

February 20, 2015

AGRIVIEW

By: Rick Hirsch
County Extension Agent

The Sandyland Vegetable Conference will offer both commercial producers and home gardeners an opportunity to improve their knowledge and learn invaluable “tricks of the trade” on Thursday, February 26th. With registration beginning at 5:30 p.m. The program will start at 6:00 p.m. at the Cain Center - Room B in Athens.

Henderson County has a long history of farming and vegetable production hence the title “Black-Eyed Pea Capital of the World” - a resurgence of Farmers Markets and a renewed interest in vegetable gardening has spurred more people into growing vegetable fields and gardens.

The conference will provide growers information on a host of vital topics such as best management practices, variety selection, fertilization, weed control, water management and irrigation, insects and harvesting guidelines.

Dr. Joe Masabni will be the primary speaker. His area of research is vegetable crop production and Extension education. As vegetable extension specialist, Dr. Masabni develops extension programs and provides educational opportunities to improve the profitability of the vegetable industry in Texas through workshops, training sessions, and print or electronic publications.

A number of exhibitors will be on hand as well - Athens Farmers Market, Winfield Solutions, Rozell Sprayers, Athens Organic and the East Texas Beekeepers Association.

The cost of the conference is \$15.00 which includes a barbecue dinner. Pre-registration is requested by calling 903-675-6130 on or before Monday, February 23rd.

2.5 continuing education units will be provided towards the recertification of private, commercial and non-commercial applicators license.

BABY BEEF:

Calving season is in full swing and producers need to do everything in their power to see that calves get off to a good start.

The first thing is to get a live calf on the ground. Knowing when to step in and assist a cow or heifer is important. For most producers the answer to the question of when to help is sooner not later as most of us are often prone to do. If we break labor into three stages it is easier to understand.

In the first stage, the cow or heifer is restless and tends to isolate herself from the herd. Stage two lasts from the time her water bag appears until the calf is on the ground. In the third stage, the cow releases and cleans the membranes.

The second stage is the most critical period, and in heifers it generally lasts twice as long as the 30 minute average in mature cows. From this you can see that if a producer lets stage two continue too long (roughly an hour and a half) then the health of the newborn calf is compromised. Two to three hours is much too long. The calf will be weakened and less likely to get the much needed colostrum it needs.

A newborn calf needs that first milk in the first six hours for it to be effective as

possible. The newborn calf's gut changes quickly after birth and after six hours immunoglobulin absorption is reduced down to 66 percent. By the time a calf is twenty-four hours old the gut will absorb virtually none of the antibodies.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- February 26th - Sandyland Vegetable Conference - Cain Center - Room B, Athens - 6:00 p.m. - \$15.00/person - 2.5 C. E. U.'s
- March 19th - Henderson County Master Gardener Association 2015 Spring Conference - First United Methodist Church - Athens - 5:00 p.m. - Tickets \$20.00 available at the Extension Office or any Henderson County Master Gardener

Rick Hirsch is the Henderson County Extension Agent - Agriculture for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit our web page at <http://henderson.agrilife.org/>.