



9020 Airport Road

Conroe, Texas 77303

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Montgomery County Agriculture and Natural Resources Newsletter for Livestock, Equine and Forage Producers

Electronic Newsletter Available

If you would like to receive this newsletter via an electronic mailout, meaning that you would receive it in your email inbox please send an email to April Fagan at the Extension Office indicating your intent to be added to that mailout. Send that email to: amfagan@ag.tamu.edu

Agricultural and Landowner Resources Workshop

Interested in financial and technical support for improvements to your operation or property?? We invite you to come visit with representatives from a variety of agricultural organizations who have resources available for your voluntary projects. **Please join us from 2-4 PM on Saturday, May 18 at the Montgomery County AgriLife Extension Office at 9020 Airport Road in Conroe, TX.** You will have a chance to hear about programs that may benefit your operations and talk one on one with representatives about your specific interests. Programs included in this "one-stop workshop" cover agricultural operations, feral hog management, soil health, grants for failing septic/aerobic system, and

more. Refreshments will be served. If you plan to attend, please contact April Fagan at 936-539-7822 or amfagan@ag.tamu.edu.

For more information regarding the program, please contact Justin Bower at 713-499-6653 or justin.bower@h-gac.com.

Pond Management Program

Sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Board of Montgomery County

Date: April 25, 2019

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Montgomery County Extension Office, Tom LeRoy Educational Building

Do you have a pond and need to know more about management of that pond? Are you exploring the possibility of having a new pond installed or an existing pond renovated? As things heat up outside, the phone lines heat up at the Extension Office with questions regarding management of ponds and the ecosystem within that pond. This program will be very beneficial to have attended going into the spring and summer.

Ron Marek with NRCS will be with us to discuss Construction, Engineering, Erosion and Renovation. Dr Todd Sink will be with us to discuss Pond Health, Fish, Aquatic Weeds, Stocking and some general management. Two CEU hours will be provided to those that are maintaining their pesticide applicator license. Please rsvp to amfagan@ag.tamu.edu or 936-539-7822 by April 18th so that I have an approximate head count for the night. Refreshments will be provided. If you miss the rsvp date, call anyway, I bet we can squeeze you in.

Freeze Branding Clinic for All Equine

Sponsored by: TAMU AgriLife Extension Service/ Montgomery County
Montgomery County Adult Horse Committee

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Montgomery County Fairgrounds Expo Arena 9055 Airport Rd, Conroe
5:00 PM till 7:00 PM

Brands should be registered with the appropriate County Clerk's Office. The Montgomery County Adult Horse Committee will have a variety of stock irons available, but horse owners are welcome to bring in their own irons for use.

Branding Fee: \$20.00 per animal

You must call 936-539-7822 to make a reservation.

Theft Prevention Information will be provided for equine owner benefits.

Virulent Newcastle Disease

As part of its overall mission to protect American agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) works to keep the country's livestock and poultry healthy. APHIS works to keep foreign animal diseases out of the country and responds when cases do appear in the nation's herds and flocks.

One disease of concern in virulent Newcastle disease, previously referred to as Exotic Newcastle Disease. Virulent Newcastle disease is a deadly viral disease affecting all species of birds. Virulent Newcastle disease spreads quickly and can infect and cause death even in vaccinated poultry. All bird owners should be aware of the basics, how to help prevent the disease, and the steps to take if you suspect your birds may have it.

Know the Signs of Virulent Newcastle Disease If you see any of the following signs in your birds, they could be sick and should be checked out: Sudden death and increased death loss in flock; Sneezing, gasping for air, nasal discharge, coughing; Greenish, watery diarrhea; Decreased activity, tremors, drooping wings, twisting of head and neck, circling, complete stiffness; and Swelling around the eyes and neck.

Report Sick Birds ASAP If your birds are sick or dying, report it right away! Early detection and testing of possible cases of virulent Newcastle disease is critical to preventing a large-scale outbreak.

Contact your agricultural extension office/agent, local veterinarian, local animal health diagnostic laboratory, or the State veterinarian. Or, call USDA toll free at 1-866-5367593, and we'll put you in touch with a local contact. There's no charge for a disease investigation.

