Individuals with disabilities, who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodations in order to participate in any of the above mentioned activities, are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office eight days before all programs for assistance.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsements by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

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

For more information contact:

Michael Donalson
County Extension Agent -
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Refugio County
107 East Roca Street, Refugio, TX 78377
Phone: (361) 526-2825
Fax: (361) 526-4340

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Refugio County
107 East Roca Street
Refugio, Texas 78377

«OrganizationName»
«FirstName» «LastName»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zipcode»

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

THE REFUGIO COUNTY

AGRICULTURE CONNECTION

http://refugio.agrilife.org/ MAY-JUNE 2014

2014 REFUGIO COUNTY CROPS TOUR

June 11, 2014

CEUs offered

DON'T FORGET!!!

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

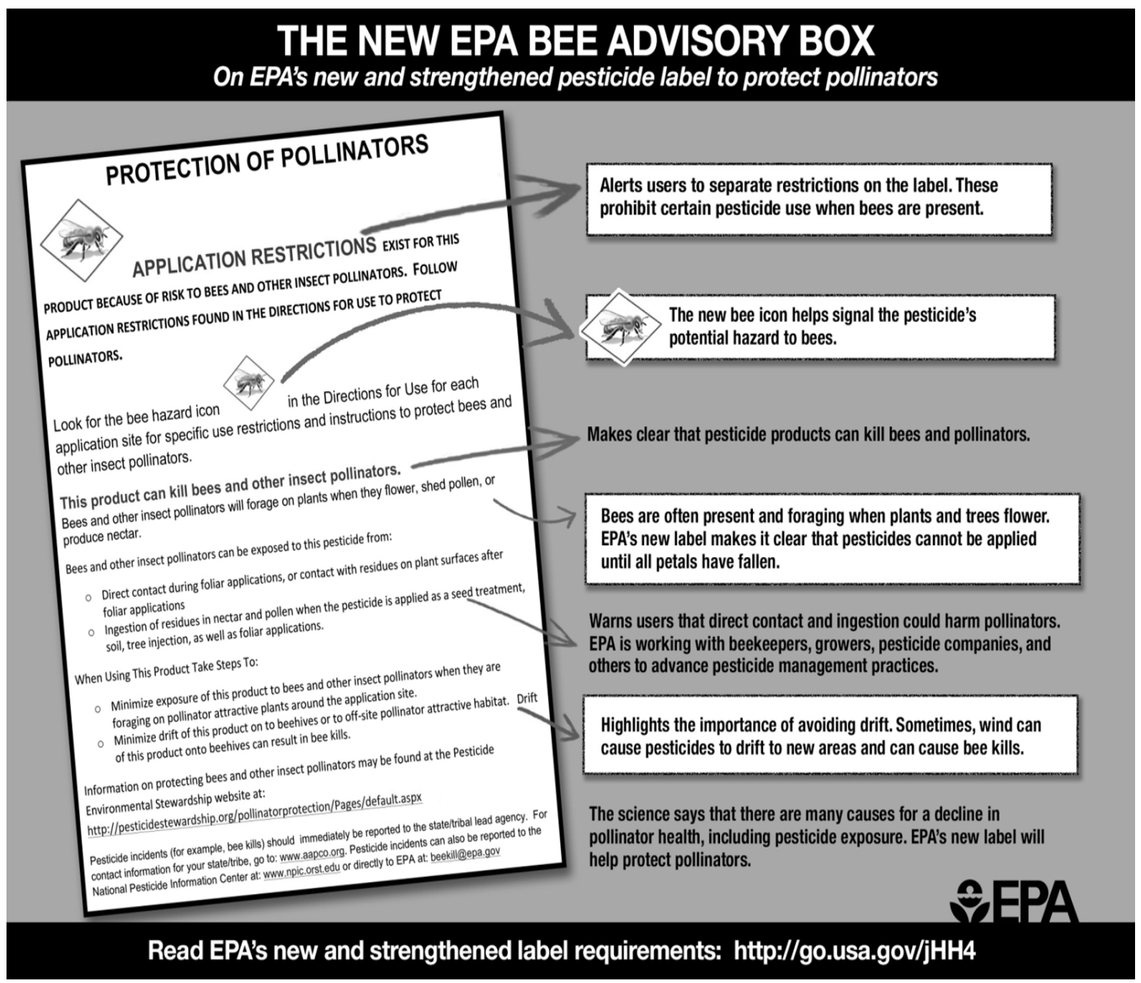
Is on the Web at…

http://refugio.agrilife.org/

CALL FOR ADDRESSES AND EMAIL

If anyone knows of someone who does not receive this newsletter, please let us know!

