

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE

Walker County Agriculture News Update

March 2017

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

“The land! That is where our roots are. There is the basis of our physical life. The farther we get away from the land, the greater our insecurity. From the land comes everything that supports life, everything we use for the service of physical life. The land has not collapsed or shrunk in either extent or productivity. It is there waiting to honor all the labor we are willing to invest in it, and able to tide us across any dislocation of economic conditions.” –Henry Ford

That is the general message...

When working with landowners the message quoted by Mr. Ford above often comes to mind. Yes, you have many potential options available. How much time and work are you willing to place into your effort? Investments beyond funding for successful agricultural enterprises are not always easily quantified and are often noted at the point where soil becomes dirt. Just in case you are not familiar with the technical transition, we grow things in soil and we must clean dirt from under our fingernails. The part of Mr. Ford’s quote that I do find issue with is that we have lost productive ground due to population growth. When he wrote that back in the 1930’s, I would think he never imagined his company would ultimately produce and sell the number of vehicles which they have.

Glad to have you here! Read on.

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

Upcoming Events:

White Tail Deer Management Series: Spring Management Workshop #1

February 28, 2017

6:00 PM (updated time from previous newsletters)

Walker County, Texas AgriLife Extension Office

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

This workshop will kick off the 2017 wildlife education classes. Dr. Larry Redmon will be with us to investigate how feeding, planting, and nutrition can possibly benefit wildlife management efforts for white tail deer. Anybody who has ever wanted some advanced information regarding wildlife management without the college course expenses will be interested in participating in this series of presentations. We will be following this workshop with the 2nd in the 2017 series on April 18th (more info later in this newsletter).



Walker County Farmers Market Organizational Meeting Tuesday, March 7, 2017

6:00 PM

Texas AgriLife Extension Service (102 Tam Road, Suite B, Huntsville, TX)

Anyone wanting to participate in the Walker County Farmers Market is invited to attend. This market has been held annually since the mid 1960's and is a great marketing opportunity for local vegetable producers. Join us to activate your membership and help set the opening date for 2017.

UPDATED INFO:

1st Friday Webinars (Monthly Horticulture Topics)

Walker County, Texas AgriLife Extension Office

12 Noon – 1:00 PM



Note: *The topic schedule has changed a bit since I first released this information. Here 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 will be 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 complete 2017 schedule (currently) is:

- March 3 – Insects and Diseases You Should Know in Vegetable Production
- April 7 – Ginger Production
- 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



Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service small-acreage horticulturist, Overton. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Adam Russell)

Spring Plant Sale

Walker County Master Gardeners

March 11, 2017

8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

At the MG Greenhouse & Gardens

Texas AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Road, Huntsville, TX)

The 2017 sale will feature: Tomatoes, Peppers, Herbs, Roses, Natives, Ornamentals, Perennials, Spring Bulbs, Seeds, Shrubs, Trees, and much more.

Educational seminars to be held on-site:

9:00 AM - Blueberries

9:30 AM - Tomatoes

10:00 AM -Herbs

10:30 AM -Texas Natives

11:00 AM –Perennials

Other notable features for the day will include a bake sale and the famous Walker County Area Beekeepers Association local honey for sale. Additional information will be posted on the MG Facebook page: Walker County Master Gardeners. Recommendations are to be early as the favorites often go fast!! Be sure and plan your visit around the educational seminars -Great information for gardeners!

Proceeds from the Master Gardener plant sale provide for educational supplies and material assisting with workshops, classes and learning events throughout the year. Another item not often noted is that this volunteer group funds expenses associated with maintaining the educational demonstration gardens and greenhouse at the AgriLife Extension office. If you are working with difficult soils, challenging locations, or simply want to learn what grows well in Walker County, the demonstration gardens are a resource you need to visit.

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.



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.

Out of County Events:

2017 International Livestock Congress-USA

March 8-9, 2017

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (3 NRG Park, Houston, TX)

Cost: Students/\$50.00, Media/\$50.00, Others/\$150.00

Registration: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2222>

This event focuses on major international issues impacting the livestock industry. Those wanting a big picture view of livestock production and marketing will benefit from participation. The link above will also permit you to view the schedule of events.

Sustaining Balance through Focused Management & Technology

March 31, 2017

8:30 AM until Early Afternoon

Tom Leroy Education Building-TX A&M AgriLife Extension Service

9020 Airport Road, Conroe, TX 77303

Registration: On-line visit <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/registration/> (FREE!!!) Lunch provided by SFI

Deadline to sign up (March 28) For information call Texas A&M Forest Service at (936) 273-2261

Three great sessions! ONE GREAT DAY! FREE!

Select your pathway from 3 unique sessions – attend all 3 or any combination to fit your needs or time schedule.

