

Row Crop Progress Report

As of May 1st, most row crop farmers in the county were reporting as being 100% finished with planting (and in some cases, replanting) throughout the county. Corn acreage seems to be up in Jim Wells County this year as producers tried to take advantage of some early soil moisture and hedged that harvest season may turn out to be wet with the current long term forecasts. Corn fields look good in the central part of the county with most having set ears at this time. Commodity prices are low and producers are currently trying to cut as many expenses as possible going into the growing season. Although rainfall has been experienced at various times since January 1st, most crops could use an additional two inches of rain at this time before yields are affected.

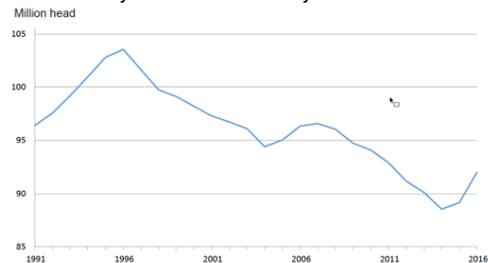


Wheat fields matured well throughout the growing season and most have been harvested at this time.

Cattle Market

The cattle market has definitely slipped downward in the last few weeks as the Futures Market plays a downward slide. Our local market, Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Alice, is reporting 500 pound steers this week at an average of \$138/cwt with highs in the \$170s. Same weight heifers average \$133/cwt with highs in \$160s. Offerings have been steady with 500-600 head being marketed weekly and normal runs of all aged cattle being reported. Demand still is strong for good replacement cattle but prices have definitely corrected themselves compared to the record highs experienced in 2014 and early 2015. Bred cows range from \$1,325 - \$1,600 and pairs are bringing \$1,700 - \$2,100 at this time. As expected, the USDA National Agricultural Statistic Service is reporting an increase in inventory with a total of 92 million cattle and calves in the US at the end of 2015. This is equal to the national inventory in 2011 but a far cry from the 103 million head reported in 1996.

Cattle Inventory – United States: January 1



South Texas Beef 706

South Texas cattlemen and women are invited to attend an upcoming Beef 706 three-part series beginning May 23 in Alice, Texas. Beef 706 is a part of the Beef Quality (BQA) efforts and is designed to educate producers about sound management decisions and the factors impacting the safety and quality of beef.

“This series offers producers a unique opportunity to follow cattle from ranch to rail and learn firsthand about safety and quality issues affecting their product,” said Jason Bagley, senior manager of beef resources at Texas Beef Council. “Another appealing aspect of the program is participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of professors and extension specialists in meat science and beef cattle production. This program encourages interactive dialogue which proves to be a valuable tool.”

The cost of the program is \$50 per participant and is refundable based on full participation in the program. To register, please contact your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent.



SOUTH TEXAS BEEF 706

Brooks | Duval | Jim Wells | Kenedy | Kleberg | Nueces | San Patricio

The Texas Beef Council, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Texas A&M University - Kingsville have teamed up to present a special Beef 706 program. This three-part series of hands-on sessions focusing on beef quality management and marketing opportunities is available for beef cattle producers from Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces and San Patricio counties.

The checkoff-funded program is designed to help producers maximize profits and have a better understanding of the production process after their cattle enter the feedyard.

Session one will be held **May 23, 2016** at the Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Alice, Texas beginning at 5:30pm with dinner. Here industry experts will discuss factors effecting feeder calves. Producers will then choose a calf to monitor through the production system at the following two sessions.

Session two will be held **October 25, 2016** at Kane Beef Processors in Corpus Christi, Texas beginning at 1:30pm. During this session producers will get an inside look into a meat packing plant and review their cattle as finished market steers

Session three will be held **November 1-2, 2016** at Texas A&M University Kingsville Animal Science Department beginning at 9:00am on Day 1 and 8:00am on Day 2. This 1.5-day session will allow producers to participate in a hands-on exercise that takes their chosen fed cattle from session one through the harvest, grading and fabrication process.

Beef Quality Assurance Credits will be offered over the course of the program to all interested participants. **The cost of the program will be \$50.00/participant and can be paid at the first session on January 19th. This cost is refundable based on full participation in the program.**



To RSVP and Register for this program, please contact your local County Extension Office.

