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## TEXAS AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER REGISTRATION NUMBERS

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### You are required to renew your "Ag Exemption" card by December 31, 2015

Farmers/ranchers/timber operators will not be able to purchase qualifying items tax free when your current card expires. Your number will need to be renewed with the Texas Comptrollers of Public Accounts (TxCPA). Remember Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office isn't where you renew your card, however we will try to help answer any questions you might have.

### When to Renew

You should renew your ag/timber number now. Your current 11-digit ag/timber number will not change, but the

new courtesy cards you'll receive from TxCPA will have a new expiration date.

### Renew by Telephone

Call 1-844-AG RENEW (1-844-247-3639). The ag/timber number renewal telephone line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Once you have completed the telephone renewal process, your ag/timber number will be renewed within two business days.

TxCPA will send you a confirmation letter and new courtesy cards by mail in five to seven days. You can also look up your ag/timber number.

## THE VFD (VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE)

The Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) is part of the US Food and Drug Administration's regulation of use of antibiotics in livestock. These regulations are

designed to: 1) promote prudent antibiotic use, 2) protect human health, and 3) restrain development of resistance in microbes to antibiotics.

Dr. Ted McCollum at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Amarillo has summarized the provisions of the VFD <http://amarillo.tamu.edu/files/2010/10/The-Veterinary-Feed-Directive-SEP-2015-V.2-rel.pdf>. The VFD (which went into effect October 1, 2015 and must be fully implemented by January 1, 2017) addresses the use of drugs in feeds for livestock. Current focus is on antimicrobials that are

### Brazos Valley CEU Conference

Friday, January 29

Burleson County Expo Center – Caldwell

5 CEU hours offered

\$35 Pre-Registration by January 22.

\$45 at the door

Call 979-542-2753 to pre-register.

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Lee County Extension News is a service of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Lee County.

Lee County Extension Office  
310 South Grimes  
Giddings, Texas 78942

979.542.2753; office  
979.542.2362; fax

<http://Lee.AgriLife.org>

e-mail: [lee.county@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:lee.county@agnet.tamu.edu)



Keeton Ehrig  
Extension Agent  
Agriculture/Natural Resources

Portions of this newsletter are cited from the Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack.



Tonya Poncik  
Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

## THE VFD (VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE) [CONT'D FROM PAGE 1]

considered medically important, that is, have applications in human medicine.

Dr. McCollum notes important provisions of the VFD rule:

1. ends the use of medically important antimicrobials to enhance livestock performance;
2. transitions many of the antimicrobials in feed that are currently available “over-the-counter” (OTC) into the VFD drug category;
3. places the use of VFD animal drugs in or on animal feed under professional supervision of a licensed veterinarian;
4. requires producers to obtain written VFD orders from a

licensed veterinarian to purchase and utilize VFD antimicrobials on or in feed.

To purchase and use VFD materials, producers must receive a signed and written (not oral) authorization [a VFD order] from a licensed veterinarian. To obtain a VFD order, there must be an established veterinary-client-patient relationship [VCPR]. A VCPR requires that: 1) the veterinarian assumes responsibility for medical judgments of livestock and the client agrees to follow their instructions, 2) the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of an animal's condition in order to properly diagnose medical status, and 3) the veterinarian is

readily available for follow-up care. A valid VCPR can not be established solely by telephone or electronic means.

If additives and complete feeds contain VFD drugs, it will be noted on product labels. Some materials used in feed that currently require or will require a VFD by 2017 include, but are not limited to, feed-grade tilmicosin, chlortetracycline, neomycin, oxytetracycline, virginiamycin, and tylosin. Several drugs currently widely used in feeds for growth promotion, increased efficiency, etc. [such as bambarmycin, lasalocid, monensin, MGA, and ractopamine] are not medically important in humans and so will not require a VFD unless used in combination with a medically important drug. A list of medically important drugs is at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcementforIndustry/UCM052519.pdf>, under Appendix A.

An extensive list of antimicrobials is at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/AntimicrobialResistance/JudiciousUseofAntimicrobials/ucm390429.htm>

VFD deals only with antimicrobials in feeds, not with other methods of administration such as injections.

