



Walker County Agriculture News Update

September 2016

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

"Knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested." -African proverb

That is what we are all about.

Unlike the quote in my last newsletter, I didn't have to think very long on this one to see the message. I think that it would be a quick assumption that since you are signed up to receive these updates, you also agree with the concept. We have had a very busy summer here at the AgriLife office with a lot of 4-H involvement and activities. Parts of one major event containing information of interest to our beef producers is described in this newsletter; I hope that you glean some information from it. Glad to have you here! Read on.

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

Upcoming Events: We have a full set of fall & early winter events for you! (6 CEU's in Walker Co alone)

Fall Hay Evaluation – Hay Testing Submission Deadline

Friday, September 23rd @ 5:00 PM

Texas AgriLife Extension office, Walker County

102 Tam Road, Suite B

Huntsville, TX 77320

First two hay entries are FREE each sample after is \$10.00 / Entry forms are included in this newsletter.

**Additional information available from Walker County, TX AgriLife Extension at (936) 435-2426*

Pasture Prep for Spring Growth Workshop (2 CEU's)

Date: September 29, 2016 @ 6:30 PM-approx. 8:30 PM

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office

102 Tam Road,

Huntsville, TX 77320

\$10.00 /person (RSVP to 936-435-2426 for seating)

Dr. Larry Redmon, Extension Forage Specialist from Texas A&M University will be here for this planning session. We will be working on helping you develop your "game plan" for the next year. One definite thing which helps a successful producer is being prepared for the growing season.

- Steps to get fields ready for spring activity.
- Developing your calendar to prep for management activities for the coming year.
- What equipment to have lined up/when.
- When to get soil testing accomplished.

Walker County Agricultural Gathering & Fall Hay Evaluation (2 CEU's)

With a FISH FRY!

Monday, October 17th @ 6:30 PM

Walker County Storm Shelter

455 Hwy 75 N

Huntsville, TX 77320

\$5.00 /person (RSVP to 936-435-2426 by 10/10/16 for meal planning)



• Feral Hog Information

Can you have too much rain? We know we can have too little. This year has been yet another challenge to hay producers with fields being wet when the hay needed to be cut. Add to the soft ground situation, a randomly visiting sounder or more of feral hogs and we all know what your hay fields and pastures can look like. Join us on Monday, October 17th to evaluate hay samples (Sept 16 entry deadline), and discuss the issues of pest control created by feral swine. These wild roaming animals are not just pasture destroyers; they can also carry disease which could affect your livestock. Did you catch the information above about the fish fry? A meal will be provided for the \$5.00 per person attendance fee. This educational event is being supported by Walker County Farm Bureau, Silveus Insurance Group (Rangeland Division), and American Plant Food, Inc. We appreciate their continuing and long term support. We are pleased to report that the TU-Mile Sportsman's Association is also supporting this educational program.

Walker Co Master Gardeners 7th Annual Butterfly Festival & Fall Plant Sale:

October 22nd (Saturday), at the Walker County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Road, Huntsville, TX 77320). Plant Sale opens at 8:00 AM and closes at 2:00 PM.

Plants available: Ornamentals (Annuals & Perennials), Texas Natives, Shrubs, Seeds, Roses, Herbs & Fruit Trees, + much more! Be sure to bring the kids out for all the fun activities and butterfly events. There are lots of fun learning opportunities planned for young and young at heart alike: Crafts, Face painting, Outdoor games, Bubbles, T-shirt painting.



Special guest speaker: Zac Stayton, Speaking on Monarch Tag & Release

11:00 AM Treasure Hunt –It is fun, fun, fun for the whole family.

12:00 PM (noon) Monarch Tag & Release –if you have never seen this done make sure you are here.

Come out and be part of the action with the Walker County “Bee Guys” and learn about making honey.

