

March 2017

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Educational Opportunities **Sutton County Agriculture/Horticulture Newsletter**

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With Spring not far away, it will soon be time to control unwanted vegetation. However, you should know that some chemicals are designated general-use pesticides and can be purchased “over-the-counter” while others are restricted-use pesticides and require a pesticide applicator license. So, if you’ve considered acquiring an applicator license, here are some things you should know.

Private applicator licenses are required in order to use or supervise the use of restricted or state-limited pesticides or regulated herbicides in the production of agricultural commodities.

For those seeking a pesticide applicator license, there will be training on March 28th beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Sutton County Extension Office. This license is required for the purchase of restricted-use pesticides which cannot be purchased “over-the-counter”. This license is good for 5 years.

Call if interested so that manuals can be ordered for you. Please order by March 21st to allow time for delivery. Cost for training & manuals is \$50.



Minimizing Livestock Predation Workshop slated for March 13 in Eden

The Minimizing Livestock Predation Workshop is set for 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. March 13 in the Roy Burnes Civic Center in Eden. The workshop is being conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Predation is a constant worry to sheep and goat raisers throughout our region. This workshop will offer topics for both new and seasoned producers, so no matter what your predator management skill level, this program will have something to offer.

Individual registration will be \$20 for adults and \$10 for youth. Fees are due upon arrival and include a catered noon meal. For more information and to RSVP, call the AgriLife Extension office in Concho County at 325-732-4304.

Topics and presenters will be:

- Predation Identification, Coyote Biology, and “Do You Speak Coyote?,” Dr. John Tomecek, AgriLife Extension wildlife specialist, San Angelo.
- Producer panel: Utilizing Guardian Dogs, Testimonials/Question and Answer Session.
- Management Strategies to Improve Guardian Dog Effectiveness, Dr. Reid Redden, AgriLife Extension state sheep and goat specialist, San Angelo.
- Laws, Regulations and Procedures for Setting Snares and Traps, Wildlife Services representative.



Three Texas Department of Agriculture general continuing education units will be offered.

We will also offer one in Edwards County next month, so stay tuned for details.

Fever Tick Update-

Most of you may know about the fever tick, but never really think about it because it is usually confined to the Permanent Quarantine Zone (PQZ) along the Rio Grande River from Del Rio to Brownsville with occasional movements outside caused by deer or other cervids or antelope (Nilgai in Cameron, Willacy and Kenedy/Kleberg counties). The four counties listed have portions that are now Controlled Purpose Quarantine Areas (CPQA).

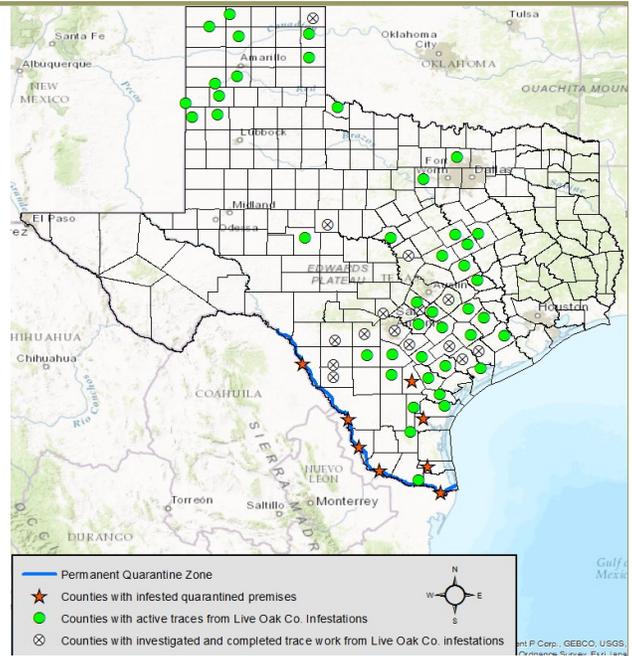
Fever ticks once ranged as far north as Virginia and in 1906 the forerunner of the USDA, the Bureau of Animal Industry, began an national campaign to eradicate the tick from the US. By the 1940s, the tick had been eradicated to the southwestern boundary of Texas running from Del Rio to Brownsville, this was designated as the PQZ. Livestock in the PQZ have to be dipped or sprayed with Coumaphos (Corral) before they can be moved. At one time it was thought that the tick only fed on cattle, it is now known that it will feed on deer (and other cervids) and antelope (like Nilgai) and can be carried far from the PQZ.

The fever tick (there are actually two species) is not the cause of the tick fever, it is merely the host to a protozoa called Babesia. Babesia causes the disease which destroys red blood cells. About 90% of the cattle that contract Babesiosis get sick and have a high mortality.