For official detailed producer requirements see <http://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/developmentapprovalprocess/ucm455413.htm>

[ Beef Cattle Browsing, October 2015;  
<http://animalscience.tamu.edu> ]

## Effect of Longevity on Cow Herds

Longevity in the cow herd is increased by reducing the proportion of females culled. In addition, greater longevity means a lower proportion of heifers are retained so the herd consists of a higher proportion of mature cows, whose calves outweigh those produced by heifers. In this study, reducing heifer replacement rate from 18% to 14% increased lifetime productivity per heifer calf retained by 24%.

The authors noted that “current approaches for genetic selection to increase lifetime productivity have resulted in limited progress, due in part to possible interactions between nutritional environment and higher genetic potential for growth and milk production”. So, “rearing and managing cows under nutritionally limited environments may lead to adaptations that result in relatively high reproductive success under lower

input levels”. That is, heifers developed under conditions similar to the mature cow herd may be better suited later in life to those conditions; but slower development also may reduce reproductive success in herds calving first at two years of age. Beef cow-calf management often requires tradeoffs.

Even though genetic selection has been minimally effective, the genetic tool of heterosis through crossbreeding has been shown to improve cow herd lifetime productivity by about 25%, or higher under particularly adverse environmental conditions. The authors noted that “crossbreeding improves retention rate due to cumulative benefits that heterosis has on the many factors contributing to cow success”.

[ J. Animal Sci. 93:4235, 2014 Beef Species Symposium, Am Soc. of Anim. Sci. Annual Meeting; USDA-ARS Miles City, MT and Univ. of Nebraska ]

## SELL CULL COWS AT WEANING OR LATER?

Across the entire U. S., the largest number of calves is spring born and fall weaned. At weaning, many cows are culled from the breeding herd due to reproductive failure, or health problems. This generally results in lowest prices for cull cows in the fall, which has prompted some interest in retaining cows culled in the fall and marketing during periods of higher prices in spring.

Data were collected over three years from a herd of commercial Angus cows. Cows were culled in October, when calves were weaned, and marketed the following March or April. Cows were maintained either 1) on stockpiled native grass with

minimal hay and 25% CP cubes during icy periods or 2) in drylot on grass hay and 25% cubes. At weaning, cows averaged 5.5 Body Condition Score, ranging from 4 to 8, with 23% classified as Thin (<BCS 5), 58% Medium (BCS 5-6), and 19% Fat (BCS>6). Cows were weighed monthly after being culled. Monthly ADG declined from start to finish. Pasture cows gained slightly more than drylot. Fat cows on pasture actually lost weight in February as did Fat drylot cows in March. For both systems of management, Thin cows had highest ADG and Fat cows were lowest. Total feed cost was \$68 for pasture management

and \$262 for drylot.

The authors suggested that, for producers considering retaining cull cows after weaning fat cows should be immediately marketed. If resources are available, any retained cows should be maintained on range/pasture management rather than in drylot until marketing in spring. If resources are limited, thin cows should receive priority for retention over those in medium condition.

[ *Jour. of Agric. and Appl. Econ.* 46:139;  
Oklahoma St. Univ., Samuel Roberts Noble  
Foundation ]

## How Much do Consumers Care about How Beef is Produced?

A survey was conducted of beef consumers on purchases of ground beef and steak. At least 2-3 times a month, 82% of consumers bought ground beef and 60% bought steak. Consumers were asked if they had bought ground beef or steak based on product with label claims for being organic, natural, animal welfare assured, locally produced, sustainably produced, guaranteed tender, antibiotic-free, or hormone-free. Depending on the claim, 25-47% didn't know if any of these applied to their purchase.

Consumers were asked what they were willing to pay for the various label claims. There was higher willingness-to-pay-extra for claims for steak than ground beef. Depending on the claim, 12-25% would not be willing to pay any extra. Willingness-to-pay-extra was higher for "natural", "locally produced", and "guaranteed tender" product. "Animal welfare assured" and "sustainably produced" ranked lowest.