New Landowner Information program (1 CEU)

Thursday, November 17 @ 6:30 PM-approx. 8:00 PM

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office

102 Tam Road,

Huntsville, TX 77320

\$10.00 /person (RSVP to 936-435-2426 for seating)

One of the many challenges faced by new landowners' is obtaining pertinent information or how to find said information. I am sure you will find the topics of this discussion useful. We will have Floyd Nauls from the NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) and Brad Dyer with the Walker County Appraisal Office with us to discuss conservation management options, as well as, timber and agricultural land valuations with the group. Another of the issues that often come into play with agricultural enterprises is the financing of land acquisitions. Randal Prehoda, with Capital Farm Credit will be with us to provide some answers on options regarding purchasing agriculture land. Additionally, there is a local organization with resources available to assist landowners active in

wildlife habitat conservation practice. This information will be discussed by the TU-Mile Sportsman's Association. I also plan to spend some time explaining what TX A&M AgriLife Extension can offer in the way of educational resources and information for our new landowners.

I encourage you to call the Extension Office at (936) 435-2426 to reserve your seat in the classroom.

Wildlife Management: 101 (Native TX/Large Mammals) (1 CEU)

Tuesday, November 22nd @ 7:00 PM-approx. 8:30 PM

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office

102 Tam Road,

Huntsville, TX 77320

\$10.00 /person (RSVP to 936-435-2426 for seating)

Hey I know this date is going to be during hunting season! We won't start until 7:00 PM; you will have time to get out of the field and get over here. Dr. Aaron Sumrall, Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent, Newton County will be with us to help you decide if wildlife management is something that fits your interests. **Topics of discussion will include:**

- Making the decision to actively manage wildlife.
- Setting your management calendar for the year.
- Management Steps, Tools, & Practices to prepare for.

This informational event will allow you to determine what amount of planning needs to be done to "get in the game" with basic wildlife management and see if this option fits your goals.

Out of County Events:

Beginning Farmer & Gardener Conference

September 22-23, 2016

8:00 AM until

Overton Research & Extension Center

1710 FM 3053 N

Overton, TX 75684

\$60.00 for 2 days, \$40.00 for 1 day (Registration Deadline, Sept 20)

Day 1: Soils, Water, Farm Loans, (Lunch provided), Business Planning, Marketing, Crop Production

Day 2: Diseases, Insects, Weeds (Lunch provided), Pollinator Management, Community Gardens

For more information, contact Dr. Joe Masabni at jmasabni@tamu.edu or (903) 834-6191. For registration, make checks payable to: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Mail to Dr. Joe Masabni, P.O. Box 38, Overton, TX 75684.

Cow Country Congress

October 21, 2016

Partin & Partin Heart Bar Ranch

Anderson County

SAVE THE DATE: This location is a registered and commercial Brahman ranch located in northern Anderson County close to Bradford, TX. The 2,000 acre ranch is truly one of Anderson County's jewels. The operation is owned by Mike Partin and his two sons Steve and Carlton. ***Additional information will be forwarded as it is available.***

5th Annual Texas Fruit Conference

Saturday, October 31st & November 1st ,

New Braunfels, TX

\$80.00 /person (Sept 1-Oct 21, or

\$90.00/person at the door)

Registration website:

<http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/horticulture/>

Could you ask for a better “get away” location with the excuse of learning something? This educational program includes 14 different presenters. Topics encompass fruit production, marketing, disease and insect management, new crops, new varieties, grower experiences and an ‘ask the experts’ panel discussion. *Complete Conference Program Now Available;* just follow the link above for all the good information and details.

Conference topics this year include:

- Keys to successful small acreage fruit growing,
- Stinkbugs and Leaffooted bugs—traditional and organic control approaches,
- Water delivery & conservation options,
- Most-diagnosed fruit diseases in Texas,
- History of commercial fruit in Texas,
- Successful outcomes in farmers markets,
- Avocados,
- Olives,
- Table Grapes,
- Fringe Fruits,
- & more

The invited speaker this year is Dr. Tom Beckman, Research Horticulturist, with the USDA-ARS Southeastern Fruit & Tree Nut Laboratory, Byron, Georgia. Dr. Beckman will talk about progress in the development of disease-resistant stone fruit rootstocks, moderate chill peaches and managing fungal gummosis on peaches.

