

Comanche County Agriculture Newsletter

Another growing season is just around the corner, it will only be about a month until corn starts going into the ground and other crops will be following closely behind. After a tumultuous 2020 and a rocky start to 2021, everyone needs a good growing season to look forward to and the increase in faith, hope and anticipation that comes from a new crop year.

We are planning to start more in-person programming and trying to get back to more normal operations. We have many programs scheduled and hope to get committee meetings back on track starting late March and April. The office is open with occasional quarantine restrictions, please feel free to come by or give us a call.

I know most folks are tired of online meetings, as mentioned, we plan to be getting back to in-person meetings soon. To help keep folks somewhat up to date on research, we have been posting videos on our website of various research efforts, <https://comanche.agrilife.org/>. We also have tab on the site that includes a good bit of our research trial and demonstration data.

Soil Testing, Now is the Time

Knowing what your soil needs, can not only save you money, but it also allows you to improve the health and vigor of your grass stand more effectively and efficiently. All disease issues I see in bermudagrass are a result of nutrient stress issues. I do understand that the fertilizer budget can be limited, if you cannot fertilize for maximum production, with a soil test you have the option of putting out lower amounts of the nutrients that are more representative of what your soil needs. This approach will not get you maximum production, but it will help to maintain plant health and survivability much better than just putting out 100 lbs. of nitrogen. If it is maximum production you want, then you will need a soil test to indicate exactly what combination and amounts of nutrients your soil will require to meet those maximum production goals.

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. If during last year's drought you skimped 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 cheap \$12.00 from the Texas A&M Soils Lab, and even free from many of the local fertilizer dealers in the area. Who knows when the water spigot will cut off? Knowing your soils needs will help you get the most from the moisture while it is available. If you would like the A&M soil test form, please come by, or give us a call we will be happy to send it to you.

New and Improved Grass Bur and Annual Grassy Weed Treatment Options

At last, I have some good news to share on a new grass bur treatment product for bermudagrass meadows “Rezilon”. I do not like to push products, but we used this one in grassbur trials here in the county and throughout the area and it worked very well. It will also work well if you need to get winter annual grasses like ryegrass and Japanese Brome under control in your hay meadows, but it would have to be applied in the fall to be effective on these annual grasses.

Here is some good discussion from the Alabama Extension Service about rates and application.

Labeled rates should not exceed 5 fluid ounces per acre in a single application and should not exceed 6 fluid ounces per acre in a 12-month period. There is a limit of two applications of Rezilon in a 12-month period. For hay production, there is a 40-day restriction for any single application that exceeds 3 fluid ounces per acre. However, there are no grazing restrictions with Rezilon.

Because this is a preemergence herbicide, rainfall is necessary in order for the chemical to reach the soil surface and provide control of germinating seedlings. Applications of Rezilon should be made several weeks ahead of anticipated weed seed germination. In general, for control of cool season annual weeds, such as volunteer annual ryegrass, it is best to make an application in early September (Labor Day) if possible. For warm season weeds, such as grassburs, crabgrass, and goosegrass applications in February (Valentine’s Day) would be an appropriate timing for producers.

Compared to other preemergence herbicides, such as Prowl H2O, Rezilon persists longer on the soil surface without degradation, which gives growers more application flexibility. Therefore, it is better to apply a month too early than a day too late. When warm season forages are dormant, a tank mixture of Rezilon and a non-selective herbicide like Roundup (glyphosate) may be applied to control existing unwanted weeds. Keep in mind that weed species pressure and environmental conditions will vary.

Like any new product initially, it is not going to be cheap, I am hearing prices in the \$30.00/acre range. This sounds quite expensive, but if are trying to produce quality hay and have been unable to get grass burs under control, it will be worth the money. I do recommend you make sure your soil nutrients are where they need to be, this will help to keep the grassy weeds out once the herbicide has done its job.

The Dreaded Water Gap

Water gaps are typically the most difficult to manage fencing issue. Each site is different; some will wash out every time you get a big rain and others will not. I have yet to see the ideal water gap, but here are a few ideas I have seen over the years. "Breakaway" fencing is often the best option for areas with high-water flows. For larger creeks or small rivers, use a single strand of electric poly wire fencing that easily breaks when water levels swell. The poly wire is attached to fence posts on the creek banks with bungee straps for easy release. Replacing a single poly wire is a fast and easy repair. Plus, a temporary water gap is usually the most economical and practical solution for high-volume waterways.