Consumers also were asked if they would pay a premium based on various production practices. Willingness-to-pay-extra was highest if cattle were "provided access to fresh, clean feed and water" and "provided adequate comfort through the use of shade, windbreaks, and ventilation assuring clean, dry, sanitary environmental conditions;" lowest willingness was expressed for "dehorning before horn tissue adheres to skull or with pain control", "castrate either within first three months or with pain control", and "plan transport to minimize travelling and waiting time."

Willingness-to-pay-extra tended to decrease as the cost of required premium was more expensive. Still, depending on the product and particular production practice, from 17-40% were willing to pay \$3.00/lb or more. (The authors noted that previous research shows what consumers say they are willing to pay is generally about two to three times more

## 2015 USDA Dietary Guidelines and Sustainability

Starting in 1980, The United States Department of Agriculture has published and periodically updated human dietary guidelines. Preparation has been in progress for an update for 2015. In the process of development, along with dietary considerations it had been planned to consider sustainability, defined by USDA in this context as "evaluating the environmental impact of a food source". After receiving comments from various sources with differing backgrounds and interests, USDA has decided to delete any consideration of sustainability from the 2015 Dietary Guidelines.

[ <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/10/06/2015-dietary-guidelines-giving-you-the-tools-you-need-to-make-healthy-choices/> ]

than what they are actually willing to pay.)

[ [www.agmanager.info/livestock/marketing](http://www.agmanager.info/livestock/marketing);  
Kansas St. Univ., Michigan St. Univ ]

## BQA ADVISORY STATEMENT ON USE OF PNEUMATIC DARTS

The stated purpose of Beef Quality Assurance is to ensure a safe, wholesome, and healthy beef supply. The advent of pneumatic darts or other remote injection methods has prompted evaluation of how these techniques fit BQA principles. Currently there are no BQA guidelines for administration of injectable drugs/products by use of pneumatic darts or other similar methods designed to administer injectable products into cattle from a distance. The BQA Advisory Board notes “several challenges associated with use” of these technologies:

- accurate assessment of body weight for proper dosing is not possible;
- some appropriate dose volumes are not possible with current dart tech-

nology;

- product might be delivered in non-approved sites;
- bruising or collateral injection site lesions can occur;
- individual animal identification is more difficult, possibly leading to inaccurate withdrawal times or potential for illegal residues;
- potential of needles penetrating ligaments, joints, etc., reducing animal well-being and/or resulting in ineffective therapy;
- could result in extra-label use because of wrong method of administration;
- needles or entire darts might remain in animal tissue;

- darts could be misaimed, into gut, head, etc.;
- illegal compounding of drugs is probable;
- accidental injection into humans of some antibiotic compounds could cause death;
- the cylinder of the dart can be contaminated by bacteria, promoting antimicrobial resistance or infections and abscesses at the injection site.

Based on these challenges, the BQA Advisory Board currently states “until such time as critical data becomes available these methods do not meet BQA injectable product administration guidelines “.

[[bqa.org](http://bqa.org)]

## Effect of Breed Type on Sale Price in Video Auctions

Data were analyzed from 116 video auctions conducted during 2010-2014 involving 3,345,826 animals sold in 33,811 lots, almost 100 head/lot. Adjustment was made in the analysis for factors statistically significantly affecting price other than breed. Breed category and price averages were:

- British and British cross, \$163.20/cwt;
- British-Continental cross, \$162.89/cwt;
- Black Angus sired out of dams with no Brahman influence, \$164.58/cwt;
- Red Angus sired out of dams with no Brahman influence, \$166.51/cwt;
- Brahman influenced, \$159.16/cwt.

Red Angus price was statistically significantly higher than other groups. Black

Angus price was significantly higher than British-British cross, British-Continental cross, and Brahman influenced. The comparison between British-British cross and British-Continental cross did not differ significantly but both were significantly higher than Brahman influence. NOTE: Most other work has shown a different relationship between Black and Red Angus. Also, extremely large samples such as these can increase likelihood of statistically significant differences, but the magnitude of economic differences might be slight. Both statistical significance and economic importance should always be considered in evaluating research results. Statistical significance tells how much confidence should be placed on results. Economic importance tells how much value can be attached to results.

