

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE

Walker County Agriculture News Update

April 2017

Greetings from the Walker
County, Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension office!

“Life on a farm is a school of patience; you can’t hurry the crops or make an ox in two days—
Henri Alain Liogier

It takes longer than that...

When your crop is growing the next generation of those who will lead agriculture into the future, you should be prepared to germinate and then tend the crop. A delayed harvest is the best you can expect and the most you can ask for.

Glad to have you here! Read on.

- *When you have the opportunity, let others hear your message.*

Upcoming Events:

White Tail Deer Management Series: Late Spring/Early Summer Management Workshop #2

April 18, 2017

7:00 PM

Walker County, Texas AgriLife Extension Office

\$10/person RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

The second workshop in this 2017 series will explore late spring through early summer management. Mark your calendar now!



Management of native species is a year-round, and hands-on project. Wildlife can benefit from your assistance throughout the year. Learn more about what you can do on your land to reach your management goals with planning and preparation.

This series has been a truly educational experience for the participants. If you are at all interested in learning to manage wildlife, you need to join us for the workshop. Don't miss it!

Identification of Native Plants Useful for Wildlife (Field Day)

April 28, 2017

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

SHSU Gibbs Ranch (Hwy 75 N, Huntsville, TX)

\$10/person RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

This field day will dovetail nicely with the wildlife management workshops; however, any landowner will find the information on identifying our native plants very useful. Join us to learn more about the plants you will commonly & possibly not so commonly find growing on your land. If you have seen something growing and wondered what it was good for, this is the event you just can't miss.

Dr. Rector will be our guide as we explore the fields, fence lines and wood line edges during this informative field day event. Bring comfortable shoes, sun screen & hat. Be sure to RSVP in order that we may notify you of changes pending weather events.



"If you can't name it, you can't see it." - Barron Rector

1st Friday Webinars (Monthly Horticulture Topics)

Walker County, Texas AgriLife Extension Office

12 Noon – 1:00 PM

This is the updated schedule for 2017. Also – If you wish to watch the webinar on your own computer at home or elsewhere, you do have that option. All you must do is go online to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/smallacreage/> and click on the link for that date, then enter the password which is: online

Interested in some additional horticulture topic trainings? If so, here is the answer! These webinars will be shown at the Walker County AgriLife Extension office. Trainings will be held the first Friday of the month starting in February. If you wish to attend, RSVP to (936) 435-2426. RSVP for those attending here on-site is so that we may contact you in the event of any changes.

I am providing this set of diverse presentations as continuing education credit for our Walker County Master Gardeners; however, anyone is invited to attend. Bring your lunch with you! The remaining 2017 schedule is:

- May 5 – Cover Crops
- June 2 – Fertilizer Use in the Vegetable Garden
- July 7 – Tomato Grafting
- August 4 – Fall Vegetable Gardening
- September 1 – Food Safety
- October 6 – Successful Watermelon and Tomato Production
- November 3 – Growing Vegetables in Containers
- December 1 – Hugelkultur

A little information on the importance of cover crops (May 5th / 1st Friday Horticulture Webinar). When utilized properly, cover crops in vegetable rotations are useful tools for growers as they will assist in numerous ways. Included in the list of positive impacts for the garden are suppression of weeds, soil protection from rain or runoff, improving soil stability, reduction of surface crusting, addition of organic matter, nitrogen fixation, and suppression of soil borne diseases or pests. You need to be aware of how this tool set can benefit your garden production...

Out of County Events:

Grassfed Beef Conference

May 2-3, 2017

Texas A&M Rosenthal Meat Center (730 Olson Blvd., College Station, TX)

Registration: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2257>

Cost: Before 4/15 \$250.00, 4/16-4/26 \$275.00, Onsite \$300.00

Consumer interest in natural, grassfed and organic beef continues to rise. If you'd like to learn more about grassfed beef production and how it's different, mark your calendar for May 2-3, 2017 to be in College Station for this year's Grassfed Beef Conference.

Online Educational Topics:

2017 Texas Range Webinar Series

12:00 PM (Recommended: check each webinar prior to day to confirm starting time)

No Cost for non-CEU recipients/\$10.00 with CEU's

Enroll in Course: <http://naturalresourcewebinars.tamu.edu/upcoming/>

May 4 – (1-CEU-General) Ready to control some brush? – Leaf Spraying Options – Dr. Bob Lyons, Professor, Associate Department Head, and Extension Range Specialist, Uvalde: For mesquite and many associated brush species, early summer is the best time to treat with herbicides. Learn how to determine the best timing, how to spray, and what to spray for effective foliar applications.