Also, if you would like to receive this newsletter by email, let us know!



Crop Tour Sponsors Needed

Please Support the Refugio County Crops Tour

Making a contribution prior to the tours insures that you are listed on the donors' recognition page of our tour program. Your financial support makes the morning and afternoon meals possible.

Sponsorship Levels

Gold Star-$300 or more

Gold Star sponsors are welcome to display their company logos at the afternoon tour in Bonnie View.

Silver Star-$150

Silver Star sponsors can email their company logo to the Extension Office, which will be used in a PowerPoint presentation.

To insure that your company's name is listed on the donors' recognition page, please mail your contribution to us by May 30th, or sooner.

If you have any questions or want to contribute any amount please contact the

Refugio County Extension Office @ 361-526-2825

Land Values: Implications of the Most Recent Federal Reserve Report

Levi Russell

Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist

Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

On March 19, 2014 Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen gave a press conference on the Federal Open Market Committee meeting that adjourned today. In her address[1], she gave some indications as to what the Fed will try to accomplish over the next several months. In this article I'll discuss my perspective on what I believe the Fed will do in the next few months and what it means for land values.

As discussed in the January issue[2], Fed monetary policy has an indirect impact on land prices through its influences on interest rates. These impacts on interest rates come about through the purchase of securities such as bonds. In addition to using its typical tools, the Fed has been purchasing Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities with an eye toward keeping asset prices high and interest rates low. The Fed's economists believe this will help boost the economic recovery, leading to maximum employment and inflation at its target rate of 2%. Recognizing that this extraordinary policy cannot continue indefinitely, purchases of these Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities has wound down. In fact, the Fed's Open Market Committee decided today to continue to decrease its purchases of Treasurys and mortgage backed securities to $55 billion in April. The question is, will these purchases continue to decline?

In her address, Chairwoman Yellen noted that there is some indication that the economy has improved but that the recovery is far from complete and that the Fed will continue to monitor the situation. She indicated that much work is yet to be done to meet the Fed's targets for unemployment and inflation. If inflation were to rise or unemployment to fall, this would increase the probability that the Fed will continue to taper bond buying, as it would indicate further strength in the economy. However, more recently-released information suggests that price inflation is still low[3] and that unemployment is still above the Fed's target (though it has improved since December).[4] Since the Chairwoman has indicated that changes in extraordinary bond purchases are contingent on inflation and unemployment (among other things), I believe the recently-released information is an indication that bond buying will either be maintained at or near the April level or increase slightly over the next several months.

What does this mean for land values? If bond buying continues to decline, there will be upward pressure on interest rates which may have a negative impact on land values. On the other hand, if broad indicators of the health of economy continue to decline and the Fed sees fit to maintain or increase extraordinary bond purchases, there will be downward pressure on interest rates which will likely keep land prices stable, absent significant changes in farm earnings.

It is sometimes said that we should "hope for the best but expect the worst." In January's article, I discussed the potential for a continuation of the Fed's reduction in extraordinary bond purchases and the necessity for proper planning if land values decline. While certainly not the "worst" scenario, a continued reduction in bond purchases could negatively impact land values, all else equal. This article discussed the other side of the coin, a potential for general economic indicators to decline, putting pressure on the Fed to continue to push up asset prices and keep interest rates low with accommodative policies. To the degree that recent increases in land values are dependent on the Fed's policies, I believe agricultural land values will remain stable over the next several months.

[1] http://www.federalreserve.gov/mediacenter/files/FOMCpresconf20140319.pdf

[2] http://agecoext.tamu.edu/files/2014/01/MMDec2013-for-sending.pdf

[3] http://www.cnbc.com/id/101494640

[4] http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Tri-County Field Day
Saturday, May 3th, 2014
Wexford Ranch – Goliad Co
(7431 US HWY 59 S near Fannin Weigh Station)
$10--(2 CEU's Offered)

8:30 am – Registration and breakfast

SPEAKERS & TOPICS

9:00am – Welcome and Ranch Information
Kai Buckert, Wexford Ranch Manager

9:15am – Load Trailers

9:30am – Huisache and Mesquite Demonstration

Dr. Wayne Hanselka, Dupont Representative – (1)IPM
Dr. Megan Clayton, Range Specialist – (1)IPM

DOW® DUPONT®

For More Information call the county offices in:
Bee: 621-1550, Goliad: 645-8204, Refugio: 526-2825

This field day is coordinated by: The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Bee, Goliad, and Refugio Counties and the Goliad County Wildlife Management Association.