[ 2015 Western Sec. Am. Soc. of Anim. Sci. meeting, abstract 64; Kansas St. Univ., Merck Anim. Health, Grassy Ridge Consulting ]

## Trends in Livestock Auctions in Texas

From 1965 to 1998 the number of livestock auctions in Texas held within a fairly narrow range, from about 140 to 160. After some unexplained jump in the late '90s to almost 190 auctions, there has been a gradual decline to about 90.

Annual cattle auction receipts have declined from about 7-8 million in the late '60s-'70s to 3-4 million since 2010. In the late '60s-'70s, average annual number marketed per auction was in the range of 40-50 thousand head. In recent years that number has declined to 20-30 thousand head.

Drought in recent years has certainly had some effect so some of the declines are probably due to lower cattle numbers. Other marketing methods, especially direct sales and the advent of video auctions, may also be a factor.

[ <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/10/06/2015-dietary-guidelines-giving-you-the-tools-you-need-to-make-healthy-choices/> ]

# WHOOPING COUGH ON THE RISE

Whooping cough, which is also known as pertussis, has been on the rise in Texas. The importance of keeping families healthy and safe is a priority of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Extension specialists prepare information to educate the public on public health techniques to prevent the spread of these deadly diseases.

Whooping cough is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by a bacteria. It produces uncontrollable, violent coughing fits that produce a “whoop-like” noise and make it difficult to breathe.

Some symptoms of whooping cough include:

- a runny or stuffy nose,
- cough,
- sneeze,
- a mild fever (99 to 101°F), and
- diarrhea.

Coughing episodes don't usually start until 10 to 12 days after these symptoms. These symptoms may be manageable, but complications may arise. These complications include choking, pneumonia, brain inflammation, pregnancy complications, and death.

Whooping cough is spread from person to person. An infected person can be contagious for up to 3 weeks from the first

signs of illness through the beginning of the coughing spells. Whooping cough is spread from an infected person's coughs and sneezes, which infect others by direct contact or through contaminated surfaces.

The best way to prevent the spread of whooping cough is to be vaccinated against it. The pediatric Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP) vaccine is part of the recommended childhood immunizations and protects children from pertussis infections. For optimal protection against whooping cough, a child needs five doses of DTaP – one dose at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 to 18

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## Salty Situations – Moving Beyond the Salt Shaker!

Do you ever find yourself asking whether you should focus on reducing sodium or salt? We hear many different messages about reducing the amount of sodium, salt, and sodium containing ingredients in the foods we eat. Surprisingly, sodium is found more often in processed foods, such as casseroles, pizza and cold cuts, than the salt shaker. One message is clear, Americans tend to consume more sodium than what is recommended and should limit the amount of sodium eaten daily.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2010) recommends limiting daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams. Eating too much sodium may lead to high blood pressure, which may increase the risk for a heart attack and stroke. Reducing sodium, which includes salt or other sodium containing ingredients, is beneficial in reducing risks for these health related conditions. Follow these

tips to reduce daily sodium intake.

**Read the nutrition label.** The nutrition facts label is one way to identify foods low or high in sodium. The percent daily value listed on the nutrition facts label can help you quickly determine if a food is low or high in sodium. Remember this rule for sodium, if the percent daily value is five or less, this is a good bet! If the percent daily value is twenty percent or more, leave it at the store! Be sure to choose foods with five percent sodium more often.

**Know foods with sodium.** Knowing common foods high in sodium can help to make choosing lower sodium options easier. Major sources of sodium include processed foods like canned products, breads, deli meats, snack foods and mixed dishes. Look for foods labeled as “low sodium” or “reduced sodium” and choose these foods.

**Choose lower sodium foods at the store.** Choosing foods lower in sodium can help reduce your daily sodium intake. When you are at the store, compare different brands for condiments, canned foods, breads and other sodium containing foods. Different brands of foods can have different sodium levels. Choose the lowest sodium between the foods you compare.