June 1 – Drones on Rangelands – The Basics: **July 6** – (1-CEU-IPM) Chemical Brush and Weed Treatment: **August 3** – The Legume Family: Taxonomy and Important Family Members: **September 7** – (1-CEU-IPM) Understanding and Controlling Invasive Species: **October 5** – Forage Forecasting: Decision Support for Rangeland Systems: **November 2** – (1-CEU-IPM) The Tools in our Land Management Toolbox: **December 7** – Grazing with a purpose – Managing for what you WANT!

Additional Information of note:

Hay producers should consider quality over quantity

By: Adam Russell (reprinted from Aggie Agenda, March/April 2017, Newsletter of the Texas A&M University Soil and Crop Sciences Department)

Producing quality hay takes planning but can be worth the effort, said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts.

Dr. Jason Banta, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, Overton, said producing high quality hay can eliminate the need for protein and energy supplementation for beef cattle during the winter.

Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, forage specialist, Overton, said improving Bermuda grass quality can be as easy as correctly timing fertilizer applications and cuttings.

Corriher-Olson said most producers in East Texas don't maximize the potential of their hay fields because they focus on quantity.

"They're thinking about producing the most bales possible," she said. "But by fertilizing and harvesting the pastures at the right time, a producer can optimize quality and quantity."

Many producers are concerned about protein content in hay, Banta said, but total digestible nutrients, or TDN, the livestock equivalent of calories or energy, is important to the nutritional needs of animals. For Bermuda grass and bahiagrass, low TDN content is often a bigger issue than low protein content.

Corriher-Olson said the challenge for producers is to find the point where TDN levels haven't declined too much and forage yield is acceptable.

Catching Bermuda grass stands during the right window, three to five weeks between cuttings, dependent upon rainfall and sunny days, is the most important factor to produce hay with higher TDN concentrations, she said.

Forage variety choice is also a consideration, she said, as is the time of the season during which the cuttings are done.

Banta said many producers consider the first cutting low quality because it typically includes winter grasses and weeds. But the first cutting is typically the hay with the best nutritional value for cattle.

"A lot of producers think the second and third cutting are the best because they look good, but they are usually the lowest in nutritional quality," he said. "As temperatures rise throughout the season, plants produce more lignin and that reduces digestibility."

<https://youtu.be/-9Ud-zURP6Y>

Fertilization is also a major component in producing quality hay, Corriher-Olson said.

Nitrogen fertilizer should be applied as warm-season grasses start actively growing, she said. She recommends an application of 50-60 pounds of nitrogen per acre as grasses become active and between each cutting.

Corriher-Olson also recommends applications of phosphorus and potassium based on soil tests and yield goals to improve production.

"It takes 50 pounds of nitrogen, 14 pounds of phosphorous and 42 pounds of potassium to produce 1 ton of quality Coastal Bermuda grass," she said. "But you should always base applications on soil samples."

Banta said producers should use ammonia nitrate fertilizer ideally, because applications are not dependent upon the forecast. Urea fertilizer requires that producers pay more attention to the forecast to make sure the application provides nitrogen to the soil effectively. The goal for providing nutritional hay for beef cattle is to produce bales with 12 percent protein and 62-63 percent TDN, Banta said.

"Producing hay that meets the nutritional requirements of beef cows during winter can eliminate any need for supplements whether the cows are dry or nursing," he said.

Spring Management Tips for Cow Calf Producers

By, Joe C. Paschal, Livestock Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Spring is here and it is time to consider some management tips for the cowherd. With most of the calves on the ground, now is the time to begin planning to work this year's calves. Vaccination for Blackleg and other Clostridial diseases should be a priority. The Sudden Death diseases (including Blackleg) are the number one killer of calves and cows. In addition, castration of bull calves, implanting the steer calves, internal and external parasite control treatment, dehorning, and identifying all calves with an ear tag and a ranch or holding brand should be included.

Any heifers considered for replacements should be vaccinated for Brucellosis or Bang's disease between the ages of 4 and 12 months of age. Brucellosis causes abortion and was once a significant reproductive disease in the state. After many years of vaccination and testing, Texas is Brucellosis free, but I highly recommend continued vaccination of replacement heifers, both purebred and commercial. Your veterinarian will have to administer the brucellosis vaccine so you will have to schedule your calf working around an appointment with them.

