

Newspaper Article: Agriculture: Submitted Aug 7th

Title: Texas A&M Extension Specialist Conducts Tanglehead Research in Jim Hogg County

On Friday August 1st, Jim Hogg County was visited by Dr. Megan Clayton, Assistant Professor and Extension Range Specialist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Her visit was to continue her research and record data on the tanglehead population located on two ranches in Jim Hogg County. The tanglehead plant is a commonly found bunchgrass in South Texas. This grass is palatable to livestock species during its developing stages. As this grass matures it will form long, coarse and sharp awns and lose palatability. These characteristics, of the mature tanglehead grass cause a decrease in foraging by livestock. Dr. Clayton states, "The goal for our project, a collaboration between Jim Hogg NRCS, AgriLife Extension, and private landowners, is to demonstrate the best management practices for managing and using the tanglehead resource that have become noxious on many areas around the county." The research being conducted includes observation and how to manage and use tanglehead through patch burning and grazing with cattle. Clippings of tanglehead from both burned and unburned plots, in different locations, were taken and sent to be analyzed by the Texas A&M Forage Analysis Laboratory in College Station. These clippings of tanglehead are analyzed for the plants nutritional value. Another portion of this research is observing and measuring the quality of tanglehead throughout the grazing season on both burned and unburned sites. The cattle are wearing GPS collars to monitor their movements for weeks at a time. These collars can assist in measuring loafing and grazing activities by the cattle. However, the real numbers of the foraging and nutrition level cattle are receiving from the tanglehead is being taken from the fecal samples. I was lucky enough to get to join Dr. Clayton and Erasmo Montemayor with USDA: NRCS to collect data and observe the tanglehead plots. Dr. Clayton and Dr. Bob Lyons (Extension Range Specialist and research collaborator) is doing great work to help make the foraging of this grass more efficient for ranch owners and livestock producers. If you want more information on tanglehead or the research being conducted, contact the County Extension Office.

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