Reducing sodium in the foods we eat can take a little practice. The tips listed are just a few of the many ways to begin reducing sodium. If you would like to know more about sodium and health, tips on reducing sodium, or how to identify sodium in foods, contact Tonya Poncik, Lee County Extension Agent at 979-542-2753.

**[ Danielle Hammond-Krueger, MPH, RD, LD, Extension Program Specialist, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, College Station, Texas ]**

## Taking the Fear Out of Food Allergies

Food allergies in children have increased significantly in recent years though the reason why is not yet clearly known. Understanding how to manage food allergies is essential for keeping children safe in the event of a food allergy emergency.

Currently there is no cure for food allergies, which can vary in degree of severity. Some children with known food allergies may experience a mild reaction such as itchiness, swelling or hives. Other reactions may be more severe resulting in difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting and even anaphylaxis, which can be fatal if not treated immediately. It is important to be aware of common symptoms.

### What is a food allergy?

A food allergy occurs when the body reacts to a specific protein in a food. As a result, the body's immune system releases antibodies, most commonly IgE antibodies, which cause an allergic reaction. The most common foods containing allergens are eggs, wheat, milk, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, fish and shellfish. Ninety percent of food allergy reactions are associated with these foods.

When a food allergy is suspected, the

child should be seen by an allergist (a physician specializing in allergies) to determine an accurate diagnosis. Once diagnosis is made, the allergist and the family develop a Food Allergy Action Plan (FAAP) that specifies the foods to be avoided and instructs caregivers what to do if the child is exposed to the allergen.

Although mild food allergies are typically treated with an antihistamine (such as Benadryl®), more severe reactions may require epinephrine injections. Children with severe food allergies should have an epinephrine auto-injector such as an EpiPen® that travels with them at all times in case of a food allergy emergency. Caregivers should be trained on the use of epinephrine since prompt administration is essential if a child with a food allergy accidentally ingests a food containing the allergen, and develops a severe allergic reaction.

If a food allergy emergency occurs, the caregiver should administer the epinephrine and then call 911 so that the child can receive further treatment. Although food allergy emergencies are rare, if proper precautions are taken, acting promptly can save a child's life.

Young children may not be able to clearly express that they are experiencing an allergic reaction. Some of the things a child might say that could indicate this are:

- It feels like something is poking my tongue.
- My mouth (or tongue) itches.
- My lips feel tight.
- It feels like there is a frog or something in my throat.
- It feels like there are bugs in my ears.

Source: The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network

### Managing food allergies

Determining how best to manage food allergies depends on the type and severity of the allergy. Some schools and day cares may choose to go "nut-free" to reduce the risk of exposure. Others may have children with food allergies seated together at a table or have a "nut-free" table. Food labels need to be checked for allergens.

Special care needs to be taken regarding food sent to school to be sure it is allergen free.

Food prep surfaces and utensils must be carefully cleaned and sanitized to ensure that any potential allergens have been removed. Likewise, children need to wash hands before and after meals and snacks to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

Proper training, clear communication and having a plan in place is important for managing food allergies. For more information, go to the Better Kid Care On Demand learning system and complete the lesson Food Allergies: Management and Prevention.

[ Penn State Extension, Better Kid Care, Service, [extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare](http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare) ]

## Whooping Cough on the Rise

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months, and lastly between 4 and 6 years of age. Adults are advised to get a booster vaccine (TDaP) every 10 years to help prevent the spread of whooping cough to young children.

Women who are pregnant should ideally receive a TDaP booster between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy, but they can receive it at any time during pregnancy.

During a whooping cough epidemic, unimmunized individuals should not at-

tend school or attend public gatherings due to their increased likelihood of acquiring this severe illness.

If you suspect you or your child has whooping cough, contact your doctor immediately. Dial 2-1-1 for information regarding vaccine locations in your area. Visit [texashelp.tamu.edu](http://texashelp.tamu.edu) for more information regarding whooping cough in Texas.

[ <http://fcs.tamu.edu/files/2015/02/whooping-cough-pertussis.pdf> ]