

Comanche County Agriculture Newsletter

This newsletter is going to mostly focus on small grain production, but weather is once again the top story. As I was about to finish-up this newsletter we went from severe drought to an over abundance of rainfall in one night. As you can imagine, going from dire dry conditions to abundant soil moisture changes everything including my outlook. We now have adequate soil moisture to get small grains up and growing, tanks should be full, we will go into the fall with some good grazing and most will be able to get another cutting of hay. None of these things looked possible a few days ago. We should all give thanks for this blessing.

Now for the science of how the drought was broken. If you are like me, you have been watching the long-range forecast and it was not a pretty picture, abnormally dry and warm for the foreseeable future under the La Nina weather pattern. Then we get over 6" of rain, where did the moisture even come from to make all this rain? I made a call to the National Weather Service (NWS) to get some explanations. As you know the wildcard in making long-term predictions for Texas is the Gulf of Mexico. However, there are no current tropical systems affecting Texas, right? As it turns out, according to the climatologist with the NWS, had it not been for both Marco and Laura there would not have been enough moisture in the atmosphere to produce the rainfall we experienced. When those two systems moved through, they pumped moisture into the atmosphere over most of Texas, including Central Texas. Then, we had the upper level low that released that moisture. He said if we would not have had both Marco and Laura and then the upper level low, we would still be under severe drought conditions.

The predications for a dry-warm La Nina weather pattern still hold true for all of us, but with the wildcard being the Gulf of Mexico. La Nina does bring us drier and warmer conditions, but also an increased chance of tropical storms and moisture as we have seen. We have had an amazing recovery and will be going into the fall and winter in much better shape. Do not let your guard down, we will still have mostly dry and warm weather this fall and winter, but perhaps with the very active Gulf we will continue catch some tropical moisture along.

Small Grain Production

The summer was not good for forage production, many (if not most), producers had to start supplementing beef herds as early as August. As a result, there will be a lot of acres put into small grains to provide high quality grazing and help make up for lost forage. Where the soil was not too hard, many have already prepared and a few have planted their fields for small grains. After this good rain, folks will be going non-stop preparing and planting fields. Behind hay production, small grain forage production is the largest crop we grow in the county. It is vital to the diverse and intensive live-stock production economy in the county. For several years we have worked on re-search trials to see which varieties perform best in the county. As a result, we have several years of data with multiple species and varieties. I would encourage you to discuss the proven varieties with your local seedsman. Please see the included chart for 2019 data.

A week or two ago, I was not very optimistic about small grains on dryland this year, things do of course look much better now. Small grains are not cheap to plant, your first consideration needs to be cost and value of planting acreage into small grains. According to Texas A&M Agriculture Economist, the cost per acre to grow small grains for grazing in 2020 is \$182.94, this includes all variable and fixed cost. I realize many of you can get your seed in the ground a little cheaper than that, but if you are honest with yourself and put a figure on all cost you will find you are going to be close to this number. However, if you own the equipment and have the location to plant you certainly need to utilize these assets. Keep in mind an additional spray for armyworms or the need to replant a portion of your field will add considerably to the \$182.94 figure.

At this cost per acre, if you are grazing calves you will need to put 315 lbs. of gain/acre and this gain needs to be worth \$.58/ lb. to breakeven. To make a profit, you either need to put on more than 315 pounds per acre or get more than .58 cents for each pound of gain. Anything below these numbers and you are going in the hole. Utilizing small grains for winter grazing is actually very economical, where else can you get 315lbs. or more of gain for \$189.94, but you need to be aware of your cost and the risk involved. I often share this cost per acre figure in my fall newsletter and most folks are surprised at the actual cost.



 TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
 RESEARCH | EXTENSION

2019 Comanche, TX County Cool-season Forage Variety Trial

Rank [†]	Variety	Species ¹	Source	Dry Matter Yield (lb/a)			
				4-Year [‡] Total	3-Year Total	2-Year Total	2019 Total
1	NF201	Triticale	Noble Foundation	8291	8161	7994	7413
2	TAM 114	HRWW	TAMU	8154	8223	9200	8558
3	Maton II	Rye	Noble Foundation	7762	7622	8265	7839
4	SY Razor**	HRWW	Syngenta	7199	6844	8352	7589
5	Prine	Ryegrass	East Texas Seed	6394	6630	6971	5620
6	Nelson	Ryegrass	TAMU	6098	6534	6943	6540
7	Oakes	SRWW	Syngenta		7631	8701	7266
8	Haybet & TAM 114	Barley/HRWW	--		7425	8334	6784
9	Harrison	Oat	LSU		7323	7504	7024
10	Slicktrit**	Triticale	Watley Seed			9032	8299
11	Elbon	Rye	Noble Foundation			8326	7338
12	Heavy Grazer II	Oat	East Texas Seed			8208	6484
13	SY Rugged	HRWW	Syngenta			8087	7524
14	TAM 204**	HRWW	Watley Seed			7973	6512
15	SY Flint	HRWW	Syngenta			7452	5739
16	Bob	Oat	Producers Coop			6848	6920
17	Big Mac & Razor	Oat/HRWW	--				7333
18	TAMO 606	Oat	TAMU				7164
19	Wintergrazer	Rye	--				6894
20	Marshall	Ryegrass	--				5383
	LSD (0.05)			1062	1103	1331	1283
	CV(%)			15	14	10	11
	Mean			7333	7386	8042	7011

**Awnless/Beardless

[†]Varieties ranked according to 4-year, 3-year, 2-year, then 2019 total yield.

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

[‡]4-year average based on 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 yields.

We will be removing a few of these varieties and adding some new ones this year. When you have 3 to 4 years of data you can feel safe using it. Do keep in mind these plots were planted under a pivot and were on a good nutrient management program.

USDA Feral Hog Program

As part of the most recent Agriculture Improvement Act (or Farm Bill) passed by the 115th Congress of the United States of America, USDA was tasked with a pilot project to test the feasibility and efficacy of an effort to eradicate and control damage from feral swine. Congress recognized the problem of feral swine and wanted to find a cost-effective way to help. The question is if the use of significant federal funds can actually eradicate feral swine, or if reducing feral swine below a certain threshold will save agriculture producers enough to make damages negligible. Ultimately, Congress will want to see enough of a return-on-investment to justify the spending of taxpayer funds. Comanche, Eastland, and Erath are the selected counties for the Upper Leon River area of the pilot project. Congress will use information from this area, and others to determine if they should invest in the future in control of feral swine. We all know the problems associated with feral swine, and we have a chance to show Congress the value of control. It is critical that we all help the project however we can. This project is completely voluntary, no cost to landowners or the county, and has several parts in which landowners can participate. We hope folks will participate in as many ways as they can.

Removal of Feral Swine

USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services directly controls feral swine by using a combination of trapping, shooting, and aerial shooting. They will work with landowners to sign up to allow access to their staff to control feral swine. The goal is to remove as many feral swine on as many properties as possible. This service costs the landowner nothing, and ultimately, you are in control of your property. Our technicians are Thomas O'Donnell at cell: 254-842-4259 or Brianna Graham at cell: 830-326-1429, please give them a call or feel free to give us a call at the office if you have questions

Damage Assessment

The lynch pin of ensuring support for feral swine control in the future is to show the massive extent of damages to our county from feral swine, as well as the benefit of the control we receive. Miss Hallie Halstead from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is the damage assessor working in our area. She works with producers to determine the extent and nature of the damages from feral swine in agriculture, land, livestock, and natural resources. She wants to speak to every landowner, regardless of if they work with Wildlife Services or not or have any problems with feral swine.

Damage Assessment (Continued)

Allowing her to visit with you will give Congress a better idea of the extent of damages from feral swine that we experience in Texas. We encourage you to call Hallie at your convenience at (682) 498- 3720.

Trap-Loan Program

Under the direction of Wildlife Services staff, there will be remote-triggered traps available for loan to landowners and agricultural producers in the project areas. This will be a great opportunity to use expensive traps that may be outside the limits of your current budget, or you simply wanted to try before deciding to buy. Staff will assist in setting up traps, teaching clientele how to use them, and providing any other technical assistance necessary. This is a chance to try out this equipment and learn the best ways to use it from boot-on-the-ground experts.

