

Fall 2010

Schleicher County Agriculture/Horticulture Newsletter

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37th Annual Sheep and Goat Field Day

SAN ANGELO - "Livestock Solutions: Predation Management and Protection Options" will be the theme of this year's 37th annual Sheep and Goat Field Day September 2 at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at San Angelo. The event will start with registration at 8 a.m. at the center, which is located just north of San Angelo on U.S. Highway 87.

Dr. John Walker, resident director of research, said the day's highlight will be the dedication of the Bill Sims Wool and Mohair Research Laboratory. Sims, a former senator and longtime executive secretary of the San Angelo-based Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association, was instrumental in orchestrating the establishment of the animal fiber laboratory here, Walker said. "It is one of only four (three academic, one commercial) in the nation," Walker said. "Sims worked with industry leaders, commodity groups our staff and state and national legislators to make the dream of having a natural fiber laboratory in San Angelo a reality."

Dr. Chris Lupton of AgriLife Research who is in charge of the laboratory, said the facility was established in 1985 to address specific needs in the national sheep and goat, wool and mohair research programs.

Key field-day topics and speakers will include:

- American Sheep Industry Survey: Sheep and Predation, Michael Marlow U.S. Department of Agriculture wildlife biologist, Fort Collins, Colo.
- Producer Experiences with Livestock Protection Dogs, Bob Buchholz, rancher, Eldorado.
- Livestock Protection Dogs: What's Important, What's Not, What They Cost and Are They Worth It?, Walker.
- Effects of Predation on Wildlife, Bruce Leland, Texas AgriLife Extension Wildlife



- Interpreting Physical Evidence of Predation, Dr. Dale Rollins, AgriLife Extension wildlife specialist, San Angelo.

Following a catered noon lunch, the field-day program will resume with industry updates from the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association, Mohair Council of America, Producer's Marketing Cooperative, Inc., and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The field day will conclude with a talk on generic herbicides by Dr. Allan McGinty, AgriLife Extension range specialist at San Angelo. Three Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units, two in the general category and one in integrated pest management, will be available for those with a private applicators license.

For more information, contact the center at 325-653-4576.

Deer Management Workshop

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Schleicher and Sutton Counties will be providing a deer management workshop held on September 28th at the Schleicher County Civic Center in Eldorado. Registration will begin at 8:30 with the program beginning at 9:00.



Topics will include:

Aging deer on the hoof, Brush management for wildlife, Exotic species interaction, Nutrition, Lease agreements, and a hunting season outlook.

The cost to attend the workshop is \$10 which includes a noon meal. The workshop will conclude around 2:30 or 3:00pm. A total of 3 CEUs will be offered for those with a herbicide license.

Please pre-register for the event by September 23rd by calling 853-2132 or 387-3101.

Sonora Ram Test Starts September 13-14

SONORA - The annual ram performance test conducted at the Texas AgriLife Research Station at Sonora will begin September 13-14 with delivery of rams to the station. The station is located on State Highway 55 between Sonora and Rocksprings. An annual field day and sale highlighting the end of the test is scheduled for March 18 of next year.



Dr. Dan Waldron, San Angelo-based AgriLife Research geneticist and the program's coordinator, said the performance test involves some of the best Rambouillet genetics in the world. "The test has long been used as a tool for Rambouillet sheep breeders to improve their flocks," Waldron said. "Since its start in 1948, the Sonora Ram Performance Test has never strayed from its main goal of identifying and documenting superior rams,"

rams,” he said. “Rams are evaluated on several important economic traits, so producers can use their own rams to improve their flocks or buy from others.”

Test animals may be registered or non-registered. Only registered rams born between October 1, 2009 and April 30, 2010 will be eligible for the American Rambouillet Sheep Breeders’ Association Registry of Merit program. Waldron said any animal showing yearling teeth will not be accepted. Cooperators wishing to enter more than 20 animals are asked to give Waldron advance notice. Complete animal information - including sire, type of birth, age of dam and birth date - is required by the first weigh day. Animals without this information will be considered commercial rams.