Here is some additional information I got from the Natural Resource Conservation Service on home-made electric breakaway water gaps.

One way to fence a water gap is with a strand of electric wire strung across a creek and attached to posts on top of the creek bank. From the single wire, attach a second wire with hanging poly strands tied to ½" nuts to help the strands hang straight. Place strands 12" to 18" above the normal water flow. Attach a floodgate controller to the secondary electric wire so that as the water rises and touches the poly strands, the circuit for that section of fence will shut off when it starts drawing too much electricity. After the water recedes, the controller will turn the current back on.

Another option is breakaway gates that open in high water. From a corner post on one side of the creek, a gate made of fencing or other material is attached by lightweight wire to the opposite corner post. During high water, the gate swings open. The gate remains intact, can be pulled from the sand and debris when water recedes and then reattached.

If the poly wire and charger or breakaway gate is not really an option, I would suggest using sheet metal. It is solid and does not catch and hold debris. For medium-sized creeks, hang a cable from posts on both sides of the creek. About a foot below the cable, hang pieces of tin with baling wire. This is not a fancy set-up but does work well on smaller gaps and can be ready made from scraps on the farm. If it does get washed out, you have not lost much.

None of these ideas are permanent and require you to check and replace gaps after heavy rainfall events. They are however cost effective as most gaps are going to eventually washout despite how much you spend to build them. If you have a good water gap design please share it with me, we are all still looking for the perfect water gap.

Comanche County

Cotton Production

Cotton Production has become a steady crop in the county with approximately 2500 acres planted this past year. Our local producers top the scales on quality and yield. For several years we have planted replicated state cotton trial in the county. The results are very interesting. If you would be interested in the complete 2020 Replicated Agronomic Cotton Evaluation that includes results from across the state, just come by the office and we can get you a copy. We really appreciate Indian Creek Farms and the Stephens Family for supporting this research trial.

Table 24. Comanche County RACE Trial, 2020^{1,2}
 Cooperator: Rodney Stephens
 Michael Berry, County Extension Agent
 Dale A. Mott, Ben McKnight - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, College Station

Variety	Yield (lbs/acre)	Turnout %	Micronaire	Length (inches)	Strength (g/tex)	Uniformity	Loan Value (¢/lbs)	Lint Value (\$/Ac) ²
DP 2020 B3XF	2421	41.7	3.90	1.23	29.7	83.3	53.92	1306
NG 4936 B3XF	2232	41.3	4.00	1.24	29.5	83.3	53.92	1203
NG 4098 B3XF	2120	39.7	3.80	1.27	32.7	82.9	54.25	1150
DP 1646 B2XF	2074	43.5	3.90	1.28	30.0	83.1	54.00	1120
PHY 480 W3FE ²	2172	43.0	3.53	1.22	32.7	83.0	50.55	1104
ST 4990 B3XF	2005	40.5	4.03	1.22	30.6	83.6	54.10	1085
ST 4550 GLTP	1954	44.8	4.27	1.17	31.0	83.0	54.03	1056
ST 5707 B2XF	1928	38.4	4.23	1.24	33.4	83.8	54.33	1048
DG 3615 B3XF	1902	44.1	4.30	1.17	30.7	82.2	54.05	1028
PHY 400 WRF ²	1820	39.7	3.53	1.21	31.5	84.1	52.60	959
Mean	2063	41.7	3.95	1.22	31.2	83.2	53.58	1106
P>F	0.0004	0.0001	0.0128	0.0001	0.0064	0.2659	0.0575	0.0049
LSD (P=.10)	174.4	1.554	0.367	0.0284	1.688	NS	1.8613	117.11
STD DEV	123.18	1.097	0.259	0.0201	1.192	0.808	1.3146	82.72
CV%	5.97	2.63	6.56	1.64	3.82	0.97	2.45	7.48

¹ Indicates the location was irrigated

² Did suffer some early season Dicamba herbicide injury on the Enlist varieties which most likely had a negative effect on yield.

³ Lint values were calculated using the 2020 Upland Cotton Loan Valuation Model from Cotton Incorporated.

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

Corn Silage Trials

This past year we had an excellent set of corn silage trials planted at Hoekman Dairy. The trials included 21 varieties, we got both yield and quality data for each variety. I really appreciate all the local seedsmen for their help and the Hoekman family for putting up with us and being patient during planting and harvesting.