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For more information on this and other checkoff-funded programs, please visit www.TexasBeefCheckoff.com or call 1-800-846-4113.

Rolling With Bowling

Much of the cotton in the Coastal Bend and Wintergarden areas is out of danger for damage by thrips. Although a few fields were treated, it was a relatively quiet year for thrips, possibly because of frequent heavy rain events. The Cotton aphid has presented some challenges, especially for cotton producers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Late last week I found cotton aphids on cotton in several trials at the Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension center at Corpus Christi. Their populations are light to moderate and the aphid populations seem slow to increase based on recent observations.



The aphid should not be confused with the sugarcane aphid. The cotton aphid nymph may vary in color from tan to green and are often marked with a dark head, thorax, and wing pads. The cornicles will be the same color as the body. Wingless adult cotton aphids vary in color from a light green mottled with dark green (most common) but may be whitish, yellow, pale green, and dark green forms. The legs are pale with the tips of the tibia and tarsi black (only the tarsi are black on the sugarcane aphid). The adult cotton aphid will have black cornicles (tailpipes...similar to the sugarcane aphid).



The cotton aphid reaches maximum reproduction at temperatures ranging from the lower 70's to ~ 80 degrees F. An Insecticide application for cotton aphid may be warranted when infestations exceed 50 aphids per leaf. It is advisable to wait a couple of days and recheck the field prior to making an insecticide application if the aphid happens to reach the economic threshold. It is not uncommon for their populations to abruptly decline possibly due to environmental conditions or pandemics of entomopathogenic fungi. I have observed predators feeding on cotton aphids and they may be responsible for keeping the aphid in check. The cotton aphid's occurrence may be important to build predator populations that will help keep sugarcane aphid populations at bay later in the season.



It is time to focus attention on cotton fleahoppers. Cotton fleahopper has been reported around the region and some cotton fields have been treated around the Victoria area. The recommendation for scouting is to examine the main terminal buds of 25 randomly selected plants at each of four or more locations across the field. During the first 3 weeks of squaring, 15 to 25 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals may cause economic damage. As plants increase in size and fruit load, larger populations of fleahoppers may be tolerated without economic yield reduction. If an insecticide treatment for fleahopper is warranted, consider other beneficial arthropods and pests (such as the cotton aphid) that are present prior to selecting an insecticide. Some insecticides are less harmful to beneficial arthropods than others and protecting these biological control agents may prevent a secondary pest outbreak. If

other pests, such as the cotton aphid, are present, beneficial arthropods are absent, and a fleahopper application is warranted, consider an insecticide that will control both pests. Please access the following link for more information about the cotton fleahopper <http://cottonbugs.tamu.edu/fruit-feeding-pests/cotton-fleahopper/>.

Last week I had a few questions about applying Transform[®] (Dow AgroSciences) to cotton for fleahopper management. Currently, the EPA has not approved the Section 3 request for Transform (for use on cotton and other labeled crops). This means that purchases of Transform in 2016 cannot legally be applied to previously labeled crops (including cotton). Dow AgroSciences is working with the EPA to reinstate the section 3 label but it is unlikely that the Section 3 label will be approved before the end of the production season. **If you have carry-over product from 2015 it can be used on cotton (and other labeled crops).** Transform did receive a Section 18 approval from the EPA for use on sorghum against the sugarcane aphid. However, this label does not include other crops or crop pests.

The above article is an excerpt from a newsletter developed by our Extension Entomologist in Corpus Christi, Dr. Robert Bowling.

Mark Your Calendars

June 2, 2016 – Crops Tour

The Jim Wells County Row Crops Tour and Seminar is scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday, June 2, 2016. As in the past, we will gather at Ag-Pro/John Deere (formerly South Texas Implement) and load busses at about 2:00 pm. A few stops are being planned and then we will reconvene at Ag Pro for the rest of the program. Johnathan has committed to serving us dinner so we know we will end the day on a good note. Stay tuned for an updated flyer and program agenda.

September 3, 2016 – Ranch Clinic

The Jim Wells County Ranch Clinic is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 3, 2016. Richard Shimer and his family are graciously opening the doors of their new ranch located about 10 miles north of Alice on Highway 281. This promises to be a treat for everyone who attends. More details of the event will come at a later date.

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