

# Oldham County Ag Talk

## Summer 2016



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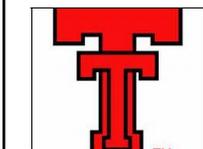
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Well the summer is off to a warm start! We have already seen several 100 degree days and there are more forecasted. A few of us have also been fortunate enough to receive some rain from the scattered showers that pop up some evenings.

With the heat we all know that yourself as well as all your animals need plenty of water. So make sure you drink plenty and keep your animals' water supply full and make sure they are drinking plenty as well.

In this newsletter you will find market outlooks, some summer gardening and yard tips, private property rights and a workshop announcement.

I would also like to introduce Oldham County 4-H's 2016-2017 State 4-H Equine Ambassadors; Colton Baca and Lacy Petty. They had to apply to become an Equine Ambassador and were chosen out of approximately 35 people from all over the state to become part of a group of 20 that will promote and help enhance the 4-H Equine Program in Texas.

They spent the last week of June at their training retreat. There they learned what their duties would be and got to listen to some of the top equine professionals in the state as well as visit many renowned facilities. With their training and knowledge gained they are now prepared to help promote the 4-H Horse program, as well as present horse safety as well as other things to your group or class if requested. Not only will they represent Oldham County, they will represent District 1 and the state of Texas. If you would like to request one or both of them to come to an event please contact the Oldham County AgriLife Extension Office at 806-267-2692 or [amanda.spiva@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amanda.spiva@ag.tamu.edu).



*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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TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI**LIFE  
EXTENSION

Mark your Calendar for our  
Fall Workshop

## **“PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE”**

OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup> 2016- 8:30 AM- ?

VEGA, TX

FEATURING:

- Ag Law Specialist: Tiffany Lashmet
- Ag Marketing & Risk Management Specialist: Steve Amosson
- Superior Representative
- Other Speakers to Be announced Closer to Date

MORE INFORMATION TO COME!!  
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

*Terri Cage*

## Cattle and hogs

Calendar year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>CATTLE</b>											
	(Million head)										
Beef cows (Jan. 1)	29.7	30.7	31.2	31.4	31.6	31.5	31.2	30.9	30.7	30.5	30.4
Dairy cows (Jan. 1)	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3
Cattle and calves (Jan. 1)	89.8	92.7	95.0	96.1	96.3	95.9	95.3	94.7	94.3	94.1	94.1
Cattle on feed (Jan. 1)	13.1	13.1	13.7	14.2	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.4	14.3	14.2	14.1
Calf crop	34.3	35.1	35.5	35.7	35.7	35.5	35.3	35.0	34.8	34.7	34.7
Cattle slaughter	29.3	30.7	32.1	33.1	33.8	33.9	33.7	33.4	33.0	32.7	32.5
Cattle imports	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Cattle exports	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Prices</b>											
Total all grades,	(Dollars per hundredweight)										
5-Area direct steers	148.12	133.41	122.62	117.94	116.72	119.64	123.04	126.77	130.50	133.35	135.74
600 - 650 #, Oklahoma City											
Feeder steers	226.52	194.34	171.02	158.90	155.12	159.33	165.37	171.68	178.83	184.62	189.51
Utility cows, Sioux Falls	99.76	85.06	75.38	70.63	69.68	72.67	75.84	78.64	81.24	83.00	84.67
<b>Cow-calf returns</b>											
	(Dollars per cow)										
Receipts	1,134.47	970.04	856.44	797.81	780.20	802.34	832.61	863.58	897.89	925.27	948.63
Feed expenses	253.86	247.74	254.99	262.61	266.24	269.81	267.85	268.36	265.42	264.08	261.67
Non-feed expenses	528.16	510.76	515.91	525.57	535.87	546.56	554.31	563.05	571.56	580.29	588.64
Net returns	352.45	211.53	85.55	9.63	-21.91	-14.02	10.45	32.16	60.91	80.91	98.32
<b>HOGS</b>											
	(Million head)										
Hogs for breeding (Dec. 1*)	5.94	6.00	5.92	5.79	5.64	5.54	5.49	5.53	5.61	5.66	5.67
Market hogs (Dec. 1*)	61.8	62.3	63.9	63.5	62.9	62.2	62.0	62.6	63.8	65.0	66.0
Sows farrowed	11.57	11.63	11.47	11.23	11.03	10.91	10.94	11.09	11.25	11.35	11.42
Pig crop	120.1	122.5	122.3	121.4	120.4	120.3	121.8	124.7	127.7	130.0	132.0
Barrow and gilt slaughter	112.2	113.6	115.4	115.0	114.2	113.7	114.4	116.4	119.1	121.5	123.5
Hog imports	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
Hog exports	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Prices</b>											
Natl. base 51-52% lean equiv.	(Dollars per hundredweight)										
Barrows & gilts	50.23	46.59	45.75	48.82	51.83	54.27	55.37	55.19	54.14	53.01	52.28
IA-S. Minn. #1-2, 300-400 #											
Sows	37.84	37.34	37.15	39.30	41.69	43.75	44.30	44.22	43.67	43.23	42.98
<b>Farrow-finish returns</b>											
Receipts	53.19	49.19	48.34	51.45	54.50	56.97	58.09	57.91	56.84	55.71	54.97
Feed expenses	30.25	28.71	29.89	31.09	31.45	31.95	31.93	32.26	32.05	31.60	31.17
Non-feed expenses	20.00	20.78	21.07	21.42	21.72	21.99	22.16	22.35	22.52	22.70	22.89
Net returns	2.94	-0.30	-2.62	-1.06	1.34	3.03	4.00	3.30	2.27	1.40	0.91