Rams also should be individually identified by ear tag or tattoo, and tagged with the mandated scrapie tag. They should have at least one-half inch of wool at delivery. Waldron recommends test animals be taught to eat from a feed trough before delivery. Rams will be treated against internal parasites and vaccinated against enterotoxemia immediately after arrival.

A deposit of \$350 per ram is due upon arrival. Any unused funds will be returned when the test is over.

Rams will be shorn September 28 before going on the test. The initial weigh-day is set for September 29. Other weigh-days are November 17 and January 5, 2011 with the final weigh-day on February 16, 2011. The final shearing is set for February 17, 2011.

For more information on the Sonora ram test, contact Waldron, Dr. Frank Craddock or Dr. Chris Lupton at 325-653-4576, or call Dr. Charles “Butch” Taylor at 325-387-3168.

The test program’s Web site is: <http://safiles.tamu.edu/genetics/ramtest.htm> .

Current Topics/ Recent Studies

TEMPERAMENT VS. PERFORMANCE

A total of 3050 calves at 27 locations were evaluated for temperament scores and ADG. Breeds involved were German Angus (Angus X dual-purpose breeds), Charolais, Fleckvieh (German Simmental), Hereford, and Limousin. Temperament was evaluated subjectively for chute activity score and flight score from the chute, with higher scores of both indicating greater activity. Genetic correlations within breed between the two scores ranged from 0.57 to 0.98. Breed significantly affected ($P < .001$) both scores, with Charolais and Limousin scoring highest. Herefords had the lowest ($P < .001$) chute scores and German Angus and Hereford had the lowest ($P < .001$) flight scores. Females were lower ($P < .01$) than males on both scores. In most breeds, temperament scores were negatively correlated with ADG. This confirms, and expands to other continents and breeds, previous findings relating temperament and performance. [(J. Animal Sci. 88:1982; Georg August Univ. (Germany) and Justus Liebig Univ. (Germany)]



DISTILLERS GRAINS: CORN VS SORGHUM

Corn-based and sorghum-based wet distillers grains (WDG) were compared to a non-distillers control fed to steers initially averaging 860 lb. Steam-flaked corn was the base for all rations. Levels of both 15% and 30% WDG were studied, with the two WDG levels consisting of either corn-based, sorghum-based, or a 50:50 mix of the two. Final weight was calculated in two ways: actual (live weight shrunk 4%) and adjusted (hot carcass weight ÷ average dressing percent.) Both actual and adjusted were used to evaluate ADG and gain:feed.



Actual and adjusted final weight and gain:feed was higher ($P < .05$) for 15% compared to 30% WDG. Dry matter intake was higher ($P < .05$) and actual gain:feed was lower ($P < .10$) for sorghum versus 50:50. Corn WDG had higher ($P < .05$) adjusted gain:feed than sorghum or 50:50 WDG. Compared to all WDG treatments, the control ration without WDG resulted in higher ($P < .10$) dry matter intake, higher ($P < .05$) actual and adjusted ADG and final weight, and higher ($P < .10$) adjusted gain:feed.

Carcass weight and ribeye area were higher ($P < .05$) for 15% versus 30% WDG. Corn WDG had higher ($P < .05$) dressing percent than sorghum or 50:50 WDG. The control ration resulted in higher ($P < .05$) carcass weight, fat thickness, and numerical Yield Grade (lower leanness) and higher ($P < .10$) dressing percent. There were no significant differences in marbling score, percent Choice/Prime, or abscessed livers. (J. Animal Sci. 88:2433; Texas Tech Univ.)

Cotton Insects

Worms

Although much of our cotton has cutout hard and is quickly becoming non-attractive to worms, there is still enough suitable non-Bt cotton out there to worry about. I haven't seen much of an egg lay this week from Lubbock south but there have been some mixed populations of bollworms and beet armyworms north of Lubbock. If beet armyworms are abundant along with bollworms, consider including Intrepid, Belt, Coragen, Demin, Diamond or Steward along with your pyrethroid Remember that beet armyworms are not voracious boll feeders and any squares they may take at this point will not produce a harvestable boll anyway, so treat only if you are seeing significant boll feeding and lots of worms. Likewise, the pyrethroids, as expected, were all weak against fall armyworms but did well against bollworms. However, if you mix Belt at 2 fl-oz + a pyrethroid (Mustang Max in this case), control of both bollworms and fall armyworms was excellent. These limited data suggest that there may be a synergistic relationship between Belt and the pyrethroid. If we would have increased the rate of the pyrethroid mixed with the Belt, I suspect that we would have taken the few remaining bollworms out as well. Fall armyworms are much more voracious fruit feeders than beet armyworms, much closer to what you would expect from a bollworm.