How Virulent Newcastle Disease Spreads Virulent Newcastle disease spreads when healthy birds come in direct contact with bodily fluids from sick birds. The disease affects almost all birds and poultry, even vaccinated poultry. The virus can travel on manure, egg flats, crates, other farming materials or equipment, and people who have picked up the virus on their clothing, shoes, or hands.

Prevent Virulent Newcastle Disease with Good Biosecurity The best way to keep your birds healthy is to practice biosecurity. Birds can become sick or die from exposure to just a few unseen bacteria, viruses or parasites. In a single day, these germs can multiply and infect every bird on your premises.

So protect your birds by taking a few simple steps. These include: Restricting traffic onto and off of your property. Disinfecting shoes, clothes, hands, egg trays or flats, crates, vehicles, and tires. Avoiding visits to other poultry farms or bird owners. If you do, be sure to change clothes and clean your hands and shoes before entering your own bird area. Washing hands and scrubbing boots before and after entering a poultry area; and Isolating any birds returning from shows for 30 days before placing them with the rest of the flock.

Smart Practices When Buying Birds Buy from a reputable hatchery or dealer, and request certification from suppliers that the birds were legally imported or come from U.S. stock and were healthy before shipment. Also, maintain records of all sales and shipments of flocks. Keep new birds separated from your other birds for at least 30 days. Keep young and old birds and birds of different species and from different sources apart.

African Swine Fever

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African Swine Fever (ASF as it is commonly referred to) has been in the news recently as a result of an outbreak in China. It is a major health threat to swine production in many countries, but fortunately it is not in the US. ASF is a highly contagious viral disease that causes death in domestic and wild pigs of all ages. Symptoms include high fever; decreased appetite and weakness; red, blotchy skin or skin lesions; diarrhea and vomiting; and coughing and difficulty in breathing. Mortality rate is as high as 100% within 2-10 days. ASF is spread from hog to hog via body fluids and some ticks as well as feeding uncooked leftovers or by travelling from an infected farm to an uninfected one. ASF is not a threat to human health and cannot be transmitted from pigs to humans and it is not a food safety issue for people. Symptoms are similar to classical swine fever so accurate diagnosis is important.

ASF was first identified in Africa in the 1920s. In 1957 it was found in Portugal after pigs were fed leftovers from airplanes from a nearby airport containing infected pork. Smaller outbreaks have occurred in other European and Caribbean countries since then. In 2007 it was reported in the Republic of Georgia and then China in 2018. In 2019 it has been reported in Mongolia, Vietnam and Japan (in March). Since there is no treatment or vaccine for ASF, the only option to reduce its spread is depopulation of sick or infected animals.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service began to research it in the 1970s. In the 1990s, they began focusing on the genome of the virus (containing about 150 genes) to determine which genes might cause the sickness and keep them from activating the disease. Then they could then create a live attenuated vaccine, like the vaccines for measles, polio and smallpox in humans. That program was slowed by lack of funding in 2004 but has recently been revived with assistance from the Department of Homeland Security. In the meantime, since there is no vaccine, producers should practice good biosecurity management by restricting movement of hogs and people on and off their locations. In addition, Customs and Border Protection is on alert for passengers arriving from affected countries who might be carrying uncooked pork products. In March, over one million pounds of illegal products containing pork from China were confiscated in New York. China has culled over 1,000,000 pigs in an effort to control their ASF outbreak.

In addition to the research on vaccine development, there is also research on diagnostic methods. Being able to quickly and accurately determine presence of the contagious virus is critical to containment, since there are no vaccines currently. In one method, a rope is suspended in a pen for pigs to chew on and then the oral fluids can be collected and tested for the virus, a simple and effective method to test for a group of swine. Currently there are two vaccine candidates but no approved vaccine. This work is being conducted through USDA APHIS and the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology.

