



Walker County Agriculture Update

July/August 2018

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

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." Richard Buckminster Fuller

New Challenges...

A constant part of any agricultural equation is some things stay the same for a while, then they change. I mentioned in my last newsletter the volume of pond weed calls that had been coming into the AgriLife office. It has never been uncommon to hear the caller say, "I've had this property for forty years and never seen this stuff in my pond!"

One of the remarks that could be made would be, "Congratulations, you have been around your property long enough to see something different!" I've resisted saying it. Though in all honesty, I have had the thought. The big picture view from the quote above is often referenced by Dr. Barron Rector when he says, "As long as you continue to do what you are doing, you will continue to have the same results you are seeing." The concept applies to all areas of production agriculture; farming and ranching and even ponds.

Think about it: What do you need to change?

Glad to have you here! Read on.

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

Upcoming Events:

We are continuing to join the statewide Wildlife Fact Check Series of educational programs which allows us to delve deeper into the wildlife topics started in 2017. For those of you who want to glean additional information on the overall picture of managing wildlife resources, this is a fantastic opportunity to hear presenters that we have not yet been able to bring to Walker County. Bring your lunch to the Walker County, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office and learn! **Be sure to RSVP in order that we will have a seat for you.** This is important as some days we will have other events ongoing and seating may be very limited.

Predators and Deer

Friday, July 20th, 2018

(11:30 AM Registration, Noon – 1:30 PM Program)

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd & SH75 N, Huntsville, TX)

RSVP to (936) 435-2426 to confirm a seat in the class.

Diseases Shared by Livestock & Wildlife

Friday, August 10th, 2018

(11:30 AM Registration, Noon – 1:30 PM Program)

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd & SH75 N, Huntsville, TX)

RSVP to (936) 435-2426 to confirm a seat in the class.

The next presentation (Native Plants & Water) blends well with the series above or can stand on its own merit. This is one that will be included in the Urban Wildlife Series being scheduled in Bexar County. Yes, we will be joining them via the web to explore this very relevant and interesting topic.

Every Drop Counts – Native Plants & Water Conservation

Friday, August 31st, 2018

(10:00 AM - Noon) *Note the time is different from programs above

Walker County AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd & SH75 N, Huntsville, TX)

RSVP to (936) 435-2426 to confirm a seat in the class.

Preserving the Harvest

Wednesday, August 15th, 2018

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Walker County Storm Shelter (445 Highway 75, Huntsville, TX 77340)

Cost: \$25.00 per person (includes Lunch & Supplies)

RSVP to (936) 435-2426.

Wasting good home-grown vegetables and fruit is a terrible thing. At one time or another, we all grow more than we can eat right that day. Sometimes we even have trouble giving the extras to family, friends, and neighbors. Here is an outstanding opportunity to learn the proper methods to safely preserve your harvest for later enjoyment. The early spring session on this subject was exceptionally popular so we decided to offer it again with a new season of homegrown produce. Topics to be discussed during this event: Pickling and Hands-On Workshop to learn pickling, Jams and Jellies with a Hands-On Workshop. Join us for this extensive training on safe recommended methods and techniques to preserve the bounty of your home gardens.

Looking for locally grown produce?

Walker County Farmers Market

OPEN -Wednesdays & Saturdays

8:00 AM until Sell Out

West Hill Mall Parking Lot

The 2018 Walker County Farmers Market is open in the parking lot of West Hill Mall located in Huntsville, Texas. Hours for the market will be 8:00 AM until sell-out on Saturdays and Wednesdays.

Local producers have a variety of farm fresh produce throughout the summer including; Tomatoes, Melons, Yellow Squash, Zucchini Squash, Potatoes, Lettuce, Onions, Peppers: (Poblano, Bell, Jalapeno, Banana, & others), Corn, Purple Hull Peas, Black Eyed Peas, Pinto Beans, Snap Beans, Okra and a seasonal variety of herbs.

Local farmers & vegetable producers interested in participating in the market are encouraged to contact the Walker County, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at (936) 435-2426 for additional information.