2020 Comanche County Corn Silage Trials

Location: Hoekman Family Dairy
 Crop: Corn Silage
 Row Width (in): 36
 Planting Date: 3/12/2020
 Planting Rate: 32,000 seeds per acre
 Harvest Date: 7/11/2020

Brand	Product	Yield	% Whole Plant Moisture	Adj Yield (65%Moisture) Tons/Acre *	Milk lbs/ton	Milk lbs/acre of DM	DM % ADF	% NDF	DM % Starch	Fat	DM % Crude Protein	DM % Crude Protein	DM % TDN
1- IntegraSeed*	INT 6588V72PRIB	19.3	60.6	21.7	3086	23.438	20.9	35.9	35.3	3.07	9.6	72.2	
2- Pioneer	P1828Q	18.9	57.7	22.84	2741	21.911	24.6	41.4	31.3	2.86	9.1	69.9	
3- Pioneer	P1370Q	17.33	53.6	22.97	2709	21.779	22.3	36.6	36.4	2.75	9	71.6	
4- Pioneer	P1380Q	19.9	53.5	26.44	2737	25.328	22.3	37.9	35.3	2.51	9.3	71.4	
5- Pioneer	P1415Q	18.4	58.8	21.66	3143	23.827	18.8	32.3	40.7	3.13	9.1	74.9	
6- LGSeeds	LG570M72P	17.8	55.2	22.78	2790	22.245	19.9	35.1	40.1	2.94	8.9	73.4	
7- Pioneer	P1464VHR	18.5	59.8	21.3	2989	22.283	20.5	34.5	40.4	2.64	8.4	72.8	
8- Pioneer	P1716Q	19.5	60.9	21.78	2991	22.800	22.5	38.6	33.1	2.55	9.8	70.4	
9- Dekalb	DKC66-68	19.5	57.6	23.62	2899	23.966	21.9	36.9	35.4	2.77	9	71.9	
10- Pioneer	P1847AMKT	19.7	61.3	21.78	3080	23.479	20.9	34.4	36.8	3.1	8.9	72	
11- VPMMax	AV7516HHB	18.1	54.8	23.37	2793	22.845	21.1	35.8	37.5	3.08	9	72.5	
12- Pioneer	P2042VHR	19.5	57.4	23.73	2931	24.343	20.8	35.1	36.8	3.07	8.8	72.6	
13- Integra	INT 9678V72P	18.1	56.2	22.65	2913	23.093	19.7	33.7	38.1	3.42	9.3	73.5	
14- Pioneer	P2089VHR	18.4	56.1	23.09	2889	23.347	19.7	32.9	40.2	2.85	8.4	73.5	
15- VPMMax	AV 8614YHB	18.6	57.2	22.75	2919	23.243	19.8	33.4	38.5	2.8	9.2	73	
16- Rev	24F77SX	22.4	65.5	22.08	3052	23.586	24.6	39.2	30.9	2.89	8.5	69.3	
17- LGSeeds	LG66C28	18.6	56.5	23.12	2913	23.572	18.8	32	40.2	2.82	9.3	73.7	
18- Dekalb**	DKC66-29RIB	14.2	58.9	16.67	2957	17.233	21.6	36.2	34.9	2.79	8.7	72.2	
19- Pioneer	P1828Q	19.2	56.1	24.08	2837	23.910	20.3	34.1	38.7	2.94	9.1	73.1	
20- Rev***	23F47SX	15.6	60	17.83	2879	17.966	23.5	38	34.6	2.64	8.4	70.5	
21- LGSeeds	LG651698	21.7	57.5	26.35	2792	25.749	21.4	35.9	36.4	2.67	9.2	71.1	
Integra * INT 6588V72PRIB Data From 4rows													
Dekalb** DKC66-29RIB Badly lodged													
REV** 23F47SX Lost some crop during harvest. Yield data not accurate.													

*All quality analysis done by Cumberland Valley Analytical Services**

Upcoming events:**Pecan Production Program**

This year's Pecan Production Program will be held on Friday, March 26th at the DeLeon City Auditorium from probably 10:00 until 2:00. This year's program will focus on 'Improving Nut Quality'. I am still trying to finalize the speaker list, but we will most likely offer 2 CEU's for this program.