8:30 AM Creating Water & Wildlife Habitats

- Wildlife Tax Valuations for Property Owners-Qualifications & Rules
- Services & Technical Guidance Offered by TX Parks & Wildlife, Current Landowner Trends
- Converting an Existing Livestock Pond for Wildlife, Small Pond Management

10:45 AM Restoring Native Forests, Woodlands & Prairielands

- Timber Tax Valuations for Property Owners-Qualifications & Rules
- Native Tree Selection Best Suited for Your Land
- Creating Small Acreage Prairies from Old Pasture Land, Native Grasses & Plants
- Prescribed Burning-Mechanical Treatments-Herbicide Application
- Forestry Best Management Practices

-Online Tools & Resources

1:30 PM Technology & Tools Available to You

- Connecting Markets, Resources, and Services
- Implementation and Soil & Water Protection



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

Ranch Management University

April 3-7, 2017

G. Rollie White Visitor's Center (7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy, College Station, TX)

Registration: <https://agriferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2195>

Cost: \$500.00/Attendee

The Ranch Management University is an intensive 5-day event targeting new or inexperienced ranchers and landowners and covers the fundamentals of soils and soil fertility, forage establishment, pasture management, and utilization by livestock. Basic livestock management practices such as castrating and vaccinating calves are demonstrated. Grazing management, stocking rate, and body condition scoring are also highlighted. Additionally, several wildlife management topics are covered for those interested in managing white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, feral hogs, and farm ponds. Approximately one-half the workshop involves lectures and discussion, with the remainder consisting of the field demonstrations of various how to methods of soil sampling, planting, calibrating sprayers, and inoculating legume seed. Various forage species, including bermudagrass, small grains, annual ryegrass, and clovers are studied by workshop attendees.

Grassfed Beef Conference

May 2-3, 2017

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

Registration: <https://agriferegister.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/>

March 2 – (1 CEU-IPM) Improving Forage Production through Effective Weed Management – Dr. Josh McGinty, Assistant Professor & Extension Agronomist, Corpus Christi: This webinar is focused on the Integrated Weed Management (IWM) approach for managing weed pests of improved pastures and hay fields.

April 6 – How much forage do I have? – Dr. Emi Kimura, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Vernon: This webinar will help you determine how much forage you have available for livestock and different methods of monitoring the forage resource throughout the year.

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!

In the you may have heard about this category:

Texas Department of Agriculture has announced the feral hog bait Kaput, has been approved by TDA as a state-limited use pesticide.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is a state-wide leader in educating the public on effective methods of controlling the population of feral hogs. As Kaput only recently received approval from the EPA and TDA, AgriLife Extension has not yet incorporated the use of this product into our educational programming. We are exploring the benefits and risks associated with warfarin-based products such as Kaput and expect to eventually add this control method to the assortment of management options we educate landowners about, including trapping, shooting, land management, and other population reduction methods.



In This Issue:

THE FIELDS OF SPRING

Have you been waiting for...

Based on the number of phone contacts with a similar theme, I would say the gardening bug has bitten more than a few of our local green thumbs. Warm days and moist soil make a vegetable gardener itch to be out in the middle of the action. Working the soil and then seeing results directly attributable to your effort is among the extreme satisfactions in life. The bonus is placing a container of extremely fresh homegrown vegetables on the kitchen table.

It is a fact that farmers and gardeners are an optimistic crowd.



THE FIELDS OF SPRING

By Reggie Lepley

It has been a mild winter for the most part here in Walker County. Breaking ice in the livestock trough only happened one time during the past season. That was over a two-day span and the ice was thin the first day.

Since it is warming up nicely, our home gardeners are feeling the urge to get outside and work in the gardens. The question I would ask is, "Are we past the cold weather?"

Statistically, the answer to that is no. Depending on which chart you review, the last two weeks in March typically end our chances of frost. Remember we are talking average even then...

FYI: The resources mentioned below can be found here: <http://walker.agrilife.org/publications/horticulture/>

In the event, you are one of the "go getters" and just can't wait any longer for those spring vegetables to be in the ground, I recommend you read the frost and freeze protection information provided by our friends from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County.

It would be wise to gather up some of the supply/resources mentioned in the article to have on hand for that last unexpected cold snap.

I have a vegetable planting chart posted on our Walker County AgriLife web page. This chart shows the ideal and marginal planting windows for our commonly planted vegetables. Each species listed will have a link to the Aggie Horticulture "Easy Gardening" publication or another helpful item explaining how to plant and care for the vegetable.

There are also a couple of vegetable variety recommendation charts posted which you may find useful in selecting your spring and summer plantings. I have two options posted as some species may be a little limited on recommendations based on the list of choice.

If you have not tested a soil sample from your garden plot, you still have time to get that done before the growing season really gets going. Come by the AgriLife office and pick up a sample kit, your garden will thank you along with the family members, neighbors, and friends that have an appreciation of home grown vegetables.

Over the past years, I talked to more than a few gardeners who have been frustrated with their vegetable results. I tend to think that a good bit of the lack of vegetative response is directly attributed to soil pH. Almost every conversation included the gardener telling me what and how they fertilized. The amendment of soil pH is rarely ever claimed when I am hearing of the failure. It is a question which I ask along with, "Have you had a soil test analyzed?"

Until soil pH buffering levels are met, plants have trouble taking up nutrients. You can fertilize all you want and still have very limited growth response. Just to keep it interesting assuming the pH is good, you can over fertilize just as easily. When this happens, plants will resist entering the reproductive phase which is what you ultimately want to produce your home-grown groceries. Yes, I also hear tales or see photos of monster plants that never produce much of anything.

Have a soil test analyzed so we can talk about something else. We have the testing forms and sample bags available at the AgriLife office. Come by and pick some up!



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

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