The US pork industry is a powerhouse with its' 2018 inventory of 73 million head producing 20 billion pounds of pork. But it is well behind No. 1 ranked China with 433 million and the No.2 European Union's 150 million head of pigs. But Texas isn't as well known for hog production. In 2018 it ranked 18th (out of 50 states) with an inventory of about one million head, the majority located in the Panhandle, well behind No. 1 ranked Iowa with an inventory of 23 million head. An ASF outbreak, however accidental or unintentional, would devastate the US swine herd and pork production. If you travel internationally, don't bring pork products back unless you declare them!

TAKING THE “HOW TO?” OUT OF YOUR QUESTION!

BY

**Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, RAVEN
Environmental, and Montgomery-Harris County Forest Landowners Association**

Whether your goal is forest health management, woodland aesthetics, wildlife enhancement, or wildfire prevention, come enjoy a one-stop site tour of the W. Goodrich Jones State Forest's four commonly used practices for vegetative control – mulching, mowing, prescribed fire, and herbicide.

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Starts at 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Bring the entire family

Afterward, enjoy a conversation with professional natural resource managers on what may best fit your goals on your land and get an introduction to MY LAND CONNECTOR, an App that helps landowners find land management service providers, assists service providers in pulling together land management services, and works for any size property.

**Meet at Texas A&M Forest Service's Jones State Forest parking area at 1328 FM 1488,
Conroe, TX 77384**

**Registration is required. Email JonesStateForest@tfs.tamu.edu or visit
[JonesStateForest/Eventbrite.com](https://www.JonesStateForest/Eventbrite.com)**



<https://beefcattleshortcourse.com/>

August 5-7, 2019 at Texas A&M University

The Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course has a rich tradition and historical place in the programs emanating from the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University. Dating as far back as 1942, Professor John K Riggs started the first in a series of Beef Cattle Short Courses held on the campus of Texas A&M College to discuss the results of beef cattle research from the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station with Texas beef producers. This historical beginning and purpose is still the standard today for the Beef Cattle Short Course held at Texas A&M University.

Today the highly respected TAM Beef Cattle Short Course is nationally and internationally recognized as the largest attended beef cattle educational program of its type in the world. It has gained the respect from organizations, associations, Land Grant universities and agencies alike as the focal point for beef cattle educational information. The Cattleman's College features more than 20 concurrent sessions. Topics include animal health, nutrition, reproduction, breeding, genetics, selection, research, marketing and handling. Management sessions will cover business, forage, range, and purebred cattle. Topics such as landowner issues and fence building will be featured at this BCSC. Sessions are designed for everyone, from the newest member of the industry to the most seasoned producer.

A number of pesticide CEUs, veterinarian CECs and BQA credits are available to attendees. Additionally, over 150 agriculture related businesses and trade show exhibitors annually attend the course and attest to the fact that it is the most highly attended activity of its kind anywhere in the United States. Annually over 1,700 participants attend the Beef Cattle Short Course to gain valuable knowledge about beef cattle production.



May 30, 2019 from 4:00pm - 6:30pm

Weathering The Storm

WITH YOUR ANIMALS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
TOM LEROY EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

Hurricane Harvey taught all of us the importance of being prepared and informed. Procedures and protocols have been developed as a result of that disaster event. This program is for the public to attend and gain understanding about what to do when we have a disaster event that creates a need for livestock, pets, and people to be relocated. A panel of key people will be at this program to answer your questions. The Montgomery County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Command Unit will be on-site for you to see and learn about.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



This program is designed for:

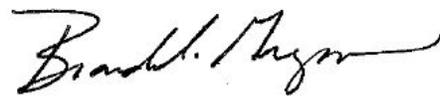
- Anyone who would like to be a volunteer during a disaster event, and would like to be a part of a directory of possible volunteers.
- People willing to transport or provide means of transport for animals/livestock.
- People that might intend to provide feed, water, or other material resources for displaced animals.
- Veterinarians that might be volunteering during a disaster event.
- Anyone interested in having a "heads up" before a disaster event occurs.

Light refreshments will be provided. Please contact amfagan@ag.tamu.edu or 936-539-7822 to let us know of your intent to attend by May 24, 2019.

Sponsored by: [Montgomery County Adult Horse Committee](#)

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners' Courts of Texas Cooperating

Sincerely,



Brandon S. Gregson

County Extension Agent, Agriculture

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