



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

April, 2009

AGRICULTURAL NEWS FOR HALE COUNTY BROUGHT TO YOU BY
TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Why call an AG newsletter "Off the Beaten Path"?

I have a friend who once worked for the Forest Service. He made the comment that the trails are not the only places you can hike; they are merely suggestions. I thought about this as I hiked in various places over the following years and I learned some valuable things. Most people take the established path because it is easy and relatively safe. They see the same things everyone else sees from the same perspective. Going off the beaten path is a great metaphor not just for hiking, but for life. When we travel off the beaten path we have the opportunity to see things in a new way. My hope is to bring to you not only the standard agricultural news, but information you might not normally receive.

Who is your new agent?

For those of you who do not know yet my name is Scott Adair and I am your new AG and Natural Resources agent. I grew up on a farm near Wellman, Texas. I attended Texas Tech University and received a B.S. in Wildlife Management in 1992. From 1993 to 1996 I worked with Dr. John Gannaway in the Cotton Improvement Program while again attending Texas Tech to earn my M.S. in Crop Science. While working there I conducted research on screening cotton for tolerance to verticillium wilt under the direction of Dr. Gannaway and Dr. Terry Wheeler. I worked for Delta & Pine Land Company from 1996 through 2007. Other than a brief time spent in their International Cotton Research division I worked as an Area Production Manager.

Last year I worked on the family farm in Terry County. In addition, I grew organic cotton and peanuts with my cousin. This experience was eye opening. I had not worked for any great length of time on the farm since 1992 and things have changed dramatically in the past 15 years. The last combine I remember my family owning was a Gleaner N6 and last year I found myself operating a John Deere 9660 with a 36 foot draper header and GPS guidance. I firmly believe that having spent the past year farming has better prepared me to serve the producers of Hale County.

What is the purpose of Extension?

Years ago I remember my father telling one of his cousins that he thought the secrets of the universe had all been discovered and the information was in a shoe box underneath some scientist's bed. His cousin, a microbiologist, replied that the information was not under someone's bed in a shoe box but hidden in books. He said if you want to keep something a secret you put it in a book, preferably a large one, so no one will take the time to read it. I think this story illustrates what I believe to be the primary function of Extension; to bring university research to producers. This could take several forms from consulting university publications to answering a producer's question, contacting a specialist to conduct a field visit, or learning the needs of producers and developing educational programs to meet those needs. Extension exists to educate and provide information.

One has access to a wealth of information on the internet, but how reliable is this information? Producers can feel confident in Extension recommendations because they are based on scientific research. Extension does not 'shoot from the hip'. In a conversation with a local gin manager he emphasized the value of field trials conducted by Extension because they are unbiased. As we are not in business to sell products we can afford to be unbiased.

Does my wheat have freeze damage?

With the recent cold weather many producers are concerned about possible freeze damage to their wheat crop. Over the past two weeks I have observed local fields and attended meetings with Extension Specialist, Calvin Trostle to discuss the symptoms of freeze damage and its impact on yield. Symptoms of freeze damage include browning and split in the stem below the node and leaf 'burn'. By splitting stems with a knife or razor blade one can view the growing point. A healthy growing point will have a light green color, while a damaged growing point will be a tan or light brown color. The most recent issue of Focus on South Plains Agriculture discusses this in more detail and has color photographs of damaged plants. Additionally, Dr. Trostle discusses the possible impact of freeze damage in detail and options available to producers. He advises that producers not make any hasty decisions as freeze damage is not usually as bad as it appears and wheat can often compensate for lost or damaged tillers. The current issue of Focus can be found at the following web address: <http://lubbock.tamu.edu/focus/>

Do I need to sign up for the ACRE program?

You can answer this question for yourself after attending a farm bill meeting held by Texas AgriLife and the Hale county F.S.A. Office on Monday, April 27th. The meeting will be held at the Ollie Liner Center in Plainview at 9:30 a.m. Jerry Thurman will give a presentation based on the most commonly asked questions about the 2008 farm bill. Jay Yates, Texas AgriLife Extension Economist, will then discuss the ACRE program and demonstrate the software developed to help producers determine if they should enroll in

this program. This software can be accessed at the following web address: <http://afpc.tamu.edu/models/acre/index.php> CEU's will be given to attendees and coffee and donuts will be provided.

What can I expect from Texas AgriLife in terms of field trials this year?

Those of you who have met me probably know that research is one of my favorite things. I have been in contact with a number of Extension Specialists and am currently planning to conduct or assist with a number of research trials. These trials will include the following: a replicated cotton variety trial, a seedling disease trial and a verticillium wilt trial. I am certainly open to suggestions for other projects.

What's your email address?

With a limited postage budget I can only afford to send out a given number of newsletter's each year by snail mail. When my budget is gone it's over. To maximize the number of newsletters published each year I need to reach as many people as possible by email. To be added to the email list you can call our office at 291.5267 or simply send me a message with the title, "Add me to the list". My email address is: asadair@ag.tamu.edu

Are you a dairyman with an interest in silage?

If so you are invited to attend a presentation titled, "Times are Tough - Why Silage Quality is More Important Than Ever". The meeting will be held at the Hereford Country Club on May 14th at 6:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Amanda Burns by April 28th at (217) 577-1964 or amanda.burns@princeagri.com

Closing comments-

If you have a question about anything related to production AG or lawn and garden, please do not hesitate to call, email or stop by our office. I realize that my mailing list is incomplete so please share this information with your friends, neighbors and customers.

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Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Courts of Texas Cooperating



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Hale County AG News

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