\* Preceding year

All projections are averages across 500 stochastic outcomes.

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## Summer Plant and Lawn Care Tips from Menards Lawn and Gar- den

As the temperatures rise and the dog days of summer begin, you might find your lawn and garden looking less than their best. Some of our natural instincts - giving that dry, dead-looking lawn lots of water; feeding those droopy plants plenty of fertilizer to help them make it through - will actually kill your plants rather than save them. Read on to find some ways to

prevent and repair damage from the heat of the summer sun.

The most important key to keeping plants (both your lawn and your garden) strong and resilient is to water them correctly. Deep, infrequent watering will help all types of plants develop deep roots and give them the resources they need to withstand heat and drought. Frequent, shallow watering, on the other hand, will encourage the roots to grow near the surface, making them susceptible to heat, cold and drought.

One of the worst things you can do for your lawn or garden is fertilize in the middle of a heat wave. The ingredients in fertilizers will quickly burn your susceptible plants. Even if they make it through the heat, fertilizing in mid to late summer is usually not a good idea because it can encourage growth into the fall, especially if you use fertilizers containing high amounts of nitrogen. The new growth will then be damaged by the cold fall and winter weather.

### **Lawn Care**

When your lawn starts to grow more slowly in the heat waves of July and August, you have two choices. You can either stop watering and allow your lawn to go dormant, or you can dedicate yourself to watering deeply about twice per week to keep your lawn alive and growing. Whatever you do, don't start giving your lawn plenty of water and then miss a watering, or allow the lawn to go dormant and then give it water to try to bring it back. Once your lawn goes dormant, you need to wait until cooler temperatures return in early September, when your lawn will spring back and start growing again.

### **Flower and Plant Care**

Keeping your annual and perennial garden plants healthy during summer heat means using plenty of mulch and the deep, infrequent watering methods described above. Mulch will help keep moisture from evaporating out of the earth before the plant can use it. Mulch should be about two to three inches thick in most garden beds (for more on mulching, see [Mulching 101](#)). Water early in the

morning before the sun becomes intense. Watering in the middle of the day can magnify the sun's rays on leaves and cause water to evaporate before it soaks down to the roots. Watering in the evening can allow the moisture to sit too long and cause disease. Early morning watering will ensure that water reaches the roots and any excess is dispersed before night.

Even with proper watering and mulching, some ailments and diseases might still occur. Bolting is one of the most common heat-related ailments in flowering plants. **Bolting** is when a plant flowers too soon, causing weak, dull flowers and dropped buds. Move the plant to a cooler microclimate of your yard if possible, and choose a different variety that can withstand heat better in the future.

A common problem for plants that are treated with sulfur is called **sulfur phytotoxicity**, where the foliage of treated plants turns black. To prevent this from occurring, stop treating plants with sulfur prior to the middle of summer. If your plants experience this issue, the only solution is to wait for them to recover. You might see less growth in these plants, but they should be otherwise unharmed.

