

LIBERTY COUNTY SPRING AG NEWS

A Big Texas Springtime **HOWDY!**

Spring has definitely sprung in the Lone Star State. Warmer days, wildflowers, green grass, and plenty of baby calves dotting the countryside are tattle-tale signs. Or just look at the calendar. Nevertheless, there is no lack for work to be done as we ready ourselves for herd health programs, hay season and spring crop plantings. If you have taken time from your busy schedule to read this letter, it is greatly appreciated and my hope is that is of some worth and value. To expand a little on each of the items on the above list, here are some things to keep in mind:

Herd Health: develop a working relationship with your local veterinarian. They will have a recommended protocol to follow, for cows and calves. And if you call them at 3am but have never called before, there might be a delayed response time. Have your bulls Fertility Tested and tested for Tricomoniasis. Remember they are only responsible for half of your herd. Implement some type of parasite/ control. These guys “pester” your cattle to the point of dropped weight at market time which is money out of your pocket.

Hay & Planting Season: get your soil tests done. Improper soil nutrient application is also wasting money. Lack of soil nutrients decreases productivity. \$20 is a small investment. Time your weed/control and herbicide applications for maximum efficiency. For every pound of weeds you kill, you will get at least on pound of forage in its place. Perform preventive maintenance on equipment before you get rolling “full steam ahead.” Breakdowns in the field are time consuming and costly. A new set of sharp cutter blades will out-perform those old ones you think you need to get one or two more uses out of. Finally, my dad used to always say, “Grease is cheap.” Food for thought from a wise man I wish I had some more time with.

For more thorough information, check out the Liberty County Extension web page: <https://liberty.agrilife.org/> . Click on the programs tab, then select “Ag/Natural Resources” tab. We have newsletters and blogs from many of our Texas A&M Program Specialists from Beef Cattle, to Master Gardeners, to Wildlife. Also check out upcoming CEU and educational opportunities. We have some dates listed in this letter so don’t miss out!

In closing, I would terribly remiss if I didn’t mention the victims of the Panhandle wildfires. The economic and emotional damages are quite expansive. Some lost a little, many lost everything. We do have some relief efforts for materials in place locally through both through McCoy’s and Tractor Supply. Financial donations can be made at the Extension office or we have bank contacts in the panhandle coordinating donations as well. Any contribution is greatly appreciated. We must not soon forget how a few years ago good folk from across the state came to the aid of Liberty County in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike. It’s time to return the favor.



Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in a program are encouraged to contact the Liberty County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service at 936-334-3230, five business days in advance of an event to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require. Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, disability, religion, age, national origin, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity . The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

VACCINATING THE HEIFER, COW AND CALF HERD

Infectious diseases cause sickness and death in calves, before or after they are born. Unborn and nursing calves are high risk to fatal diseases during the time of year when a beef rancher is calving cows, moving and mixing these cows, and bringing in bulls to them. Newborn calves can have low immunity and be highly susceptible to many diseases. They are exposed to germs shed by stressed cows, calves and bulls in the cow herd. Below, retired State Veterinarian, Dr. Floran C. Faries, Jr., gives several tables to assist ranchers in choosing the proper immunization schedule for their herd.

TABLE 1: COW HERD VACCINES

Pre-calving Vaccination of Cow Heifers

(7 to 9 months of pregnancy or twice a year)

1. 4-way Viral BRD Vaccine
2. Pasteurella Bacterin & Leukotoxoid
3. Haemophilus Bacterin
4. 5-way Lepto Bacterin
5. 7-way or 8-way Blackleg Bacterin
6. Scour Vaccine
7. Vibro Bacterin
8. Trich Vaccine

**Prebreeding Vaccination of Replacement Heifers
and Bulls**

(3 to 6 weeks before breeding)

1. 4-way Viral BRD Vaccine
2. Pasteurella Bacterin & Leukotoxoid
3. Haemophilus Bacterin
4. 5-way Lepto Bacterin
5. 7-way or 8-way Blackleg Bacterin
6. Vibro Bacterin
7. Trich Vaccine (heifers)
8. Anaplas Vaccine

TABLE 2: CALF HERD VACCINES

Post-calving Vaccination of Nursing Calves

(2 to 3 months of age)