Beef Cattle Browsing

Dr. Stephen Hammack, Professor & Extension Beef Cattle Specialist Emeritus

GENETIC – ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

If cattle do not perform the same in different environments, then genetic evaluations in one environment may not be universally useful. An analysis was conducted on records of birth and weaning weights (n = 74,681), postweaning gain (n = 39,104), and stayability (n = 28,895) from the American Red Angus Association. Records were assigned to nine geographical regions of the U.S. (Corn Belt, Desert, Gulf Coast, Lower Plains, Mountains, Northeast, Pacific Northwest, South, and Upper Plains). Records were included only from sires with at least 50 calves and at least two regions.

Regional interactions were not important for birth weight, weaning weight, or postweaning gain. However, some notable interaction was found for stayability (probability of a female still being in the herd at 6 years of age). In general, interactions were lower for adjoining regions. The authors noted there was little interaction for growth traits, but "care should be taken when selecting sires to produce replacement heifers". NOTE: lack of genetic – environmental interaction means **ranking** of sires' genetic potential for a trait should be similar across regions. It does not mean **actual level of performance** in different regions would necessarily be the same (and often would not be) because performance includes both genetic and environmental influences.

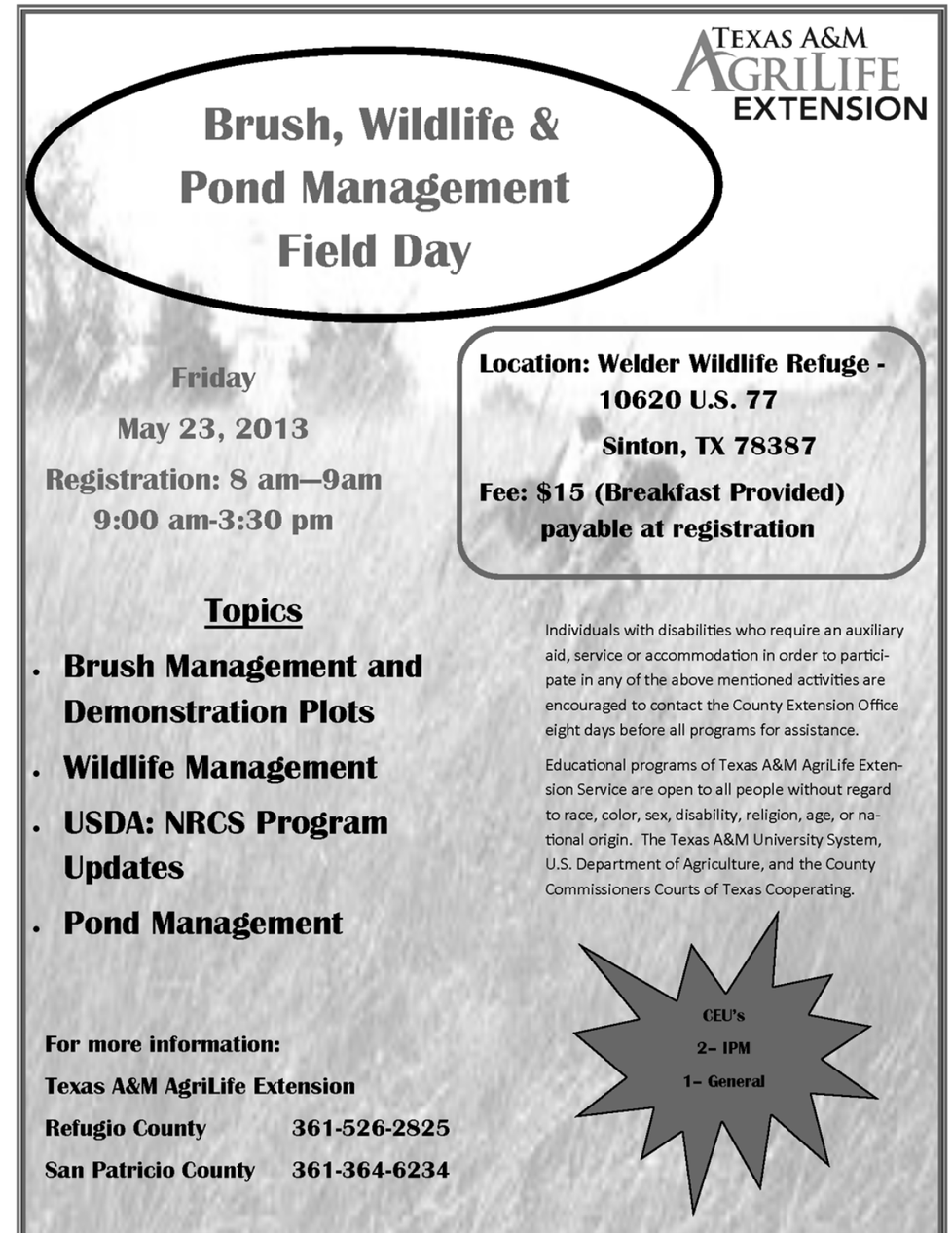
(J. Animal Sci. 92 E-Supple. 1:9; Univ. of Missouri, Kansas St. Univ, Univ. of Zagreb, Croatia)