BUZZ OFF! 4 WAYS TO PREVENT MOSQUITO BITES

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



Drain or dump out all standing water around your home

Clean clogged gutters

Empty bird baths and flower pot drain dishes weekly

Store buckets, toys, and wheelbarrows so they do not hold water



Avoid disease-spreading mosquitoes, which can be active at any time, day or night

They can bite anytime that the temperature rises above 55°F



Outdoors, wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts

Choose fabrics with a tight weave instead of knits or other loosely woven materials



Use mosquito repellent containing one of these ingredients when you're outdoors:

- DEET
- IR3535
- Picaridin
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (paramenthane-3, 8-diol)

Sonja L. Swiger, Extension Medical/Veterinary Entomologist
Mike Merchant, Extension Urban Entomologist
The Texas A&M University System

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.



Grapes are GROWING in popularity! Here is an section devoted to grape education events:

Post-Harvest Gathering

September 17, 9-11am

Paradox House Vineyard

8544 Bermuda

Industry, Texas

RSVP!

fmPontasch@tamu.edu

Prospective Winegrower Workshop

September 16, 8:30-4pm

A Field & Seminar Introduction to Growing Grapes

Texas A&M Horticulture Center (TREC)

9650 FM 50

College Station 77879

Online [Register](#)

Grape Camp

November 6-7

Lady Bird Johnson Park Pioneer Pavilion

Fredericksburg, Texas

txwines.org

In This Issue:

GRASS FED BEEF PRODUCTION & MARKETING

– 4-H LESSONS ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE & TRAVEL.

There are both an “Us and a Them”...

I think we take for granted that all agricultural production and methods in developed countries is relatively the same. I have learned that there may be some “sameness”; however, there are real differences. Equipment and technology is the first item where you would expect a difference, as I did before traveling to Uruguay and Argentina this summer with the Texas 4-H Livestock Ambassadors on their first ever international trip.

I guess my surprise was not so much in the level of technological advancements. The technology I saw during this experience oftentimes was equal to that of the U.S., even to the point of being beyond typical for many operations we see in this part of Texas. I was more so taken aback by some of the things I heard.

Other parts of the world don’t necessarily think like we do; even those engaged in similar endeavors. And it seems to work well for them. On reflection, it has a lot to do with the environment and climate for their area. They think differently and it seems to work well for them. Can it work here for us or would we be less competitive. I think I know the answer.

I noticed the difference very early on in the itinerary, like right at the beginning. I do have to admit in all honesty, it did take a couple of stops to allow me to realize what I was learning. This held true even after I had experienced it. I hope that you will take the information I am providing below and work it over in your mind. Could this work for you?

GRASS FED BEEF PRODUCTION & MARKETING –4-H LESSONS ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE & TRAVEL.

By Reggie Lepley, CEA-Ag/NR

The prospect of a 10 plus hour airplane ride isn’t something you would generally look forward to if you are not sitting up front in the high dollar seats. I surely wasn’t in the expensive part of the flying machine. Those of you, who are full size people and have flown commercially, know where I’m going with this. If you are lucky enough to get crammed into the center section of the airplane with someone you don’t know it gets even more interesting;

however, that excitement quickly wears off. To make it even more of a true experience, let's say you are the type person who really can't sleep in a vehicle, much less an airplane. Your flight left at 11:00 PM and landed a couple of time zones earlier than that you left.

That's me, by the way. No sleep. The previous paragraph was a simple math word problem explaining my condition upon arrival. I hope you enjoyed it.

"The grass is always greener on the other side." You know if you leave Texas during a 100 degree summertime humid dry spell and you then arrive in Uruguay during the South American winter, that statement is totally correct. They grow a lot of the same winter pastures there: ryegrass, wheat, and clovers. So it really was green on the other side of the equator. If you want to up the ante a bit more it was 50 degrees Fahrenheit upon arrival. Sweet..

Due to our arrival time, one of the first items of business beyond the obligatory "photo-op" with a group of Texas 4-Hers was lunch. Now we are getting to the good stuff, it is time to talk more about agriculture. As we all should know, there is nothing tied closer to basic agricultural involvement as eating.