1. 4-way Viral BRD Vaccine
2. Pasteurella Bacterin & Leukotoxoid
3. Haemophilus Bacterin
4. 5-way Lepto Bacterin
5. 7-way or 8-way Blackleg Bacterin

Pre-weaning Vaccination of Nursing Calves

(3 weeks before weaning)

1. 4-way Viral BRD Vaccine
2. Pasteurella Bacterin & Leukotoxoid
3. Haemophilus Bacterin
4. 5-way Lepto Bacterin
5. 7-way or 8-way Blackleg Bacterin
6. Bang's Vaccine (Heifers)

Additional information can be found in the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service publication:

Cattle Vaccines

Common Cattle Parasites

You may obtain a copy by calling the Extension office.



2017 GRASSFED BEEF CONFERENCE—MAY 2 & 3, 2017

Consumer interest in natural, grassfed, and organic beef continues to rise. Learn more about grassfed beef production and how it's different and what's new in the industry . . . from pasture to plate.

Early registration is \$250, late \$300.

To register go to <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu>

UPCOMING AG PROGRAMS

For information on attending any of the following programs please contact the Extension Office at 936-334-3230.

APRIL 12, 2017 8:30 A.M.
 PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING
 LIBERTY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
 501 PALMER AVE. LIBERTY

APRIL 27, 2017
 FORAGE PRODUCTION SEMINAR AND
 FIELD DAY/FERAL HOG MANAGEMENT
 JACK HARTEL BUILDING 318 SAN JACINTO, LIBERTY

MAY 4, 2017
 HERD REBUILDING PROGRAM
 WITH DR. JOE PASCAL
 JACK HARTEL BUILDING 318 SAN JACINTO, LIBERTY

MAY 10, 2017
 PEST MANAGEMENT IN LIVESTOCK
 WITH DR. SONJA SWIGER
 JACK HARTEL BUILDING 318 SAN JACINTO, LIBERTY

JULY 17, 2017
 RICE PRODUCTION FIELD DAY
 TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH CENTER
 BEAUMONT

MAY 16-18, 2017
AND
SEPTEMBER 6-8, 2017
 BEEF 101

Beef 101 is a three-day intensive hands-on program designed for anyone who has an interest in expanding their knowledge of the total beef industry. The cost to attend \$675. To register please visit:

<http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu>



A MANAGEMENT CALENDAR FOR SPRING CALVING

The management calendar was developed as a production practice and management guide for Texas cattlemen who practice spring calving. The time of application of the procedure may vary depending upon the location of the herd and operator's management practices. Local adjustments and adaptations in some areas may be necessary due to differences in type of grass and cattle, amount of rainfall, length of grazing season and/or other factors. Therefore, the suggested dates may not always be appropriate and producers are encouraged to use the management procedures and guidelines that fit their operations. Assistance in making these adjustments for local ranches is immediately available to cattlemen from their county Extension agent. To obtain a copy of the Management Calendar for Spring Calving contact the Liberty County Extension Office at 936-334-3230 or access the calendar by following the link on our website at <http://liberty.agrilife.org>



A Longleaf Pine Community Project

A group of residents at a Northern Liberty County community, in Artesian Lakes Retreat, has taken on a project of planting different sizes of Longleaf Pine Trees throughout their community. Plantings have occurred at numerous homesites, ownership Lots and dedicated "Green Areas" throughout the community. Conditions for planting and growing this Pine Tree Specie were considered a perfect match in most areas in the Artesian Lakes area; by the having of sandy loam to clay soils, with slight or moderate acidic levels, along with a fluctuating rain water table during seasonal conditions. The reasons for writing this article are numerous but most importantly this native tree specimen is a unique historical tree that is in growing decline. However, many tree enthusiasts are now trying to bring back this beautiful tall majestic tree into the East Texas Landscape areas after such a drastic decline in the tree's native growing regions.

The Longleaf Pine Tree was once a stable growing tree in parts of East Texas, as well as throughout the Southeastern U.S. The natural range of Longleaf Pine Trees includes most of the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Plains, moving across the southeast U.S. from parts of Virginia, on into eastern Texas, as well as south into northern Florida. The Longleaf Pine Tree is also the official state tree of Alabama. This Longleaf Pine Tree once dominated the natural growing range in these areas mentioned above. Longleaf Pines, which once covered and estimated 90 million acres, now cover less than 3-5 percent of their natural original range according to the Arbor Day Foundation.

