

# LUBBOCK COUNTY SMALL ACREAGE LANDOWNER NEWS

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The purpose of this newsletter is to assist and educate small acreage landowners to make the best decision for their production needs and keep them updated on educational opportunities. If there is a topic you would like me to address please email me at [rj-scott@tamu.edu](mailto:rj-scott@tamu.edu) and I will try to address your request. If you would like to be on the newsletter email list let me know and I will be glad to add you to the list. The Lubbock county Extension website is <http://lubbock-tx.tamu.edu/>.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BOB BENSON MEMORIAL / 4-H EXCELL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Scheduled for August 18, 2009, at Plainview Country Club, Plainview, Texas. Tournament proceeds support two important South Plains 4-H activities:

The Bob Benson Memorial 4-H Scholarship - Fifty percent of the proceeds are used to fund the scholarship.

The 4-H EXCELL Scholarship - The remaining fifty percent is used to fund travel for South Plains 4-H members who have qualified for National 4-H activities. EXCELL is an acronym for **EX**perience, **C**itizenship, and **EX**amples for **L**ifetime Leadership. Funds are administered through the South Plains District (2) Extension Office and overseen by the Bob Benson Memorial / 4-H EXCELL Committee.

The format is a 4-person scramble with prizes to the top three teams. Lunch will be provided prior to the tournament.

The Bob Benson Memorial / 4-H EXCELL Committee needs your help. We are asking each county to obtain the following 'minimum support' for the tournament. However, support above and beyond the 'minimum' is needed and will be greatly appreciated.

One Team	\$200 per Team
One Tee Sponsor	\$150
One Green Sponsor	\$100
One Tournament Sponsor	\$50 to \$99
Door Prizes	3 items

Entries and sponsors are due by August 7, 2009. The tournament is limited to 22 teams so get your entries in early!

For more information contact Bryan Reynolds, Lynn County Extension Agent 806/561-4562

## TEN SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM WILDFIRES

With the record-breaking Texas temperatures, wildfire activity is picking up across the state. Since June 25, Texas Forest Service has responded to 110 wildfires that have burned 4,540 acres, including the Goose Paddle Fire, which burned 381 acres in Walker County and the Reese Lane Fire, which has burned 1,950 acres in Colorado County.



The following precautions can help prepare your home and lessen the damage to your property in the event of a wildfire.

1. Propane (LPG) tanks should be far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of a wildfire. Keep the area around the tank clear of flammable vegetation.
2. Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from buildings.
3. All combustibles, such as firewood, wooden picnic tables, boats, stacked lumber, etc. should be kept away from structures.

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied. We will seek to provide reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities for any of our meetings. We request that you contact Texas AgriLife Extension Service - (806) 775-1680, as soon as possible to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require.

4. Clear roof surfaces and gutters regularly to avoid build-up of flammable materials such as leaves and other debris.
5. Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet or more.
6. In rural areas, clear a fuel break of at least three times the fuel length around all structures.
7. Keep tools, such as a ladder long enough to reach your roof, shovel, rake and buckets for water, nearby.
8. Place connected garden hoses at all sides of your home for emergency use.
9. Make sure your family has an emergency evacuation plan.
10. Know all emergency exits from your neighborhood.

A few things you should be aware of this summer.

1. Know if there is a burn ban in place for your town, city or county.
2. If you burn, clear large areas of combustible material, such as grass, leaves and scrap wood. Be sure you burn only what you want to burn.
3. Do not leave your burn pile unattended and have a hose at the ready.

### HOW TO TAKE THE STING OUT OF TEXAS BULLNETTLE

**Works Best:** If you have only a few or scattered Texas bullnettle plants to control or do not have a ground broadcast sprayer.

**When to Apply:** Texas bullnettle should be sprayed in the spring when the plants begin to flower.

#### Prepare the Equipment

To properly apply the herbicide using this method, you only need a pump-up garden sprayer, backpack sprayer, cattle sprayer or a sprayer mounted on an ATV. If there are many plants to spray, backpack and ATV sprayers are more efficient. Your sprayer needs an adjustable cone nozzle (X6 to X8 orifice size) or a flat fan nozzle that can deliver a coarse spray (large droplets).

#### Prepare the Herbicide Mixture

You can expect 76 to 100 percent control of Texas bullnettle by spraying with a mixture of 1 percent Grazon P+D™, GunSlinger™, Weedmaster™ or Range Star™ in water. To prepare the spray mixture, fill the spray tank half full of water, and add the desired amount of herbicide and surfactant.

Then continue to fill the tank with water to the desired level. Adding a color dye to the mixture marks the plants that have

been sprayed. The following table of recommended spray mixtures shows the amounts of ingredients for typical tank sizes.