Our first meal in Uruguay was beef! After all, we were a bunch of livestock people from Texas. They were cooking on what we would call a wood fired grill. The typical grill found throughout the region is a parrillero. Everything they cook on a parrillero will be known as barbeque. They have a lot of parrilleros covered in barbeque. *A note to amuse you –prior to the trip, all our health professionals had warned us to avoid the local water and uncooked vegetables.*

"Where's the beef?" we found, is not a question that comes up in Uruguay or Argentina very often. I ultimately learned this fact during the trip. As we walked into the market in Montevideo, we were enjoying the experience looking around at all the counters with huge amounts of beef products covering every grill. We were thinking we had hit the jackpot. Then we noticed a difference. If it came off a beef animal, it was probably on that grill somewhere. Not a problem, just a difference or an opportunity depending on your personal comfort level. I chose beef ribs, others chose baby beef (*later learned to originate from a fat heifer*); others ordered cuts which appeared similar to strip steaks or ribeye's. I thought it interesting as the baby beef appeared to also resemble a ribeye.



It all looked great. Not being fluent in Spanish we had invested some time while waiting for lunch deciphering a sign that hung on the wall close to our table. Best we could figure it said something about salt. Salt is illegal in Uruguay, did you know that? We surely didn't. Actually, you can get salt but you have to ask for it. Restaurants cannot (*by law*) place it on the table, as we learned the next day. The beef wasn't seasoned; no salt, no pepper, no nothing. It was unseasoned meat. There was salt substitute on the table. Our server brought us a bowl of chimichurri sauce. Chimichurri proved an item which I came to enjoy before the end of the trip. There was no black pepper on the table either. Before the trip was over we learned you had to ask for it. Later in some of the grocery stores I saw that it is much more expensive than here in the USA. Beyond the weather, differences were being noticed.



My beef ribs which looked great were really chewy, down right tough. Trust me when I say we are going somewhere here; just give me some more time to walk you through it. Back to the differences noticed. Everything comes with papas fritas (*we call them french fries*).

One of the early stops of the trip was a tour of a JBS-Uruguay's meat-packing plant in Canelones. Those tuned into the meat-packing industry, will know that JBS is the second largest global food company in the world (1st largest

meat processor). With 2015 net revenue of \$50+ billion and over 230 thousand employees, this is a truly large global company. This Brazilian based enterprise which started in 1953 as a “Mom & Pop” operation processing 1 to 2 head of cattle per day, now owns several U.S. companies such as: Swift, Pilgrim’s, Smithfield (meats), and Cargill Pork (Cargill Meat Solutions), I would think you are familiar with those brands.

This proved an outstandingly great plant tour. We walked the plant from one door to the other right down the lines; cattle in the outside unloading chutes, to boxed beef, plastic wrapped and ready to load on distribution trucks. After seeing the operation and their processes, I had no issues eating beef during the trip –the product is properly handled.

But, here is where I first heard what I had experienced but had not yet thought.



During the presentation given at JBS, portions of the talk included stats, figures and reference to the export of beef out of Uruguay. Mentions of how their markets fluctuate due to trends in global/regional/governmental stability and economics were of discussion. Not an unreasonable concept, I think. So Russia can’t and won’t take the volume of beef you are producing? Let’s simply shift gears and send it to China, no problem. They work with a fluid marketing system. They seem to have no problem adjusting their market destinations.

Now it is time to jump ahead in their presentation so we can come back to where I’m going.

The important thing to know is I heard this very same thing at multiple locations from multiple speakers in both Uruguay and in Argentina. The description of beef production: “We have a low input, low production system.” Everybody described the cattle business in THOSE VERY WORDS. My thought when I heard the statement the first time was, “Heads Up, We aren’t in the USA anymore.” It got even more interesting as I listened.