Other Local Events:

TU-MILE Sportsman's Association Banquet

August 17, 2018

Walker County Fairgrounds

6:00 PM

This locally based organization has been an outstanding supporter of the 4-H & Youth Shooting Sports program and our outdoor education/wildlife activities. The TU-MILE Sportsman's Association has donated to numerous 4-H programs in our area. Walker County is fortunate to be one of those counties. Additionally, the association is planning to provide five \$1,000.00 scholarships to graduating high school seniors. This year's banquet will include youth events, special raffles, gun giveaways and much more. Admission tickets are: Kids 8 & under (free), Ages 8-18 (\$25), Adults (\$65), Couples (\$120). For more information, or to purchase tickets please contact Jody Crawford (936) 714-3499. Your banquet ticket provides you a membership in the association.

TU-MILE Sportsman's Association Seed Program

Members of the association are eligible to receive seed purchasing assistance for wildlife food plots. This program provides 20% (up to \$50.00) assistance program per member redeemable at local feed suppliers. Read more about cool season forages and food plots later in this newsletter.

Texas Farm Bureau, Young Farmer & Rancher Fall Tour

September 7-9, 2018

Huntsville, TX (Hampton Inn & Suites)

This is a fantastic opportunity for Farm Bureau members 35 and under. This tour will headquarter out of Huntsville, Texas and will travel around our area of the state exploring diverse agricultural enterprises. The YF&R Fall Tour provides opportunities to:

- Learn about the diverse agricultural industry Texas offers.
- Learn about agriculture indigenous to the Huntsville Texas area.
- Develop a network with other young producers from across the state.
- Fellowship with one another and make new friends.
- Expose young people to Texas Farm Bureau and the Young Farmer and Rancher Activities.

Three different packages are available:

Package A - \$375 Includes all functions listed above for Two People (Sharing a room)

Package B - \$275 Includes all functions listed above for One Person (private room)

Package C - \$100 Includes all functions listed above for an Individual or Couple (NO HOTEL)

Registration must be completed **online by the member**. The online instructions, flyer and link to

register for the tour are available at: <http://texasfarmbureau.org/yfr> **The deadline for registration is Wednesday, August 15.** Registration forms need to be submitted online no later than this date to allow for making appropriate bus, room and meal arrangements.

Out of County Events:

2018 Houston Urban Food Production Conference

July 27th, 2018

9:00 AM-3:30 PM

University of Houston Downtown (201 Girard, Houston, TX 77002)

Cost: \$50.00 per person (includes lunch)

Registration: <https://hufpc2018.eventbrite.com>

This event will include educational tracks for small scale commercial growers, backyard hobby growers, as well as a business startup track. Regardless of where you fit in the urban food production scenario there is something here for you!

- Commercial Track: Organic Weed Control, Vegetable Production: New & Top Varieties for Southeast Texas, Small Scale Fruit Production, Integrated Pest Management for Vegetable Production.
- Backyard Track: Building a Healthy Soil, Backyard Aquaponics, Container Vegetable Production, Backyard Chickens.
- Business Start-Up Track: Developing a Business Plan, Cottage Food Laws, Texas Farmers' Markets: Becoming a Vender, How to Be Successful at a Farmers Market.

TX A&M Beef Cattle Short Course

August 6-8th, 2018

8:00 AM until (depending on day)

Rudder Tower (Joe Routh Boulevard, College Station, TX)

Cost: Participant/\$210.00 person (3 daily lunches, 1 Prime Rib Dinner/Monday, proceedings, tradeshow admittance, refreshments & access to campus shuttle service provided/CEU's offered within selected tracks), parking permits are an additional \$15.00.

Registration/More Info:

<https://events.tamu.edu/EmsRegics/64th%20Annual%20TAMU%20Beef%20Cattle%20Short%20Course>

Today the highly respected TAM Beef Cattle Short Course is nationally and internationally recognized as the largest attended beef cattle educational program of its type in the world. It has gained the respect from organizations, associations, Land Grant universities and agencies alike as the focal point for beef cattle educational information.

The Cattleman's College features more than 20 concurrent sessions. Topics include animal health, nutrition, reproduction, breeding, genetics, selection, research, marketing and handling. Management sessions will cover business, forage, range, and purebred cattle. Topics such as landowner issues and fence building will be featured at this BCSC.