Although I prefer knife cutting for castration, some prefer to use an elastic band to castrate calves. If you prefer to band your bull calves, I recommend a tetanus toxoid vaccination. Since the process of castration by banding takes a little longer and the wound caused by the band takes longer to heal, there is a greater risk for infection. Some of the Blackleg vaccines, especially some of the 8-way vaccines, contain tetanus. Check the label or vaccinate with a separate injection.

While planning for the calf working consider any cow work that might be done. If the calves are 3-4 months old, some early pregnancy checking could be conducted. In addition, there might be some vaccinations your veterinarian recommends and certainly horn fly control would be appreciated by your cows. It has been an early season for horn flies and a combination of both a “knock down” product like a pour-on and long term control like a fly tag should be used.

For more information contact your local County Extension Agent.

Selected References:

Blackleg and Clostridial Diseases - <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-blackleg-clostridial-diseases.pdf>

Implanting Beef Calves and Stocker Cattle – Dr. F. T. McCollum <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-implanting-beef-calves.pdf>

Common Cattle Parasites – Dr. F. C. Faries <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-common-parasites.pdf>

Protecting Cattle from Horn Flies – Dr. Jeffery K. Tomberlin <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/protecting-cattle-from-horn-flies.pdf>

In This Issue:

THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE

If you noticed that this newsletter is a bit late...

Most of you are aware that we have just finished the 2017 Walker County Fair. As it happens, this local event is the “Big Event” of the year for many Walker County 4-H members and closely follows a three-month run of the Texas Major Shows (Fort Worth, San Antonio, Houston, and Austin). With preparation time before each stock show, travel to and from, plus time spent at each event there has not been much in the way of expendable free office time for gathering newsletter material.

It is a busy time of year for County Extension Agents.

To add to that scenario, imagine an extension agent with a graduating senior in the family. Many of you have been there with the high school senior. Schedules get very tight, very quickly. As a parent raising an extremely active 4-H & FFA member, I have now viewed these youth development programs from all sides.

We cross paths with people who do not understand the reasoning behind our youth development/education efforts. A few years ago, I wrote down some thoughts on the subject. As ten years’ worth of youth livestock projects is nearing an end for our family, I felt compelled to review some of these thoughts for some reason.

THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE

By Reggie Lepley

I got to thinking about why; why we travel all over the state hauling kids and livestock. It has absolutely nothing to do with money, ribbons, or placings at the show. Some say the reason they haul is the chance to help build a fund for school later. In our experience, you spend more than is ever taken in. The likelihood of having to retract that statement seems slim now. *Note; It held true... I could have invested the money elsewhere; however, that wouldn’t have grown the kid.

Yes, my kid was raised in a barn.

A while back I had a chance to visit with a former coworker at a previous show and had a very similar professional conversation. Why? Why do we do this type work? Again, it's not for the money. There are a lot of things we could be doing where we could have better paychecks and normal working hours with free nights and weekends off.

I think the answer to both situations are benefits.

The positive benefits returned by working with great people. Seeing good kids grow into great people while learning that sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. Regardless of the outcome, always being better for the knowledge that the harder you work, the better your chances are for success.

The tools of the trade, so to speak: families & livestock.

One of the important things about stock shows are the families. These are families who become great friends regardless of whether you're related or not. Time spent sitting around and visiting. Adults talking, kids talking, adults talking to kids, and most importantly kids who can talk with adults. People enjoying their experience and sharing that experience with others: family. You probably won't agree with your family all the time, but you will learn to respect them for what and who they are.

Livestock plays the very same role in teaching respect, as well as, providing many other positive attributes. Time spent caring for something totally dependent on the person who is responsible, teaches respect for the animal and in turn, respect for others.

I feel strongly that kids be exposed to the world in a safe manner. They need opportunities to succeed and to safely fail. They need to learn the value of education and knowledge. They need to experience life and family.

The world needs more of this: Good kids becoming great people.



If you have questions or would like more information regarding Extension Educational Programs, call us at (936) 435-2426.



Reggie Lepley

Reggie Lepley,
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Provisions from the American Disability Act will be considered when planning educational programs and activities. Please notify the Walker County Extension Office if you plan on attending an Extension Educational program and need specialized services. Notification of at least three to five days in advance is needed, so that we may have ample time to acquire resources needed to meet your needs.

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