#### Spray the Texas Bullnettle

Spray Texas bullnettle plants when they begin to flower in the spring. Wet all foliage of the plant thoroughly until the leaves glisten – but not to the point of dripping. Do not mow or disturb the plants for at least 90 days after treatment. Do not spray directly on desirable forbs or brush. In addition, do not spray when winds exceed 10 mph, when temperatures exceed 90 degrees F or when the humidity is below 10 percent.

#### Keep these points in mind:

- Follow the herbicide label directions.
- The treatment cost escalates rapidly as the number of Texas bullnettle per acre increases.
- Do not spray when the plants are wet.
- Avoid spray contact on desirable forbs and shrubs.
- Controlling Texas bullnettle is not a one-time job. You may need to re-treat periodically.

For complete mixing instructions visit our website <http://lubbock-tx.tamu.edu> click on Publications then go to Pasture and Rangeland Publications



### NITRATE POISONING

Sorghums, millets, corn, oats, wheat, rye, and pigweed.

**Conditions:** Drought (moisture stress) or cloudy (low-light) conditions prevents normal plant growth. Under this conditions, the plant accumulates nitrates mainly in stems and lower leaves instead of converting the nitrate to protein.

**Causes:** Consumption of plant parts with high levels of nitrates. Toxic levels usually exceed 1%. The term "nitrate toxicity" is commonly used but the toxic principle is actually nitrite. Nitrate is converted to nitrite in the rumen. Nitrite is absorbed from the rumen converting blood hemoglobin to methemoglobin. Methemoglobin cannot transport oxygen to body tissues, so animals die from oxygen insufficiency.

**Animal Symptoms:** Labored breathing if detected early enough.

**Treatment:** Acute - treat with methylene blue, Chronic - treat with Vitamin A.

**Prevention:**

1. Don't graze during stress periods, monitor nitrate levels to determine levels in forage are safe.
2. Don't graze too short nitrates accumulates mainly in stems and older leaves.
3. Don't feed high nitrate forage free choice. Nitrate does not dissipate from hay like HCN (prussic acid).

Once high nitrates levels are reached they stay high. (it must be diluted by feeding it mix with hay that is nitrate free and or discarded). Horses and hogs are less tolerant than ruminants. Plant samples can be sent to: Texas Veterinary Diagnostic Medical Laboratory or Texas Cooperative Extension, Soil, Water, and Forage Testing Laboratory.

For more information on this topic visit our website <http://lubbock-tx.tamu.edu> click on Publications then go to **Pasture and Rangeland Publications**

### PRUSSIC ACID

Primarily occurs in sorghums commonly less than 1½ foot. (johnsongrass, grain sorghum, sorghum-sudan), wild cherry, and occasionally on white clover and birdsfoot trefoil. Prussic Acid does not occur in pearl millet or corn.

**Conditions:** Poisoning is associated with consumption of plant parts with high levels of prussic acid, by a cyanogenic compound that is highly poisoning. Prussic acid is associated with rapidly growing plants. Occurs in young plant tissue that is damaged or stressed, (for example: after a frost or drought after heavy N fertilization) or mechanically injured (after 4 wheelers or ATVs are run over a field). Under these conditions the cells are ruptured mixing their exzynme content with that of Dhurrin, breaking down dhurria to prussic acid.

**Causes:** Plant HCN (Hydrogen cyanide) levels greater than 50 ppm dry mater basis or 200 ppm on wet basis.

**Mode of Action:** Cyanogenic glucosides are converted by enzymatic hydrolysis to HCN (Hydrogen cyanide). HCN causes acute respiratory inhibition by inhibiting the enzyme cytochrome oxidase.

**Animal Symptoms:** Labor breathing if detected early enough. May occur minutes (10-15 min) after consumption of feed.

**Treatment:** Treat with sodium thiosulfate or methylene blue to detoxify CN.

**Prevention:** If plants have been injured defer grazing until they are recovered from injury. After a hard freeze, or severe drought, avoid grazing for approximately 1 week. After a rain or irrigation on drought stressed fields wait at least 2 weeks after plants begin to grow before grazing.

Due to volatilization of CN compounds, hay can be fed; however, you still need to monitor forage by taking samples and have them tested to confirm 'safety' in feeding the hay. Forage samples can be sent to: Texas Veterinary Diagnostic Medical Laboratory to determine toxic levels for a fee of \$15.00 in-state.

For more information on this topic visit our website <http://lubbock-tx.tamu.edu> click on Publications then go to **Pasture and Rangeland Publications.**

### AGRICULTURAL WEB COURSES AVAILABLE FOR SMALL ACREAGE LANDOWNERS!

The small acreage landowner is a growing segment in Texas agriculture. Per Ag Census statistics, 38% of all farms and ranches in Texas are ranked under 50 acres in size. The small acreage farm or ranch owner may have purchased their small acreage operation for many reasons - retirement, a source of alternate income, or to impart a life-style change. Small scale farmers/ranchers many times have arrived in the enterprise with the need for education concerning enterprise choices, basic production guidelines, as well as advice on marketing strategies and agricultural legalities. One characteristic also typical of small scale farmers/ranchers is that they have hurried schedules in many cases, but are considered very technically astute.

