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AGRIVIEW

By: Rick Hirsch
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The Henderson County Beef Cattle Committee started 2014 off with its annual installation and awards banquet this past Thursday night. Lloyd Smith of Murchison was installed as the 2014 Chairman of the seventeen member committee. He will oversee the activities of the county-wide committee as they work towards developing educational programs designed to bring about solutions to problems common to the beef cattle industry.

Other officers installed to help direct the committee were Vice-Chairman Richard Saunders of Frankston, Secretary Terry Rhodes of LaRue and Treasurer Nick Hoffman of Athens. Cliff Smith of Brownsboro, J Quade of Athens, Phil Jordan of Kemp, Charles Seabourne of Eustace and Lori Sturgess of LaRue were installed as new members to assist the committee in various programs. Both the officers and new members were officially installed by Henderson County Leadership Advisory Board member Bob Miars of Murchison.

Newly installed Chairman Lloyd Smith stated that the committee has several programs slated for this year including an East Texas Beef Cattle Short Course, Cattleman's Cow-Calf Clinic, Forage Field Day Cow-Calf Roundtable, and a Winter Pasture Seminar.

INSECT PROBLEMS:

The start of the growing season is just a few short weeks away and that means insect problems are sure to follow.

Producing your own vegetables can be challenging. One of the greatest challenges is to successfully control insect pests. Fortunately, there are numerous management alternatives that vegetable gardeners may consider when dealing with insects and other pests. These include cultural, biological, and management controls and, last but not least, chemical controls.

There are approximately 30,000 insect species in Texas. Fortunately, fewer than 100 species are routine pests in vegetable gardens. Most insects found in the garden are either incidental or beneficial, contributing to pollination, the balance of nature, or recycling of organic matter. A garden with an abundant supply of insects actually may be quite healthy and productive. However, insect pests can reduce the quantity of quality of the vegetables produced and may transmit plant diseases. Consider using control measures when insects threaten the garden.

Identify the insects in your garden to determine if they are beneficial, incidental or pests. Learn to recognize the common insects in your area, especially the pests and learn to recognize the type of damage associated with pests.

Insect pests can enter vegetable gardens by walking or flying. Flight allows many insects to have great mobility and their movement in large numbers is possible. Also, certain pests, like aphids and mites, reproduce about once a week under good conditions and their populations can increase rapidly. When pests seem to appear in large numbers

almost overnight, they have either moved in or are rapidly reproducing.

As insects grow, they change in size and shape. This process is called metamorphosis. Some insects damage plants in both the immature and adult stages. Because insects change, they may be difficult to identify and the type of damage they cause also may change. Young caterpillars may barely scrape the surface of a leaf when feeding, while the same caterpillar may eat great chunks of leaves when mature.

An insect's mouthparts can be a key to understanding the type of damage caused by a pest. Insects with sucking mouthparts feed by piercing leaves or fruit. Damage appears as pock marks or mottled leaves. Insects with chewing mouthparts chew holes in plants. If you can recognize the type of feeding, you can select the proper insecticides (I. E. stomach poisons for chewing insects).

When planting a vegetable garden, anticipate the pests that may occur during the year. Consider all management practices that will help deal with the pests before they become problems. Then, develop a management plan and put it into use before problems occur. Use your past experience as a guide in anticipating pests for the upcoming season.

Integrated pest management, IPM , is a philosophy of managing pests using multiple control techniques. IPM balances the goals of economic production and environmental stewardship when implementing control practices. IPM is the overriding strategy for most of production agriculture today and is rapidly being adopted in home gardening as well.

Monitoring or scouting crops for the presence and abundance of pests is an important part of IPM. Most IPM programs reserve the use of insecticides for situations when the pest is present in large numbers and the cost of return on the investment in

control practices can be justified.

Many specific insect control practices can be implemented as part of an IPM program; generally the use of insecticides is included as a control option. When alternate control practices are substituted for insecticides, the IPM approach is similar to organic gardening.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:

Farm and ranch safety should be a resolution at the top of the list for farmers and ranchers. Accidents and work related illnesses cost time, money and sometimes life. So, protecting safety and health should be a top management goal. There are several guidelines that you can follow in helping to insure that you and those around you remain free from harm.

Manage to prevent accidents and work-related illnesses. Make safety part of every farming operation.

Train new and/or inexperienced workers.

Buy quality products and take proper care of them. Read and heed instructions in operator's manuals, on labels and containers.

Establish an on-farm/ranch safety program that includes regular inspection of all equipment, tools and facilities.

You budget money for fuel, seed and other farming inputs. Adding a little more for safety devices can help protect you.

Be prepared for fire, weather, medical and accident emergencies.

IMPORTANT DATES:

February 6th - East Texas Turfgrass Conference - Texas A&M AgriLife

Research & Extension Center, Overton - 8:00 a.m. - \$30.00

February 25th & 26th - East Texas Beef Cattle Short Course - Corazon-Pitchford Sale

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Facility, Athens - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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