Currently as of 2016, JBS-Uruguay is marketing to more than 80 markets. Beef from this one plant finds its way in to a variety of markets; domestic (Uruguay), China/Hong Kong, EU, USA, Israel, Brazil, Chile, Canary Islands, Russia, etc. More than 80 markets.. They gave me the numbers and I can do the math. JBS (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay & Uruguay) processes 41,240 bovines per day. Uruguay with one plant accounts for 2% of their processing business. That is 824.8 cattle per day average at that particular plant going to potentially more than 80 markets. It is a relatively small processing plant with a lot of potential market options. For a comparison: JBS owned plants in the USA number a total of 9 which process 27,000 head of cattle per day, or 3,000 head processed on average each day per plant. So now if you haven’t noticed you should start seeing a few more of the differences. FYI: I later learned at the National Agricultural Research Institute station (Instituto Nacional de Investigacion Agropecuaria) that Uruguay is the 8th largest beef exporter of the world. There are no hormones or antibiotics utilized in their beef production by law. They have markets openly willing to take their products.

In the 1980’s, 70% of Uruguay’s beef sold domestically and 30% exported. In 2011, 20% sold domestically and 80% exported. I hope that got your attention.

Since we were in a meat-packing plant, we were naturally curious about the beef grading and end marketing. When that question was asked, surprisingly we learned that there are no grades; either quality or yield. Instead, the beef is simply sorted by physical size to fit which ever market wants their product. Some countries want larger sized product, some want smaller and so on. Several of the Extension agents on the trip looked around at each other about this time, to see if we were hearing the same thing. We were.

Hold on, “What is the average weight of you slaughter cattle?” “Oh, they will average 450 kg to 500 kg live weight with some being lighter” (that is 992 lbs. to 1,102 lbs.). Keep in mind at this time; we had not been up close and personal with any cattle on the tour. We had only looked at cattle as the bus traveled down the road. That

sounded a bit on the moderate side. Shortly afterward, walking through the chutes beside the plant, we saw our first cattle in person.

Frame score 5 would fit what we were looking at. They are smaller. I was thinking, "Why? This country seems covered in grass." At this time, I still had not heard the full story.

Our questions revolved around their cattle: where do they come from, how are they marketed off the ranch, how long do you feed them prior to slaughter, what size carcass do you want, where do you ship the product, and so on. Keep in mind our group is used to the beef industry in the USA.

I have already told you about the fact that there are no quality or yield grades considered in their system and I have mentioned the global markets. The packers buy the cattle directly from the ranch; several of us looked around again after that statement. That's different. Sometimes they will buy from brokers and we later had an epic tour of the auction barn in Buenos Aires (*another story*). Their cattle are smaller and lighter than ours at harvest and the cattle are only marketed for slaughter when they get fat. Not by age, not by season, but when they get fat. Let that one sink in. That's hugely different. That's important and ultimately it..

Small framed cattle mature and fatten earlier.

Here is the deal. Cattle in this region, for the most part are Hereford, or Angus (red/black no difference to them). They are smaller framed than our cattle. Production indicators for the country of Uruguay in 2012 showed daily gain by head of 0.271 kg/day (0.597 lbs.) with a weaning percentage of 68%. Only 10% of the cattle in both Uruguay and Argentina ever enter a feedlot. The numbers quoted were the same in both countries, by the ranchers/farmers, research center, feedlots, auction barn, and packer. 90% of all the cattle produced in the region are grass-fed. "Low input, low production" remember. Most of the cattle originate as sold directly off the ranch –when they get fat. This means they range from close to a year old to 2 years plus, depending on conditions of the pastures. Do you remember me talking about eating the tough ribs? There is very little uniformity in their beef product. Their beef only goes to market when the animal is fat and then marketed based simply on physical size at fabrication.

And they like it that way. We asked.

We learned that the preference for beef in the region was primarily grass-fed. Later at our feedlot stop in Argentina, our speakers informed us that much effort is being given to educating the local consumers about the potential increase in quality from feedlot sourced cattle. By the way, the feedlot we toured only feeds cattle 90 to at most 120 days with 90 being the target. The goal simply is to get white and not the yellow colored fat of grass-fed cattle. Feeding also yields a consistent flavor and hopefully improved tenderness. But it is a tough sell, because "they", the people in the region like it that way. That's the way it has always been.

