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Montgomery County Agricultural Resources Newsletter for Livestock, Equine & Forage Producers

Private Pesticide Applicator Training for TDA License!

The training will be held on Tuesday morning, September 19, at the Montgomery County Extension Office. The training program will begin at 9:00 AM and last about 4 hours. Study material must be purchased ahead of time to assist with preparation (included in the registration fee). The study guide is actually utilized during the training portion of the program. There is \$50.00 cost for the training to cover program materials, and related costs. The registration fee can be paid when reserving your seat. Contact the Montgomery County Extension Office to reserve a seat at the September 19th training. Documentation will be provided at the conclusion of the training to be used in securing a test date.

What About Profitability? Exploring Possible Opportunities!

What if you could have better control of the price you received for product marketed, would you be interested? The Montgomery County Beef Improvement Association will hold an educational meeting on September 21 that may very well answer some of these questions. Understanding market activity, expanding the buyers for your cattle and ways to improve your management decisions are all ways that can impact your profitability. This educational meeting will begin at 6:00pm with a meal on Thursday evening, September 21, at the Montgomery County Extension office. The program will follow the meal. Please RSVP by September 15 to attend the program. You can register or receive more information by calling 936-539-7822 or email m-heimer@tamu.edu. The evening meal is being sponsored by Montgomery County Farm Bureau.

Forage Testing Campaign

This year the Montgomery County AgriLife Extension Service in cooperation with the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation Board will sponsor a forage testing

analysis promotion. We have been able to produce forage this year with more precipitation than we anticipated. Producers are invited to bring in samples from hay they intend to feed or market. We will take all the samples to the TAMU Forage Testing Lab for analysis. **These samples need to be in the Montgomery County Extension Office before Monday, October 2nd.** The AgriLife Extension Service has a bale coring tool that can be checked out to assist with sample collection. We greatly appreciate the support of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation Board by sponsoring this event each year.

24th Annual Southeast Texas Grounds Maintenance Conference

This conference is designed to provide anyone involved with novice or professional landscape maintenance and management with the latest in skills and knowledge. The conference will be held on Thursday, October 19. The conference will feature presentations on Feral Hogs, Turf Grass Management, Termite Populations, Insect Problems in the Landscape, and an update on current pesticide regulations. There will be 5 hours of CEU credit for TDA and SPCS license holders. Check our website for more information or Call 936-539-7822 or email m-heimer@tamu.edu to get registered. Early registration ends October 9, 2017.

Winter Pastures for Southeast Texas - Reduce hay needs and winter-feeding expenses by using winter pastures.

The Montgomery County Ag Committee and MCBIA present this informative winter pasture program on Thursday evening, October 26, for producers across the area. The program will feature presentations by Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson from the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Overton Center.

Topics will include:

- Cool-season forages and variety selection
- Monthly and seasonal forage production potential
- Establishment and fertilization
- Grazing and utilization strategies
- Impact of cool-season annuals on warm-season perennials

We will also have the forage test results back and have hay samples on hand to compare the lab analysis to visual evaluations. Feeding hay efficiently is money saved.

To register for the program or receive more information, call 936-539-7822 or email m-heimer@tamu.edu. A registration fee of \$20.00 will cover the meal and program materials. The meeting will be held at the Montgomery County Extension Office. Please RSVP by October 24.

Quality Management Equals Quality Product

The Montgomery County Beef Improvement Association and the Ag Committee are committed to providing beef cattle producers with the latest skills and technology necessary to produce a quality product for market. Best management practices look at any product administered to the animal. On Thursday evening, November 16, Dr. Paul Schmitt, of Beard-Navasota Veterinary Clinic, will demonstrate the consequences of not following the label, site selection, and the reduced carcass value as a result of the

management actions. The program will begin at 6:30pm at the Montgomery County Extension Office. Please RSVP by November 24.

Soil Testing Campaign

The campaign is designed to encourage producers to use soil testing to build their soil fertility program. A soil test is a diagnostic tool to assist with the decision making process. The Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering this program at no cost to assist Forage and Livestock Producers with determining the current fertility levels of the fields used to produce forage or hay. The soil analysis provides the information needed to determine the current fertility and pH levels. The samples need to be submitted to the Montgomery County Extension Office by **Friday, December 15, 2017**.

Potassium is for Persistence

We rely heavily on our bermudagrass pastures and hay meadows during the summer in some parts of Texas. Often times we are disappointed with production, see a thinning of our stand and/or see disease like symptoms. This is often times referred to as "Bermudagrass Decline." We quickly blame weather. Granted weather can have an impact on each of those issues. However, there is often a deeper problem that we need to access.

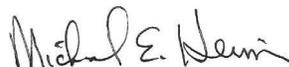
Primary Causes:

1. **Low Potassium (K) Fertility:** A deficiency in K will result in poor stress tolerance, reduced winter hardiness, decreased disease resistance, and reduced rhizome and stolon production. To determine if K deficiency is causing the problem, a soil analysis will be imperative. Collect representative soil samples from the affected areas and another from areas nearby that are unaffected or less affected. More soil testing information can be located here: (<http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>). Potassium deficiency may occur during periods of water stress. The plant absorbs K from the soil by drawing in water from the soil that contains K. Therefore, even if the soil test indicates an adequate level of soil test K, a drought can reduce the amount of K available to the plant.
2. **Low Soil pH:** There are several ways that soil pH causes a problem. First, toxic levels of soluble Al can occur in soils where the soil pH has dropped too low. This burns back the fine root hairs and prevents root growth. Low soil pH also reduces the availability of other nutrients such as P, K, Mg, Ca, and others. Ultimately, low soil pH starves the plant of water and nutrients. Soil pH (as evaluated by soil test) showed not to be less than 5.5 for Coastal bermudagrass and 5.8 for Tifton 85 bermudagrass. Overseeded forages such as clover and ryegrass need a pH of 6.0 or higher for optimum growth.
3. **Leaf Spot:** Helminthosporium leaf spot (*Bipolaris* spp.) is commonly associated with bermudagrass decline. Helminthosporium leaf spot commonly attacks bermudagrass stands where K levels are low.
4. **Ryegrass:** The past two springs have been abundant with rainfall and ryegrass (volunteer or otherwise). In the spring when bermudagrass is breaking dormancy, an abundance of ryegrass can out-compete bermudagrass for water, nutrients and

light. Heavy growth of ryegrass and removal as hay can deplete large amounts of K from the soil, thus effectively reducing the amount of K available to the bermudagrass. To avoid this problem, be sure to avoid late applications of N to ryegrass stands and utilize as much ryegrass forage as possible by grazing.

5. **Drought:** Bermudagrass is quite drought tolerant. However, if drought is combined with other stressors such as K and pH stress drought can be challenging for bermudagrass to handle. Remember to maintain soil fertility during good growing conditions (periods of rainfall) so if drought does become an issue bermudagrass will be better prepared, so to speak.
6. **Poor Nutrient Management in Hay Production:** Bermudagrass can be an excellent hay crop if properly managed. High rates of nitrogen fertilization with no attention to depletion of other plant nutrients (especially K) can lead to low soil potassium and the associated problems as listed above. Annual soil testing and special attention to K levels with help alleviate these problems.

Sincerely,



Michael E. Heimer,
County Extension Agent, Agriculture

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