The beauty of the Longleaf Pine Tree and the history behind the tree with it's drastic decline was part the driving force as a volunteer project for the landowners at Artesian Lakes Retreat. There are three intern Master Gardeners who live in this community who are part of the planting, in more than one way or another, being Charlie and Cindy Jackson and John Gawronski. The community owners would pay for a tree, or group of small trees, ranging from a seedling of about 24 inches or to a tree about 6 feet tall or somewhere within. Lot owners may have planted one or may have elected to plant a whole lot more. The Community's open "Green Areas" where also planted with these Longleaf Pine Trees to add beauty to some open grassy areas within the community to add depth and viewing beauty, especially in future years.

The Longleaf Pine, *Pinus palustris*, is a native tree found in the southeastern United States. It can reach heights of 90-115 feet and a diameter of about 28 inches. There were writings and reports in the past that these trees reached the height of 154 feet and 47 inches in diameter in some areas of the U.S. The bark is a scaly reddish brown and the leaves are dark green with long needles occurring in bundles of three. The tree naturally prunes their own lower branches and grows near perfectly straight up into the sky. These trees can live over 300 years, taking almost half of that time to reach their full size. A unique trait about this tree is that in both the grass stage and mature stage, the specimens are fire resistant strengthening their native ability to survive. However, this only works when there are natural forest fires. Pine forests are fire climax systems, meaning that fire is necessary in order for pines to maintain dominance in the presence of hardwood competition. With a reduction over time in fire occurrence, for many reasons, hardwoods and other pines encroached on the native Longleaf Forests.



In East Texas, the pineywood forest dominates much of the landscape. *Shortleaf*, *Longleaf* and *Loblolly* pine are the three main native species of southern yellow pine that occupy most of the surrounding forests on both commercial and private land. Longleaf pines differs from other southern yellow pine in that seeds germinate soon after they are dispersed from the trees branches. Given optimum conditions, seeds can germinate in less than a week after they reach the ground. Seedlings are virtually stemless after one growing season. This stemless condition is another unique characteristics of the Longleaf pine. This stemless condition thus is known as the grass stage. In this grass stage is when the seedlings develop extensive root systems. The growth rate varies among individual plants, due to nutrients and soil conditions. In this grass stage, while immune to fire, the plant is quite appealing to feral hogs. The early settler's habit of releasing swine into the woodlands in the past was also greatly responsible for the decline of this tree species.

However, the biggest reason for decline can be attributed to human commodity uses. These Longleaf forests in the past were the source of naval stores for its resin, turpentine, and timber required both by the navy and merchants for their ships. The wood was long, had longevity and had straight cuts. Due to the resin within the wood, the planks had long term usage life over 200 plus years. The extremely long needles were popular for the once ancient craft of coiled basket making. The stumps and taproots would become saturated with resin and would not rot. This wood became popular with builders for long lasting wood products.

Most of the Longleaf pine forests were gone by the 1920s due to this commodity demand and they had a hard time coming back on their own because of fire suppression. Rather than replanting the long time growing Longleaf trees, the foresters replaced them with the faster growing pine trees, such as the Shortleaf and Loblolly pines, that would produce more short term economic benefits.

Longleaf pine tree restoration has become a major conservation priority in recent years. Efforts are being made to restore the Longleaf pine ecosystems within its natural range. Some groups such as the Longleaf Alliance are actively promoting research and education. The USDA offers some cost-sharing and technical assistance to private landowners for Longleaf restoration.

The Longleaf pine tree is a beautiful and unique native tree to the southeastern U.S. The showy bark and distinctive silvery white winter buds, decorative cones and low maintenance make it well suitable for where ever space will permit a tree to be planted. The community at Artesian Lakes Retreat has made an effort to restore the growing of these Longleaf pine trees throughout their community for their growing and viewing enjoyment today. However, the real enjoyment will be years to come when ones children get to reap the benefit of viewing these majestic tall trees throughout the landscape.