Okay here is a humorous note for you. When we were at the feedlot, one of the guys motioned me into the workroom that the cowboys work out of. I walk in and he starts showing me a side of beef covered in clear plastic lying on a table. Remember I don't speak Spanish, and he didn't speak English, but we both could do our own countries variation of "cowhand". I figure out fairly quickly that he was showing me the white color and amount of fat covering on the carcass. I understood completely. Here is where it gets a bit on the fun side for me since I don't own the feedlot. By law, there is no antibiotic use. So when a calf gets sick or hurt in the lot, somebody at



the feedlot has an employee birthday party and the parrillero is fired up. I asked an English-speaking relative of the owner how often they have parties; he said, "A lot!" The beret wearing cowboys were lighting the cooking fire when we drove out.

We had beef at almost every noon and evening meal for 10 days. Other than three chicken servings, one salmon serving, and one lamb serving, it was all beef. For 10 days straight. Twice per day, and yes I counted 15 meals of beef. The flavor was good but there were noticeable variations, no real problems there. I experienced none of the flavor "Wang" from locally sourced grass-fed beef I have had here in the good old USA. I hope you have read my newsletters long enough to remember that reference and laugh just a bit. It was winter time and the pastures were good. I have no idea how long any of the product had been stored so if it was all freshly harvested that could be a variable. I guess I need to travel down there during their summer and see what the seasonal variations are. What was different was there was extreme variation in size of cuts on the grill, and there was extreme variation in tenderness. Some of the beef had a bit of fat covering, some had very little, and none of it exhibited marbling. With the lack of marbling some was dryer than others as you would expect.

One of the farms we visited provided us with lunch at their local fairgrounds. The farm owner did not feed us his beef; instead he bought the ribeye steaks we enjoyed. We asked where they came from. He said that he wanted us to all have a good steak and he did not have that many steaks on hand, so he purchased them. He seasoned the beef the night before (remember the salt thing). They were by and far the best cuts of beef we had the entire trip. Three inches thick and medium rare. By this time I was eating the vegetables and not worrying about it.



Those steaks were 90 days fed beef. Check out that salad in the photo.

I have much more to tell but this issue is long enough. If you see me around, ask about: the dairy tours,



cheese making, milk processing, sheep production, show cattle, South American governments and agriculture, desserts, breakfasts (that's an interesting one), feed stores, fence posts, produce markets & grocery stores, mate, finding coffee, honey mustard, electrical wiring/running man signs, and South American Cowboys. Come to think of it, I never really told you what I wanted to about South American pasture management. Maybe later.

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

Reggie Lepley

Reggie Lepley,
County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources
Walker County
(936) 435-2426



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE

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

HAY TESTING Application Form

– COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION & SECURELY ATTACH TO YOUR HAY SAMPLE:

(Sample entry DEADLINE: September 23, 2016)

Please attach the following information securely to your hay sample. Limit of TWO samples per person. Samples may be turned in at the Walker County Extension Office on TAM Road. Hay sample may be producer grown or purchased. All samples must be processed through a mechanical hay baler. Hay testing is sponsored by Walker County Farm Bureau. Recognition awards for this program are sponsored by American Plant Food and Silveus Rangeland Ins. Questions about your entry? Call: (936) 435-2426

CLASS OF HAY ENTERED:

- WC PRODUCER GROWN
Cutting: ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd
Fertilizer Rate per Acre _____
- PURCHASED _____

IMPROVED BERMUDA _____
COMMON BERMUDA _____
BAHIA _____
SORGHUM _____
LEGUME _____
LEGUME GRASS MIX _____
RYEGRASS _____
MIXED GRASSES _____

NAME _____
PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____
EMAIL _____
ONLY ONE SAMPLE PER FORM

Samples Must Consist Of:
TWO BLOCKS From Square Bales OR
ONE FULL CLEAN FEED SACK from
Round Bales. NO PLASTIC BAGS!

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