**Sunscald** is essentially sunburn on a plant. It affects tomato and pepper plants that receive too much sunlight, and creates light, dry, soft spots on the fruit's exterior. This can often occur if the foliage of the plant is not doing a sufficient job of shading the fruit. Provide additional shade to the plant until the foliage bounces back, or move the plant to a shadier area.

## Pruning

Pruning trees and shrubs during the heat of summer can be beneficial, as long as your goal is to thin out the plant. New growth that is usually encouraged by pruning will be inhibited first by the hot, dry conditions, then by the cold of autumn and winter. However, you should never prune on the very hottest days of the summer, as this might be more than the plant (or you) can endure. Pruning can put your plant into shock, so be careful to only prune up to one fourth of the plant's foliage.

## Container Plants

Unlike plants in the ground, potted plants should continue to receive frequent watering through the hottest, driest part of summer, especially in clay or other porous pots. Water will evaporate very quickly and needs to be replenished immediately to keep your plants from shutting down, so check them every day (or even multiple times a day). Remember that overwatering can be just as deadly as under-watering.



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### Private Property Rights on the Ranch

The ag industry has been concerned for many years about protecting operations from trespassers who seek to secretly videotape footage of animals. Producers point to concerns over the safety of their animals, employees, facilities and privacy as reasons to prevent this type of activity.

There also have been allegations that undercover activists have actually encouraged or initiated animal abuse and that the videos released from this type of occurrence were falsified or improperly edited.

In light of these issues, several states passed farm protection laws. Opponents, who term these statutes as "ag gag" laws, filed suit challenging the constitutionality of these laws in Idaho, Utah and North Carolina.

After a trial court decision declared the Idaho law unconstitutional (this decision was appealed), many producers asked what other legal protections exist to help prevent trespassers on their operation.

There are several potential legal claims for a rancher facing undercover video investigations to consider.

- *Civil or criminal trespass.* Generally, trespass occurs when a person enters the property of another without permission, although the exact elements of civil and criminal causes of action may vary slightly by state. This claim is available to producers when an undercover videographer enters the property without permission. The claim would not be available, however, if the videographer was hired by the operation as an employee.
- *Civil or criminal fraud.* Fraud occurs when false information is presented to another person with the intent that the person rely upon the information. For example, if a potential employee provided false information on an employment application, a claim of fraud may exist. This claim would not, however, be available if someone was not hired by the operation but merely snuck on the premises.
- *Criminal tampering with a government record.* In instances where an employee provides a falsified drivers' license, this charge may be available.
- *Defamation.* Defamation law differs in each state, but generally a defamatory cause of action exists when one person publishes a false statement likely to harm the reputation of one person to another. Defamation cases are often long and difficult, particularly because there are many factual issues often raised with regard to whether a statement is true or false.
- *Conspiracy.* Generally, conspiracy occurs when two or more people agree to do

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something to deceive, mislead or defraud others or break the law. It has been suggested that a conspiracy claim could potentially be used to bring suits against the activists releasing the undercover videos. It does not appear, however, this has succeeded as evidence showing intent is not easily ascertained.

Still, many producers who have survived an undercover video situation elected to forgo pursuing these types of claims due to the expense and time required. The best protection for agricultural operations is to implement careful hiring practices and extensive employee training with regard to animal care and handling.

- *Animal care and handling.* The best way to defend against an undercover video is to ensure there is no animal abuse or mistreatment occurring. Owners should develop written animal care and handling policies and ensure these policies are reviewed and understood by all employees. Similarly, ongoing trainings and evaluations should be scheduled to ensure proper animal care is occurring.
- *Hiring practices.* Producers should weed out any potential undercover activists when hiring employees. Tasks as simple as Googling an employee's name, running a background check and viewing social media pages can provide invaluable information to employers regarding both the qualifications and intentions of new employees.

The vast majority of cattle producers are excellent stewards of the land and caretakers of their animals. These producers have legitimate reasons to protect their animals, employees, facilities and families from trespassers or people gaining access based on false credentials.

With the fate of farm protection statutes currently pending in court, producers should carefully consider other options to protect operations.



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