY 480 W3FE	1737	de	43.3	b	3.93	c	1.21	c	33.4	abc	85.1	a	54.45	946	de
DP 1948 B3XF	1739	de	43.3	b	3.93	c	1.27	a	33.1	abc	84.0	bc	54.35	945	de
FM 2398 GLTP	1687	e	45.3	a	4.85	a	1.20	cd	34.2	ab	84.6	ab	53.55	902	e
Mean	1816		44.0		4.33		1.21		32.9		84.1		54.22		984
P>F	0.0139		0.0011		0.0064		0.0001		0.0212		0.0218		0.373		0.0062
LSD (P=.10)	138.45		1.511		0.3349		0.0291		1.525		0.929		0.5887		72.01
STD DEV	97.78		1.07		0.24		0.02		1.08		0.66		0.42		50.86
CV%	5.38		2.42		5.46		1.69		3.27		0.78		0.77		5.17

¹Lint values were calculated using the 2019 Upland Cotton Loan Valuation Model from Cotton Incorporated.
DG=Dyna-Gro, DP=Delatine, FM=FiberMax, NG=NexGen, PHY=Phytogen, ST=Stoneville.

We should have our peanut trial data soon. We will make it available as soon as it is compiled.

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

Here we are starting a new decade, 2020 has the potential to be a good year for agriculture. New trade agreements with several other countries look very promising for agriculture. It has been a rough period for ag while getting the deals done, but we have to hope the agreements will be better in the long run for U.S. farmers. A couple of local grown commodities that should benefit immediately once these deals are done is milk and pecans. With the growing need for protein and issues like the swine fever in China, beef is another area that should see strong prices once all the deals are done. Most all commodities grown in the county will benefit from increased and hopefully more equitable trade agreements. Never be fooled, Comanche Counties economy is almost totally dependent on agriculture. Any improvement in prices for these commodities is also great for the county's economy. On the downside (luckily) we cannot make deals for productive weather conditions. Unlike last year's accurate predictions this year's long range forecast really holds no solid answers. The current predictions are for warmer temperatures and an equal chance of wet or dry moisture conditions. My old dad always told me to plan on dry conditions and hope for wet conditions. That seems to be a good plan for the coming year.



Michael Berry

Comanche County-CEA-Ag

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