Sessions are designed for everyone, from the newest member of the industry to the most seasoned producer. Several pesticide CEUs, veterinarian CECs and BQA credits are available to attendees. Additionally, over 150 agriculture related businesses and trade show exhibitors annually attend the course and attest to the fact that it is the most highly attended activity of its kind anywhere in the United States. Annually over 1,700 participants attend the Beef Cattle Short Course to gain valuable knowledge about beef cattle production.

New for 2018: This year's program will include a **Ranch Horse Workshop**, Sunday August 5th, 8:00 AM-2:30 PM, registration is included for all Beef Cattle Short Course participants (or) \$50.00 at the door for non-participants. This will be held at Thomas Hildebrand Equine Complex (3240 F&B Road, College Station, TX). Morning lectures will include Equine Nutrition, Hay & Pasture Management, Routine Health Maintenance. Afternoon activities will be in the arena with Jeff Williams of Post, TX. Jeff has been starting colts for clients that include the Haythorn Ranch, King Ranch, Beggs Ranch, Matador Ranch, Espuela Ranch, and the Muleshoe Ranch for over 20 years.

Ranchers Leasing Workshop

Friday, September 7, 2018

12:00 – 4:00 PM

The Brazos Center (College Station, TX)

Cost: FREE (Includes Lunch!)

To register contact Tiffany Lashmet, (806) 677-5681 or tdowell@tamu.edu

I get calls, regularly. What do I need to include in my lease agreement? Do you have a sample pasture lease? If you need this type information you do not want to miss this workshop. I highly recommend attending. Participation will allow you to hear what the experts have to say about formulating an effective and useful lease document. This educational program is running with a 100% YES, I would recommend to a friend evaluation...

- Focused specifically on grazing, hunting, and livestock leases.
- Half-day seminar, participants will be able to ask questions, interact with attorneys and economists.
- All participants receive their own copy of the Ranchers' Agricultural Leasing Handbook, which contains checklists and sample lease language.

Keep this date ON YOUR CALENDAR:

**2018 Cow Country Congress
October 19, 2018.
Triple Son Farms, Leon County, TX**

I will continue saying this: Trust me on this one, you will want to join us in Leon County to visit the Triple Son Farms. This ranching location raises some exceptionally high quality F1 Brahman/Angus cross cattle. You don't want to miss the 2018 Cow Country Congress! Look for yourself and see what the excitement is about:
<http://www.triplesonfarms.com>

Useful Information:

How many cows can you haul in that trailer...

Those of us who haul livestock around have had that discussion at one time or another. Here is a chart I saved to share with you. This time of year, be sure to pay attention to the air temperature when hauling livestock-give them extra room.

Recommended maximum number of cattle* for trailers of different lengths**								
Trailer Size (Inside Dimension)	Cattle Weight, Lbs.							Total Wt.***
	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	
16x6 ft	18	12	9	7	6	5	5	< 7400
18x6 ft	21	14	10	8	7	6	5	< 8400
20x6 ft	23	15	12	9	8	7	6	< 9300
24x6 ft	28	18	14	11	9	8	7	< 11100
20x7 ft	27	18	13	11	9	8	7	< 10800
24x7 ft	32	22	16	13	11	9	8	< 1300
32x7 ft	43	29	22	17	14	12	11	< 17300
* This chart represents the max number of polled/dehorned cattle for trailers of different lengths; when hauling horned/tipped cattle reduce the number of cattle by 5%.								
** The number of cattle loaded during hot conditions should be reduced.								
*** This is the max weight of cattle for each trailer size with these calculations. Do not exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating for your truck and stock trailer.								

In This Issue:

COOL SEASON PASTURES & FOOD PLOTS

Is it too early to talk about this...I don't think so.

You are reading the "Ag" newsletter, so it is probably safe to assume most of you watch the news weather regularly. Are you one of the people who have had issues with the Saharan dust that has been blowing into our area this year? If so, dust in mass quantities is something you want to avoid if possible.

Unfortunately, some of the things we do in the world of agriculture have to be done when they need to be done and dealing with environmental conditions is accepted as part of the job.

One of the tough decisions about writing a newsletter is timing information. It is not always easy to meet the balance of timely information vs. current interest. Mid-summer may seem early to discuss winter pastures when it is 98 degrees and people are still working in the hay fields.

