

March 2020

Inside:
Educational Opportunities
Current Topics
Horticulture Tips

Sutton County Agriculture/Horticulture Newsletter

Upcoming Programs

Pesticide Applicator Training

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 25th 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 18th to allow time for delivery. Cost for training & manuals is \$50.



Central Texas Beekeepers School Now Accepting Students

Learn how to produce your own honey and help save the bees by attending the Twelfth Annual Central Texas Beekeepers School on Saturday, March 21 at Brenham High School in Brenham. The school is open to the public for anyone interested in keeping bees or who wants to learn about bees.

The beekeeping school will teach you the parts of the hive, how to build or assemble your equipment, how to install bees, the proper procedure for lighting a smoker and how to inspect your bees. You will learn how to dress to minimize the possibility of being stung and what to do if you are stung.

You will see how to extract honey and how to care for it before consuming.

The cost is \$65 for the first adult and \$60 for additional adults in the family. Cost for students (including college students) is \$25. Children under the age of 12 attending classes with a parent are \$10.

The cost of the school includes a catered Bar-B-Q meal and a manual with information about beekeeping. Door prizes will be given away and a drawing to give away complete bee hives will be held at 5 p.m.

The school starts at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude at 5:30 p.m.

To register, go to www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org. For more information, call (979) 277-0411 or



USING TECHNOLOGY IN FERAL HOG CONTROL

We are planning a workshop for April. Topic areas include:

Feral Hog Biology & Behavior; Trapping & Conditioning Feral Hogs To Bait; Remote Monitoring Of Traps; Wireless Trap Systems

Look for details in next month's Ag newsletter.



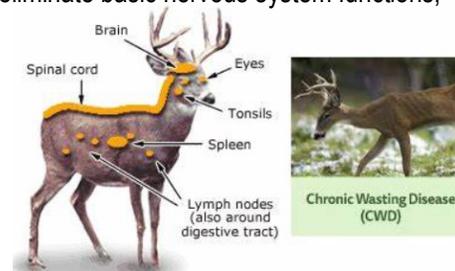
What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

CWD is a disease that affects the nervous system in some cervids including white-tailed deer, mule deer, red deer, elk, sika deer, reindeer, and moose. The precise origins of CWD are unknown. The condition was first detected in 1967 in a research mule deer herd in Colorado. Today it is present in 24 US states and 2 Canadian provinces. Chronic Wasting Disease is one in a group of diseases called the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), such as scrapie in domestic sheep and goats, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle. CWD is not thought to be transmitted to humans or livestock. It is caused by a type of misfolded protein (prions) which causes host animals to replicate the misfolded protein. Prions interrupt and degrade nerve cells and ultimately eliminate basic nervous system functions, leading to death.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear from 16 to 36 months after infection. These include:

Emaciation or generally poor body condition	Decreased activity and/or erratic behavior
Wide, low stances and blank expressions	Excessive drinking and urination
Salivation and grinding of teeth	Keeping distance from the herd
Loss of fear of humans	



Because these symptoms are common to a number of diseases, positive diagnosis requires laboratory testing by a trained professional.

How is it spread?

Chronic Wasting Disease is spread among susceptible animals by direct and indirect contact with infected tissue and body fluids including saliva, urine, feces, or an infected carcass. These prion carrying sources are deposited on the ground and in the soil, and can be picked up by other animals during foraging. Research indicates that some plants and soil types bind prions. Other inanimate objects like feeders, water containers and possibly rubs and scrapes have been experimentally implicated in CWD transmission. Thus, reservoirs of prions in the environment enable transmission. Prions are capable of persisting in the environment for long periods of time. Though mother-offspring transmission is possible, lateral transmission between two animals is thought to be the typical route for infection, primarily by ingestion or inhalation.

Can CWD affect livestock or humans?

There is no strong evidence that CWD is transmissible to humans or domestic livestock. However the CDC and WHO advise that animals known to be infected with a prion disease should not enter the food chain to be consumed by humans or livestock. If hunting in a known CWD area, it is strongly advised to test your harvest and not consume it until the results are complete. Prions accumulate densely in the brain, spinal cord, other nervous tissue, eyes, tonsils, spleen, and lymph nodes of infected animals. These tissues should never be consumed and good personal protection practices such as wearing disposable gloves while field dressing is encouraged. In areas affected by CWD, bone out carcasses in a way that removes all nervous system tissue. Be sure not to cut meat with saws or knives that were used to cut bone. To prevent exposing other susceptible animals to infected material, bury the inedible carcass parts as deeply as possible or dispose of it in an approved landfill.

There is no vaccine to prevent infection and, once infected, there are no effective treatments. Although researchers are working to develop such tools, the way to prevent the spread of CWD, for now, is to manage susceptible animal populations.

If you see an animal suspected of CWD, contact the nearest **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)** Game Warden or Wildlife *Biologist* or the **Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)**. If directed to send a sample for testing by TPWD or TAHC, contact your local TPWD biologist for professional assistance in collecting the sample.

Record Number of acres treated with prescribed fire in Texas-

Excerpt from AgriLife Today article by Alexandra Reynolds

Texans are using prescribed fire more than ever to manage land and mitigate wildfires. A recent statewide survey found that 402,017 acres were treated with prescribed fire in Texas during 2018. That's an increase of nearly 50,000 acres from the previous year, due to Texans using prescribed fire to manage their land in one of the most successful and cost-effective ways, and Texans are also doing a better job at reporting the use of prescribed fire.



In a state as vast as Texas, no one agency has the sole responsibility of conducting and reporting all prescribed burning according to Andy McCrady, Texas A&M Forest Service fuels coordinator.

In the spring of 2019, more than 60 stakeholders came together to create the Texas Prescribed Fire Council. Partners recognized there is a significant amount of forest and rangeland in Texas – most of it privately owned – and that it takes everyone working together to conserve and protect resources and communities.

....Continues on next page

.....Continues from previous page.....

The council is helping guide the use of prescribed fire in the state, and together with Texas A&M Forest Service and Texas A&M AgriLife Research conducted the survey of prescribed fire use in Texas for 2018 (via email to hundreds of professional land managers, governmental agencies and landowner groups).

The level of participation in filling out these surveys and reporting acres burned has increased. This data collection is providing a clearer picture of how extensively Texans are using prescribed fire.

This regularly occurring snapshot of prescribed fire in Texas will be part of a national report conducted by the National Association of State Foresters and the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils. Their report has historically shown that across the country, states in the Southeast conduct 70% of all prescribed burning activities.

"By using fire in a prescriptive way, land managers can reduce hazardous fuel buildups – simultaneously meeting land management goals and moderating risk of severe wildfire in a cost-effective way," said McCrady. "Fire is a natural part of the Texas landscape, and when landowners use prescribed fire, they help make our land safer for all Texans."

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 the County Extension Agent's office. The cost of testing is about \$12.00. 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..... About Spring

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt. -Margaret Atwood

It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want – oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so! -Mark Twain



Pascual Hernandez

Pascual Hernandez
Sutton County Extension Agent
Phone: 325-387-3101
Fax: 325-387-5537
E-mail: p-hernandez@tam.u.edu



Check us out on the web! <http://Sutton-co.tamu.edu>

And Facebook :

<https://www.facebook.com/SuttonCountyExtension/>