COW TEMPERAMENT VS. CALF GROWTH

A total of 380 cows in two herds were evaluated before calving for chute behavior and chute flight speed, and behavior when isolated. Shortly after calving, cows were scored for defensiveness when calves were ear tagged and when a cow-calf pair was isolated; calves were given a subjective vigor score. Calf ADG was measured to 7 months of age.

In one herd, temperament and defensiveness were unrelated; in the other, cows more nervous in the chute were more defensive. Across both herds, temperament and defensiveness were unrelated to calving ease or maternal behavior shown to the calf. In one herd, cows more nervous in the chute had calves lighter at birth and calves from cows more agitated when isolated before calving had lower ADG. Defensiveness was not related to either calf ADG or vigor; pre-calving temperament was not related to calf vigor. The authors concluded that "pre-calving temperament and post-calving defensiveness appear to be independent traits" but "fearful cows may produce calves with decreased birth weight and ADG".

(J. Animal Sci. 91:4417; Anim and Vet. Sci. Group, SRUC, Scotland)



When to Treat Mesquite?

Dr. Megan Clayton

Assistant Professor and Extension Range Specialist

March has already snuck up on us, so it's time to start making plans for any Honey Mesquite leaf-spray applications planned for this Spring/Summer. Making the application during the right time is CRUCIAL for good control. I'll be updating this post regularly with information collected or shared from across South Texas, so be sure to check back in! For step-by-step instructions on doing the leaf-spray method, check out Brush Buster's: How to Beat Mesquite.

What characteristics are we looking for to define the "perfect" spray time?

1. Enough leaf material to take in the herbicide and move it to the bud zone underground. This means a plant at least 3′ tall with plenty of leaf canopy. Have smaller trees or seedlings? Why not try a stem-spray application instead (15-25% triclopyr in 75-85% diesel sprayed 12″ high on the stem all the way around).
2. Spray when the leaves look healthy, not damaged by insects or drought.
3. Soil temperature 12″ deep needs to be 75 degrees or higher. (see below for reports)
4. Leaves need to be a uniform dark green color. Note the leaf color right now – more of a limey green. Wait until you see the uniform dark green to spray!
5. Watch out for these small rains we might be receiving (hopefully receiving :) If it spurs new leaf growth on the tips, wait until the new leaf turns a dark green as well.
6. Typically, the best time to spray is 45-90 days after budding, or leaf emergence is first noticed (see below for reports)
7. If mesquites start to sprout beans, wait until the bean is fully elongated before spraying.
8. Spray when there are either no flowers present OR when the flowers are yellow. Don't spray when the flowers are white.

Slime Mold

Prepared by Dr. Kevin Ong
Assistant Professor and Extension Urban Plant Pathologist
Texas AgriLife Extension Service; The Texas A&M University System
April 21, 2005 (rev. 012408)

"There is yellow foam like stuff in playground. It is going to hurt the kids?"

"Urgh!!! There is something that looks like dog vomit on my mulched flower bed!!!"

"There is this ugly blob in my flower bed, and it was somewhere else the next day. Can it move?"

CAUSAL AGENT

These are some of the questions that are asked concerning slime mold. Slime molds belong in the phylum Myxomycota in the kingdom Protista. They are not a true fungus. These organisms exist in nature as a "blob" (plasmodium), similar to a amoeba. And they engulf their food, mostly bacteria. The slime mold that typically appear on mulches are from the genus, *Fuligo*.

LIFE CYCLE

The brightly color blobs usually appear and may spread around mulched beds when there is high humidity and relatively warm temperatures. In Texas, we typically hear of slime molds in the spring and occasionally in the summer in highly irrigated shade areas. Slime mold can appear to be bright yellow to red. As they begin to dry out, these colors fade to brown and tan. Breaking up the dried blob, you may notice a dark brown to black core – the spores. Slime molds are not known to be a danger to human or animals.

CONTROL

Chemical treatment is not warranted for this problem. These organisms are very sensitive to the environment. The best approach to controlling slime mold is by modifying the environment. Slime molds do not survive well in dry conditions. We cannot control the rains, but we can carefully manage our irrigation systems to reduce the amount of wetness on the surface. You can also use a rake or even use a stream of water to break up the slime mold. This will encourage the drying out of the slime mold and remove the unsightly "vomit".