With the growing success of University level distance learning opportunities, the same webcourse access is now provided for adult learners in non-degree seeking courses. The Small Scale Web-Based Program is targeted to small scale farmers/ranchers in need of agricultural courses to address some of the most common small acreage enterprises and problems. The courses are completely asynchronous (can be completed in time available) but at the same time, interactive. The courses will be conducted using the Moodle course management system. The fee for taking the webcourses is low at \$50 per course for the introductory courses. Interested small acreage landowners may visit the Small Acreage Landowner Webcourse website at <http://grovesite.com/tamu/RI> or "myspace" page at <http://www.myspace.com/smallfarmprogram> for more information on the courses currently available and the course schedules. Registration can be done directly at <http://agrilifeevents.tamu.edu/>. This educational opportunity is being offered through Texas AgriLife Extension Service of the Texas A&M University System. Courses will be added during the 2009 year, so save the link and check back frequently.

**The Beef Cattle Management Course** (6 week course) is currently scheduled for the summer for July 27 - September 4, 2009, October 5 - November 13, 2009 and January 4 - February 12, 2010. Beef cattle management has many components. Experienced ranchers spend a lifetime learning, however, there are some critical components that will need to be identified and studied before responsibly entering into this type of enterprise. In this basic course, students are introduced to all of the important components of beef cattle management. The beef cattle feeding and nutrition program for small producers is typically fairly concentrated due to the smaller acreage available. Basic nutritional needs are discussed per class of animal and expected growth goals. Options are presented balancing protein and energy needs. The subject of waste management is also discussed ensuring the environmentally sound practices. The most common beef cattle breeds are provided including discussion on traits of each. The basic breeding systems used by cattle producers are detailed and the simple genetics incorporated. Matching breed (maternal and paternal traits) to agricultural enterprise is a main educational goal. The small farm producer has many options to market beef cattle raised. Traditional forms of trade as well as technologically advanced options are presented as well as methods used to reduce risk. This course will address a comprehensive need for education for small landowners entering into an operation including beef cattle.

**The Resource Inventory Course** (4 week course) is currently scheduled for July 6 - July 31, 2009, September 14 - October 9, 2009, and November 30 - December 30, 2009. County Extension Agents report that large numbers of small farm producers will purchase land before an agricultural enterprise is determined. Identifying resources ranging from the amount of funds to the amount of time available to the operation is essential before an enterprise can be selected. If all resources available to the operation are not identified prior to selecting an enterprise, landowners may find more labor, machinery, land, or finances are required to meet their goals than initially thought. This web course will assist landowners in the identification of all available resources as well as the creation of a complete inventory of these resources. Once the Resource Inventory is completed, the selection of enterprises that correspond to all resources of the operation will be much easier. This course will assist small landowners in answering the question, "I bought some land...now what do I do with it?"

**The Pasture Management Course** (5 week course) is currently scheduled for July 6 - August 7, 2009, August 14 - September 14, 2009, and November 2 - December 4, 2009. The establishment of a quality pasture for any livestock species will be the most healthy and economic option for any ruminant livestock species. Educational modules in this course will include: the nutritive value of forages; the importance of

stocking rate to the operation and how to manage it most efficiently; hay storage and feeding; and forage establishment. This course will be appropriate for small landowners seeking to establish forage/hay operations as well as preparing pastureland for a livestock enterprise.

**The Introduction to Enterprise Budgeting Course** (3 week course) is currently scheduled for July 20 - August 7, 2009, September 28 - October 16, 2009, and January 11 - January 29, 2010. Deciding how to organize an operation as well as what to produce and how to do it economically should be made with the goals of the operation in mind. Developing and using enterprise budgets can help improve the quality of information available to you to make these decisions as well as evaluate alternative enterprises. These enterprise budgets are an estimate of the costs and returns associated with the production of a product or products. When done correctly, enterprise budgets can help identify: enterprises that contribute (or can contribute) the highest returns, the amount of labor needed, the amount and types of equipment needed, how to best use the available equipment, the amount of operating capital needed, the best production practices to use, areas where costs may be reduced, prices required to break even, as well as the level of risk exposure within enterprises. This "hands-on" course will provide participants with information on how to develop enterprise budgets as well as enable them to develop their own enterprise budget(s) for crops and/or livestock currently produced (or considering to be produced) on their operation.



**Robert Scott**  
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