

# Oldham County Ag Talk

## January/February 2016



**Amanda Spiva**

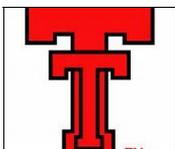
**CEA-AG/NR**

**P: 806-267-2692**

**F: 806-267-0117**

**C: 940-765-7461**

**E: [Amanda.spiva@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Amanda.spiva@ag.tamu.edu)**



Thank you for taking the time to read my first Ag Newsletter as the Oldham Agriculture and Natural Resources County Extension Agent. I have been in this position since July, 2015. I have met and know a few of you that will be receiving this newsletter. For those whom I have not met, here is a little about myself.

I have lived in Oldham County for three years now, and am married to Clint Spiva. Prior to moving to Wildorado I completed my undergraduate Animal Science degree at Texas Tech and my Masters in Animal Science at West Texas A&M.

I look forward to many rewarding years to come as your County Agent. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, needs, or wants that the Extension Office can help you with.

### **What is Extension**

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a unique education agency with a statewide network of professional educators, trained volunteers, and county offices. It reaches into every Texas county to address local priority needs. Some of our major efforts are in mitigating drought impacts; conserving water use in homes, landscapes, and production agriculture; improving emergency management; enhancing food security; and protecting human health through education about diet, exercise, and disease prevention and management.

AgriLife Extension demonstrates the latest technology and best practices to improve the state's food and fiber system, which serves all Texas consumers and contributes nine percent of the gross domestic product. Texas 4-H, our primary youth program, engages some 600,000 youth every year in learning projects, leadership development, and community service.

*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*

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## **2016 Programs to be on the Look out For**

In April look for a program that will cover updated weed and pest control for crops that are generally planted in this area. New regulations and precautions will also be discussed at this meeting. Also either in April or May there will be a meeting that will discuss advantages/disadvantages on treated and untreated seed.

In June there will be a Beef and Commodity Marketing and Risk Management Program. Also later in the summer an Estate Planning Seminar will be offered.

During the year also keep an eye out for some gardening programs that are in the works.

## **THE VFD (VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE)**

The VFD is part of the U. S. 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. My colleague Dr. Ted McCollum, at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Amarillo, has recently 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 will go 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 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.



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## VFD Continued

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.

## Which Grain Sorghum Hybrids have Significant Apparent Tolerance/Resistance to Sugarcane Aphid?

*In preparing for Sorghum planting season, below is an article from Texas A&M Agrilife Extension regarding Sugarcane Aphid resistant hybrids.*

Dr. Brent Bean, agronomist, United Sorghum Checkoff Program (and formerly Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo), has compiled an initial list of grain sorghum hybrids that appear to have substantial to strong tolerance/resistance to sugarcane aphid. Some other hybrids may also have tolerance at moderate levels, but those are not listed. Dr. Bean has visited across the Sorghum Belt with companies, state university staff, farmers, etc. to arrive at this list as of Dec. 17, 2015. Producers should consult the USCP website, [www.sorghumcheckoff.com](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com), for possible updates beginning in early January.

Before I say anything else about how to use this list or how it was derived, know this: All commercial grain sorghum hybrids, including these listed below, have at least some level of susceptibility (and most are highly susceptible) to sugarcane aphid. **All hybrids must be scouted, and the same treatment thresholds apply to these hybrids as any other.** No hybrid is immune to SCA. *Some Texas farmers made the mistake of assuming too much about the early purported tolerant hybrids in 2015, and they failed to treat SCA in timely fashion, or even scout their fields regularly if at all.*

The picture on the left is the test plot in Vega before it was infested with SCA. The picture on the right is one plant of many that were infested. There were some varieties that had a greater resistance and the data collected from the plot here was sent in.



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Company/Brand	Hybrid†	Maturity
Alta	AG1201	Early
Alta	AG1301	Medium-Early
Alta	AG1203	Medium-Early
B&H Genetics	BH 4100	Medium
B&H Genetics	BH 3400	Very Early
DeKalb	DKS 37-07	Medium-Early
DeKalb	Pulsar	Medium-Early
Mycogen	627	Medium-Early
Mycogen	1G688	Medium
Pioneer	83P17	Medium-Full
Pioneer	83P56	Medium-Full
Richardson	RS260E	Medium-Full
Richardson	Sprint W FG	Medium-Early
Richardson	Jowar I	Full
Richardson	Swift	Very Early
Sorghum Partners	SP 7715	Medium-Full
Sorghum Partners	SP 78M30	Medium-Full
Sorghum Partners	SP 73B12	Medium-Full
Warner Seed	W-844-E	Medium-Full

†In spite of resistance or strong tolerance all hybrids are still susceptible at some level to sugarcane aphid and must be scouted like any other hybrid for threshold treatment levels of SCA.