Peanut Production Program

We are planning this meeting at the DeLeon City Auditorium from 10:00 AM until 12:00 AM on Tuesday, April 4th with lunch following the program. We have Dr. James Grichar, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Peanut Research Scientist, coming to talk about fungicide and herbicide management and programs in peanuts. We also have Dr. John Cason and Emi Kimura coming to talk about peanut varieties, management, and research trials in the county. This will be an excellent program and will offer 2 IPM CEU's.

Comanche County CEU Program

The Comanche County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be hosting a 5- hour CEU program Friday, April 9th at the DeLeon City Auditorium located at 125 South Texas St., DeLeon, Texas. The cost is \$50.00.

Registration for the program will be at 8:30 and the program will begin at 9:00 AM and run until 3:00 PM. Speakers will include Scott Nolte Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Weed Specialist- "Auxin Training", Jason Jones, Texas Department of Agriculture- "Laws and Regulations", Mark Matocha, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agriculture and Environmental Safety covering "Herbicide application and Drift Management". After lunch we will have Dr. Russ Wallace, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension IPM Vegetable Specialist, covering Insect Management in Watermelons, Cantaloupes and Vegetables" and lastly Thomas Isakeit, Texas A&M Professor Plant Pathology, will be covering "Disease Management in Watermelons and Cantaloupes".

We are waiting approval from TDA but expect the program to offer 5 total CEU's 2 L&R, 2 IPM and 1 drift. 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. Please call the office to register for this program.

Dairy Outreach Program Area Training

For all the dairy families out there, that need DOPA credits we will have the Spring DOPA meeting on Thursday, April 15th. We will offer 5 DOPA credits. We will follow our traditional schedule with the morning session starting at 10:00 AM and offering 2-DOPA credits, the afternoon session beginning at 1:00 and offering 3-DOPA credits. We are still finalizing some speakers and location for this event, so watch for more information.

Small Grain Field Day

Once again, this year we have an extensive set of small grain trials with many varieties and species. Weather permitting, we will have a field day at the trial location on Friday, April 23rd from 10:00 am until 12:00 PM. This is an excellent opportunity to come and see all the varieties and species side-by-side. We will have the new small grain specialist Dr. Fernando Guillen Portal on-hand to talk about varieties and management. We will be offering 1 CEU at the program.

Dairy Animal Handling Certificate Training

This training for workers and managers will be held on Tuesday, May 11th from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Stephenville. The program will focus on Dystocia and Management of Colostrum, with hands-on demonstrations of proper calf pulling methods. The training will be offered in Spanish and English and a 4-hour Dairy Animal Handling Certificate DAHC will be awarded to attendees. Lunch will be provided by good local sponsors. Please call the office to RSVP, 325-356-2539.

*We plan to have these meetings come hell or high water, but as we have learned some things are out of our control. Please preregister for any of the program you might want to attend, that way if there is a change, we will know to give you a call. In an effort to keep everyone safe we will practice all county and state Covid-19 requirements at these meetings.

Data From 2020 Cotton Root Rot Research Trials

In response increased use of Topguard Terra fungicide to control cotton root rot (CRR), caused by the fungus, *Phymatotrichopsis omnivora*, and lack of experience with its options for application, we established a fungicide trial in a commercial field to compare a post-plant application of the fungicide with the grower's application at planting. The post-plant application was made June 4, 2020 as a 4-inch band on the planted row, a few days after planting, but before emergence, and included 4 fl.oz. and 8 fl.oz. rates. This area used in the test was not treated by the grower, but the surrounding field was. When assessed September 24, the non-treated rows had 92% incidence of CRR, while the 4 fl.oz. rate had a 35% incidence and the 8 fl.oz. rate had a 18% incidence. In comparison, the incidence of CRR in the surrounding area of the field treated at planting ranged from 8%-11%. A post-plant application of Topguard Terra eliminates the risk of phytotoxicity that can occur with an application at planting. The effectiveness of the post-plant application in this trial may have been positively affected by the presence of overhead irrigation to control watering, as well as a sandy soil that would permit some incorporation of the chemical by water. Before adopting this method, growers should include test strips in their fields to see how the method works for their operation.

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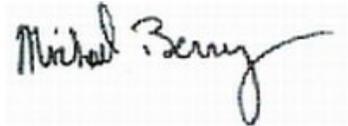
Our office is currently open, but we recommend you call or email first in case of COVID-19 restrictions.

You are always welcome to call or email if you prefer.

Please call the office at 325-356-2539.

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