Longleaf Pine: *Pinus palustris*

Hardiness Zones: Zones 7-10

Tree Type: evergreen tree

Mature Size: 60-90 feet and spread of 30-40 feet

Growth rate: medium to fast, 13 inches to 24 inches per year

Sun Preference: full sun to partial shade

Soil Preference: alkaline, loamy, rich and clay soils. Drought tolerant once established

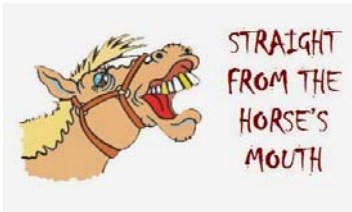
Attributes: dark green needles up to 18 inches long in fascicles of 3; ovoid-oblong cones that are 6-10 inches long and 5 inches wide

Scaly, light orange-brown bark

Grows in an oval shape with upright branches and an open crown

BACK TO THE BASICS WITH HORSE POWER

With Sandy Gammon



I can recall as a child listening to my dad talk about farming and logging with draft mules. Of course I was use to tractors and all of those great modern machines and wondered why in the world would anyone want to use, much less own, a draft mule.

We had beautiful quarter horses that worked cattle. Modern equipment that worked the field. Surely nobody wanted to go back to the OLD way of doing things. Now at the tender age of, well lets just say close to retirement and leave it at that, I realize maybe the OLD way of doing things was the best way after all. A much slower paced time. Not a time sitting behind a computer or sitting on the couch watching TV. When was the last time many of us spent a day in the sunshine soaking up some much needed Vitamin D? When was the last time, if ever, any of us toiled in the garden and field like our fathers and their fathers before them? If you would consider getting up off that couch and getting back to doing things the way our father and grandfather did then join me on a trip. Travel with me to Pennsylvania. Up to Amish country we will go, so watch the road for horse drawn buggies. Where farming with drafts is still the norm. You won't see a whole lot of draft mules but you will see a great deal of the chosen farming animal, The Percheron Draft Horse. The Percheron horse is a French beauty that was bred as a medieval warhorse. He was large enough, and strong enough, to carry knights with all of their heavy armor. The Percheron is a favored farming horse because of their ability to step carefully in the field. I visited the most wonderful place on earth (in my opinion) in Pennsylvania. Beautiful rolling hills, mountains in the background, and green alfalfa grass as far as the eye can see. The place . . . Windermere Farms. Owned for generations by the Allebach family this is the home to some of the most renowned Percheron horses in the world, such as 2 X National Champion Bentley which is pictured to the right. Gerald and Melissa Allebach greeted me with open arms and I made friends I will have forever. This is where I fell in love with the Percheron breed. And nobody knows the breed better than Gerald. If you are ever up that way stop in. But call first. He might be at a National or World Championship showing off his horses and winning titles. And tell him Sandy sent ya.



With the movement toward more organic farming, the draft horse is being utilized more and more. The Percheron, as with most draft horses, is tall in stature, heavy boned, and extremely muscular. They have shorter backs and hind-quarters than the horses we are use to seeing here. Their shoulders tend to be more upright, making their movement and conformation well suited for pulling. Draft horses are sweet tempered and have a natural curiosity and willingness to learn. They make wonderful companion horses and are favored for their docile demeanor.

On the farm the draft horse can be used to prepare seed beds, plant and cultivate row crops, provide power for cutting, raking and baling hay. They can haul and distribute feed on livestock operations. If you need it hauled the draft horse can haul it. They are also used to assist in pulling logs from wooded areas that modern logging equipment can't get to.

The decision to purchase a draft horse should not be taken lightly. Like a tractor, they require fuel. LOTS of fuel. In the form of good grain and quality hay. They can pose a safety risk. When spooked, their first thought is to run. Whether you are behind them or in front of them. And that's a LOT of horse power barreling toward you. The farming equipment can be hard to find. But thanks to the internet its much easier that before. The veterinarian bills can get expensive as can the farrier. But not as expensive as a broken down tractor and tractor tires.

So if you are ready to get back to the basics in farming, want a beautiful animal to pull your float in the local Christmas parade, or just enjoy a wagon ride down a country lane on a cool spring day, then consider a draft horse.

I DID!