Spider Mites

Moderate to high populations of spider mites are continuing to increase in some fields, but I am seeing high number of thrips feeding on these populations. Most of these thrips appear to be six-spotted thrips and western flower thrips. Along with the cooler temperatures we are experiencing I am hopeful that much of the mite problem may subside over the next week. However, do not rely too heavily on thrips and the weather. If your mite problem is currently at a treatable level and appears to be spreading it is advisable to go ahead and treat. The products that are looking good in our tests include: Oberon at 4 fl-oz and 8 fl-oz, Epi-Mek at 8 fl-oz and Portal at 1 pt. Brigade at 6.4 fl-oz had a very good knock down of the mite population, but by 19 days after treatment the mite population had recovered to that of the untreated.

Stink Bugs

Stink bugs just won't go away. It seems like I find them in every field, not always at a treatable level, but always there. The current recommended action threshold for stink bugs is 1 bug per 6 rowft, however, if you have been running near threshold for over a week I would consider spraying them. Once the crop has reached 450 DD60s past cutout, treating for stink bugs should no longer be necessary. Currently, it appears that Orthene at 1 lb or Bidrin at 6-8 fl-oz appear to be providing good stink bug control

New Rainwater Harvesting Manual for Pro and Novice Alike

COLLEGE STATION - Everything you ever wanted to know about rainwater harvesting but didn't know to ask could well describe a new publication just released by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

The publication, "Rainwater Harvesting: System Planning" (publication number: B-6240), is 206 pages chock full of the how-to's, whys and best management practices associated with planning and installing rainwater catchment systems of all sizes, said Billy Kniffen, AgriLife Extension's state rainwater harvesting specialist at Menard. "The manual is designed to assist designers and installers of rainwater collection systems in properly planning, sizing, installing and using rainwater for inside and outside use," Kniffen said. "The rainwater harvesting business could easily become a sideline or new career for such people as engineers, contractors, roofers and plumbers seeking added income or a complete change of work." Kniffen said the manual is the first of its kind. It offers the technical information needed by the professional, but is also useful for the do-it-yourselfer needing guidance to install a small system. He said the manual is also designed and written to be a complete educational guide and textbook curriculum for instructors in college or industry. "It will help those in the business consider all aspects of the construction of a system from bids and contracts to properly installing and maintaining systems," Kniffen said.

The 17-chapter spiral-bound manual has a table of contents, color photos, diagrams and extensive appendices including tables and figures, uniform plumbing code, references and answers to study exercises found in several of the book's chapters. The manual retails for \$48.50 per copy with a wholesale price for orders of 20 or more of \$35 each. Order by visiting the Texas AgriLife Bookstore at: <https://agrilifebookstore.org/>.

Horticulture Tips for Winter

September

- Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture.
- Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now may stimulate tender growth prior to frost.
- Replenish mulches around trees and shrubs, and water every 3 to 5 days.
- Start cool-season vegetables, such as mustard, lettuce, arugula, broccoli, carrots, and turnips, from seed in well prepared beds.

October

- Careful covering of tender plants on nights when light frost threatens, early in the season, is a way to stretch out the season for a few more days or weeks.
- October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden.
- Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb.
- Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6 inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil.

November

- Plan now for your spring flowering season with a mixture of annuals and perennials.
- Don't get in a hurry to prune woody plants. Late December through February is usually the best time to prune them.
- November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Protect your lawn from excessive winter damage by providing irrigation during dry periods.
- Use good pruning practices when selecting Christmas greenery from landscape plants.

If you would like to receive emails as well please email me and we will start sending out reminders of upcoming programs.

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If you are interested in attending any of these programs and require auxiliary aid, please call the Schleicher County Extension office at 325-853-2132 to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made.