Producers try to control the ticks so they can't carry the fever. Mexico has both the fever ticks as well as Babesiosis according to USDA and TAHC. If Texas cannot control this outbreak, there could be a quarantine or restriction of livestock movement out of the state by USDA which would have a hundred million dollar impact so this is really a serious situation.

There is no easy fix so awareness and prevention are important. It is not economically sustainable to gather and dip (or spray) cattle every two weeks or to gather and inject with Doramectin every 25-28 days for 6-9 months. Vacating a premise for 6-9 months won't work either if there are other hosts for the ticks (like deer or Nilgai). Both those are the options required by TAHC.

For more information regarding the fever tick program and terminology used, please visit <http://www.tahc.texas.gov/news>

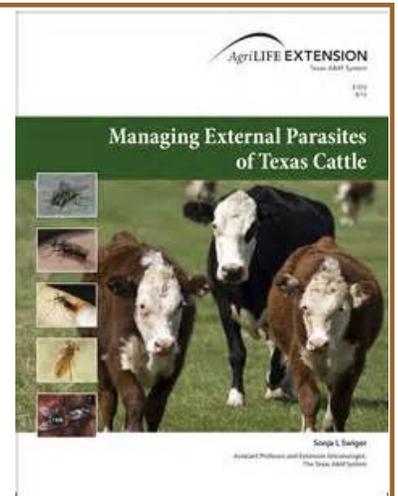


Useful Publication For Managing External Parasites of Cattle

With the news about the fever tick situation in South Texas and the recent screwworm outbreak in Florida, I thought we might feature a publication which provides information and control options for external pests of livestock.

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service publication is E-570 "Managing External Parasites of Texas Cattle" written by Dr. Sonja Swiger in 2012. It is available on AgriLife's bookstore <http://agrilifebookstore.org> and Animal Science website <http://beef.tamu.edu>.

This is a handy reference for normal external parasites of cattle with methods/products for controlling them. It is organized by parasite and has pictures of most.



Feral Swine Toxicant Update

Last month's newsletter mentioned the toxicant called "Kaput", the warfarin-based anticoagulant that has recently been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for use on wild pigs. Since then, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller has announced a rule change in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) that classifies a warfarin-based hog lure as a state-limited-use pesticide. It's the first toxicant to be listed specifically for use in controlling feral hogs.

However, opponents believe that the toxicant will also affect non-target species. They also believe that there will be residues in the hog meat.



AgriLife Extension has begun exploring the benefits and risks associated with a warfarin-based product. At this time there is not enough information to thoroughly evaluate the short and long-term impacts on wildlife, livestock and their management.

March Horticulture Tips

Prune: Pruning of evergreens and summer flowering trees and shrubs should be completed in early March. DO NOT prune spring flowering trees or shrubs until after they bloom.



Fertilize: Fertilize pecan trees with 21-0-0 or similar high nitrogen fertilizer early in the month and repeat after 30 and 60 days. Begin zinc sprays at bud break on pecans also.

Be on the Lookout: Beware of close-out sales on bare-root trees and shrubs. The chance of survival is rather low on bare-root plants this late in the season. Your best bet at this time of year is to depend on container-grown or balled and burlapped plants for landscape use.

Look for black spot and powdery mildew on roses and apply fungicide at 10 day intervals. Be on the look out for fire blight on plants in the rose family and pears, apples, Indian Hawthorn and other susceptible plants. Protect while in full bloom with spray of agricultural streptomycin.

Miscellaneous Chores: Prepare beds for planting flowers and vegetables. You may want to rent or buy a garden tiller to speed up the process. If you have a strong back, the old fashion way of using a gardening fork and shovel still does an excellent job.

Our soils in West Texas, have very little organic matter. A good rule of thumb is to add about 4 inches of matter to your beds in the form of peat moss, compost, or shredded pine bark. The organic matter helps to hold water and improves soil texture.

This is an excellent time to have your soil tested. Pick up a soil test kit at your local County Extension Agent's office. The cost of testing is about \$10.00. Knowing the nutrient levels in your soil will help you determine the kind and the amount of fertilizer to apply to your flower beds and lawn.

The window to apply pre-emergent weedkillers to prevent germination of crabgrass, grassburs and other summer weeds in your lawn is closing. Use broadleaf weedkillers to eliminate dandelions, clover, henbit, chickweed, plantain and other non-grassy weeds in turf areas. Follow label directions carefully.

Parting Thoughts..... JUST A MINUTE— by Benjamin E. Mays

I have only just a minute,
 Only sixty seconds in it.
 Forced upon me, can't refuse it.
 Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.
 But it's up to me to use it.
 I must suffer if I lose it.
 Give account if I abuse it.
 Just a tiny little minute,
 but eternity is in it.

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