## Understand the Potential Caveats of this Initial List of SCA-Resistant Hybrids

- Much of the above information is derived only from seedling tests conducted in a controlled setting in a growth chamber or greenhouse. Real life conditions in your field are not a guarantee that the hybrid will demonstrate the same level of tolerance/resistance.
- Several of the above hybrids also have documented favorable reactions to SCA in field conditions, and additionally, there may be numerous reports from producers, Extension staff, field scouts, and crop consultants noting an individual hybrid performed well relative to other neighboring hybrids, etc. Dr. Bean notes that in most cases these hybrids have exhibited the ability to withstand higher infestation populations of SCA while retaining their yield potential, or SCA has been shown to increase in number much slower than in susceptible hybrids.
- You may hear a producer or other agriculturalist disagree with a hybrid being included on the above list. Know that these hybrids probably can't tolerate/resist heavy SCA infestations on their own. For example, Dekalb DKS 37-07 has numerous documented and anecdotal observations of reduced SCA activity (not sprayed as soon, sprayed once instead of twice relative to other hybrids, not sprayed at all), but an elevator manager told me Dec. 16 that he thought that 37-07 had the same level of problems as any susceptible hybrid.
- Visit with the seed company about the hybrids you are interested in. Ask them what evidence they have for the hybrid's substantial tolerance/resistance. Seedling tests? Field observations? Field data? Do they have new information on any other hybrids?

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## Texas A&M AgriLife “Texas Row Crops Newsletter”

Submitted by: Dr. Calvin Trostle, Extension Agronomy, Lubbock,,Dr. Clark Neely, State Small Grains Specialist, College Station, January 4, 2015

### Winter Wheat Conditions after Late-December Snow

What impact would 8-15” snow have on Texas wheat conditions in the High Plains and northern Rolling Plains? Several factors may contribute to current wheat conditions, including how well wheat was established. However, remember first that wheat and other grasses like rye and triticale are cool-season grasses. Popular wheat varieties planted in the Texas High Plains like Winterhawk, Hatcher, and TAMs 111, 112, & 113 are also well adapted several hundred miles to the north, for example, in northwest Kansas.

Temperatures were actually not that cold for wheat, perhaps to about 10°F in some of the Texas Panhandle. These same varieties will experience significant sub-zero weather in northwest Kansas, often for several days.

A more likely concern for some growers, whether early planted wheat for grazing or later-planted wheat for grain, is the status of winter adaptation of the current crop. It was in the mid-50s and low 60s for several days before the cold, wind, and snow started on December 26<sup>th</sup> across the region. So the abrupt change in temperature and the snow might be a potential ‘shock’ to regional wheat. This could lead to some leaf burn or desiccation of the foliage and ultimately some brown or dead leaves (Fig. 1).

However, let’s go back the other direction toward favorable conditions for wheat survival and continued growth: soil temperatures were relatively warm. Those same warmer days before Christmas kept soil temperatures a few inches deep in the soil even in the low 50s. And for wheat this is favorable as the growing point for most fields is around 1” deep in the soil (Fig. 2), perhaps a little deeper. Furthermore, moist soils—present in virtually all of the region—mitigate the potential impact of cold temperatures on wheat. Yes, cold temperatures can damage the foliage, but the growing point is below ground though cold temperatures when soils are relatively dry do have a higher potential for wheat injury.

Dr. Jackie Rudd, Texas A&M AgriLife Research breeder, Amarillo, believes the sudden cold and wind of November 12-13, 2014 was far more injurious to the region’s wheat crop last cropping season. Back then, for much of the Texas High Plains south of Amarillo, area wheat had not yet experienced a freeze, so the potential for tissue and even growing point damage was greater due to the sudden, pronounced, and prolonged impact of that November change of weather. Meanwhile our 2015-2016 wheat crop had already experienced several light and even moderate freezes.

### *What about late planted wheat only recently emerged or yet to do so?*

Some late-planted wheat in the region was only recently emerged before the storm, and I estimate the Lubbock region may have had as much as 100,000 acres of wheat remaining to be planted the first week of December. Dr. Jourdan Bell, AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo, notes that some Panhandle wheat planted in late November with only 1-2 emerged leaves appears to have some light winter kill after the storm. But for the most part she reports central Panhandle wheat fared well after the Dec. 26-27 storm. Most Panhandle wheat had already experienced some winter weather, and the Panhandle has received very good fall moisture so the Sep. – Oct. planted wheat was in very good condition going into the storm.

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The Texas South Plains has wheat acreage that is more likely not yet emerged. Obviously cool conditions will slow emergence and growth. But as noted above, soil temperatures were warmer than normal so there is no reason to believe this wheat is injured. And like the recently emerged wheat Dr. Bell noted above, the growing point is below the soil surface so even if existing leaves were damaged, new growth will appear soon.

## *Will the cold and snow affect wheat diseases levels?*

Dr. Ron French, AgriLife Extension plant pathologist, Amarillo, has few if any concerns related to the December cold and heavy snow. There should be no major cold impacts on wheat plant health due to disease, as virus and fungal diseases (and bacterial for that matter) are not active when temperatures are still cold. He does not expect the first significant sightings or detections of foliar diseases on wheat, triticale, rye until at least mid-March in the Texas High Plains. In a cold year, rusts may even disappear if we get an extended sub-freezing spell.

Lower wheat leaves (which are older anyway and may senesce some) may yellow and show some secondary rots due to them being in touch with soil and very moist. Possible root rots will also be “dormant” until weather is good for root growth, which also means it is good for the fungus.

Finally, Dr. French reminds growers that in a wet year, we need to be on the watch for foliar diseases such as leaf and strip rusts, as well as root rots.



**Fig. 1.** Some foliage has desiccated (died) due to leaf burn from strong, cold winds Dec. 26-27 in the Texas High Plains. Plant survival and continued growth is not affected.

**Fig. 2.** Wheat growing point at the base of the crown is about 1” below the soil surface (represented by top of orange stake, which is 1” wide). Notice the white portion of lower stems, which were below ground. This depth of growing point protects wheat from permanent injury. Continued growth of these plants will be normal.