Some people consider the slime mold to be a beneficial organism in that it helps in the decaying process of the mulch and may also play a role in competing against some soilborne plant pathogens.

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System
Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

TEXAS IPM
Partners with Nature

Stephen Biles
186 CR 101
Port Lavaca, TX 77979

PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

Calhoun, Refugio & Victoria Counties

(o) 361-552-3324
(m) 361-920-1138
biles-sp@tamu.edu

VOLUME 10 *ISSUE 1* *April 11, 2014*

Grain Sorghum

Yellow Striped Armyworm

June Beetle

The oldest sorghum fields I have seen are in the 4-leaf stage. In these fields, I am currently finding several different insects and other pests including **Yellow Striped Armyworms** and June Beetles. The armyworms (1 worm per 10-15 row feet) are causing the most problems now including defoliation and some plant death; but I don't think they are worth an insecticide application. I have not seen any published economic threshold on these worms in seedling sorghum; I think fields should be able to tolerate at least 1 armyworm per 3 foot without economic loss.

The June Beetles I found were dead, but they could have been laying eggs in the soil which will hatch into white grubs that feed on plant roots. Seed treatments should maintain control of the white grubs.

Insect Warning

Several aphids we should be on the lookout for include Sugarcane, Yellow Sugarcane and Corn Leaf Aphids.

Thus far, I have not found aphids in newly planted sorghum. However, I have found both sugarcane and Yellow Sugarcane aphids on Johnsongrass in the Victoria area. These aphids can kill or stunt sorghum plants.

Attached is an Extension Publication on "Sugarcane Aphid: A New Pest of Sorghum." I encourage you to become familiar with this insect.

Sorghum Downey Mildew

In the past few years, SDM has been found in sorghum fields in Calhoun, Victoria and Refugio. As your sorghum fields emerge, I encourage you to look for signs of sorghum downey mildew. This disease is easiest to detect in sorghum fields before they get too tall.

Attached is an Extension Publication on Sorghum Downey Mildew Symptoms.

The systemic, yield-limiting phase of the disease happens before the seedlings emerge. Once you have a few true leaves, you can assess this phase of the disease. It won't increase during the season. It might even decrease, as some of the infected seedlings may die.

A race of this disease has developed resistance to the fungicide seed treatments we use to control it but there are also sorghum hybrids that are resistant to the disease. Management of SDM is accomplished through crop rotation and planting resistant sorghum hybrids. If you find SDM in one of your fields, the damage is done and additional fungicidal application will not affect yield.

Cotton

Cotton is emerging and should be monitored for thrips and aphids. Thrips will be more damaging to cotton during periods of cooler temperatures which slow growth of the plants.

Corn

Corn should be monitored for chinch bugs. Seed treatments usually provide adequate control of Chinch bugs but if treated seed was not used, or the seed treatment does not provide adequate control, the only way to achieve control of chinch bugs is with a directed application using multiple nozzles per row and application volumes in excess of 25 gallons per acre.

Soybean

The primary insect pest of seedling soybeans is the 3-cornered alfalfa hopper. The nymphs of this insect will girdle soybean stems before the plant reaches a height of 12 inches. After the plant is taller than 12 inches, the nymphs can girdle leaf petioles and pods. Injury caused by 3-cornered alfalfa hopper is usually not seen until later in the season when the plants fall over.

Manage this pest by planting a population to obtain a final plant stand of 6-8 plants per foot.

Mid-Coast IPM Program

The Mid-Coast IPM Program will conduct activities in Calhoun, Refugio and Victoria Counties. These activities will include applied research projects on pest management and crop production issues identified through contacts with producers. The primary crops of interest are Corn, Grain Sorghum, Cotton and Soybeans, but issues in other crops will be investigated as they are identified.

If you have a topic you would like to have me look into, call me at 361-920-1138.

IPM Newsletter

Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter can be added to the email list by contacting my office at 361-552-3324 or biles-sp@tamu.edu .

Support for the 2013 IPM Program comes from the following:

Woodsboro Farmer's Cooperative
Moreman Coop
Hlavinka Equipment
Numerous Producers
South Texas Cotton and Grain Association
Helena Chemical
Welfab

2012 Yield Response of Corn and Grain Sorghum to Residual Soil NO_3-N
Upper Gulf Coast and Central Texas Blacklands

Did you miss a program or want to watch a video to learn something new?

Check out the Agriculture Videos on our Website at:

http://refugio.agrilife.org/videos/agriculture-videos/