Please feel free to call the office, if you have any questions about the feral hog program.

New Annual Grass Herbicide

I am very excited about the release of the new herbicide Rezlion by Bayer. It is going to be a great product to use on both summer and winter annual grasses, like grass burs and ryegrass. We have also been getting lots of Japanese Brome and 30-day fescue in hay meadows in the spring. I have seen these two really delay Bermuda growth in some fields. To use this product on the winter annuals like ryegrass, Japanese Brome and 30-day fescue you will need to treat in early October before they have an opportunity to germinate. For summer annual grassy weeds like grass burs and crabgrass you will need to apply in February. The half-life is an incredible 150 days, this means one treatment in February should last you throughout the growing season. I have seen this product in trials on grassburs and it has worked very well. I am not sure what the cost are going to be, but it will probably be pretty expensive initially. However, if you are doing everything else right and still have grassbur issues, it will be worth the money. Remember it only works on annual grasses, so not going to do anything for Dallisgrass or other problem perennial grasses.

Upcoming Programs (I hope)

The COVID-19 virus has made it hard to plan and have programs. I am hoping to try to get back to a somewhat more normal schedule in the next couple of months. As a safety precaution, some programs are being offered virtually rather than in-person.

Cotton and Peanut Field Day

We will be hosting an in-person field day to view state cotton and peanut trials and talk with some excellent specialist and producers about varieties, growing conditions and challenges, disease and insect issues, and a plethora of other topics that would be of interest to all ag producers.

The field day will be held on Thursday, September 17th, beginning at 10:00 AM and running to approximately 2:00 PM. We will begin in the field at the cotton research trials location located off 1476. From intersection of 36 and 1476 (Union Cemetery) you will go 2 miles, pivot with cotton trials are on the west (right) side of the road. Watch for sign at entrance. From there we will travel to the peanut trials. There will be 2 CEU's: 1 IPM and 1 general offered at the field day and lunch will be sponsored by our great local sponsors.

In order to properly plan for the meal (due to COVID we are not allowed to have buffet type meal), we must have RSVP for anyone wanting to attend the event. Please call the office at: 325-356-2539 or send Mrs. Cindy a quick email: cindy.duran@ag.tamu.edu if you plan to attend. All CDC and County COVID-19 requirements will be followed.

Tri-County Cattle Gathering

We are still working out the details, but as much as I hate it, it looks like this year's clinic will be held virtually. I guess it will not really be a gathering. We have some really good topics planned that include Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, Texas State Climatologist, Dr. Jason Johnson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Economist, and Dr. Jason Smith, Texas A&M Beef Cattle Specialist.

The clinic is set for Tuesday, October 20th from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Please watch for more information and details on how to attend the program.

Silage Program

We are planning a silage program for Thursday, December 3rd this will be an in-person program with a live feed for those that are not comfortable attending in person. We are looking at several topics covering harvesting, processing and storage to improve quality.

District 8 Farm & Ranch CEU Program

We are still a good way out, but if you are needing some CEU's mark December 10th on your calendar. We will be hosting our annual Farm and Ranch CEU Program on Thursday, December 10th. The program always offers 7 or 8 CEU's. We are still trying to figure out the best format to get this program out to everyone, so once again please watch for updates.



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

We are back open but still appreciate a phone call or email to set appointments.

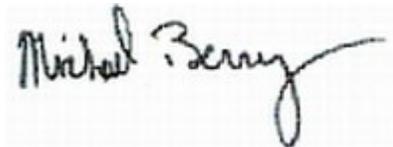
Please call the office at 325-356-2539.

Emails:

Michael Berry—County Extension Agent: mwberry@ag.tamu.edu

Amanda DeAx—4H Program Assistant: amanda.deax@ag.tamu.edu

Cindy Duran—Office Manager— cindy.duran@ag.tamu.edu



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System
101 W Central, Suite B-101
Comanche, TX 76442-3264

Nonprofit—Postage Paid
Permit #170
Comanche, TX 76442

«First Name»«Last Name»

«Company Name»«Address Line 1»

«City», «State» «ZIP Code»