In my opinion it is not too early for the discussion to follow. Important things require planning for success, so we will spend a little written time on the topic. It is time now to set your plan and prepare for your cool season forages and food plots.

In supporting my thoughts, I will provide some examples: Where is your soil pH level? If you don't know, you're probably late due to the tendency for acidic soils in our area. If your pH is low and you want to grow cool season legumes and haven't already applied agricultural limestone, you're defiantly late. Those who fall into the second example as interested in including legumes in cool season plantings may have an issue, depending on the species you want to include in your game plan. Those who don't have a pH issue or will only be working with small grains or ryegrass, still have some time to spare.

Generally, soil samples should be taken in late July or August to give you time to plan your needed pasture expenses. We have the forms and collection bags here at the AgriLife office waiting for you.

When I think of planting "winter pastures", I think of dust. It is almost never not hot and dusty during the planting process. There have been a few years with early rains which make it a pleasure to be on the tractor at that moment. Those are the years I think about when I'm trying to not think about the dust.

COOL SEASON PASTURES & FOOD PLOTS

By Reggie Lepley

Winter pastures provide the highest quality forage that can be grown in the eastern half of Texas. They include small grains, annual ryegrass, and cool-season legumes such as clovers. Grazing of winter pastures can extend from November through early June depending on location, varieties used, planting method and planting dates. The type and amount of winter pasture should be planned carefully because of the expense associated with land preparation, seed, and fertilizer. Keep in mind most of this information will be useful regardless of your planting designation being cool season grazing pasture or wildlife food plots.

First some very basic grouping terminology explanations on items I will be discussing:

- Cool Season Forages - plants you can grow and graze October-June depending on species.
- Small Grains - Oats, Wheat, Elbon Rye, Barley, Triticale
- Annual Ryegrass – Numerous varieties; however, the point is... (Elbon Rye is NOT ryegrass/totally separate species, don't be confused)
- Cool Season Legumes - Clovers (Arrowleaf, Ball, Berseem, Crimson, Rose, Subterranean, White), Alfalfa, Vetch, Austrian Winter Pea, Burr Medic, Sweet Clover
- Warm Season Legumes- Cow Pea, Peanuts, Soybean (You may be wondering why I included these in a cool season discussion-keep reading...)
- Prepared seedbed – means clean tilled (think vegetable garden soil type preparation for best results).
- Sod seeded– can include planting with no-till equipment or a very light disking into a perennial warm season pasture.

- Over seeded – means no soil preparation work beyond management of grass cover.

Regardless of what you want to grow as a cool season forage or cover crop, there is a critical establishment item that serves as the limiting factor. That factor is moisture.

I received a call several years ago from somebody with a deer lease in the southwestern portion of the Texas Hill Country. He wanted to plant some wildlife food plots. I have a general enough grasp on Texas geography to know we have some major differences between here and there. I asked him if the property featured any tillable soil. After I was assured that yes there were places which could be worked with a tractor, I asked if I could call him back later.

It happened that I know an Extension Agent who had worked that county. After a quick phone call, I received the information that cinched the question. Rainfall was the problem, either not enough to germinate the crop or not enough to keep it growing. It would be a rare year for any cool season forage to “do well” or “justify the effort and cost”.

Our usual Walker County limiting moisture factor is not that we don't receive moisture needed to grow the crop, but rather we may not have moisture needed to plant the crop when we want to. If I am asked when to plant cool season forages the answer is always, “It depends”. With good moisture, we can plant mid-September without any issues. Without adequate moisture, we may be waiting until late October in some years. “It depends”, is a real thing. Remember that dust I mentioned during the lead in on this topic?

Related issues to watch out for:

- We may plant early in September expecting good growing conditions then have a dry October. It isn't uncommon for expectant producers to plant early only to have dry conditions kill the young small grain grasses shortly after they emerge.
- Fall Army Worms may hatch on an early stand of Oats or Wheat. And on that subject, with these recent showers army worms may yet be a problem in our hay fields. Sharp eyes are needed...

Before you get excited about establishing cool season forages, you need to examine your soils. First, not all forages fit all soil types so do your research to insure a match. Next, well drained soils that resist bogging are desired. Keep in mind the livestock will be on these pastures during what is typically some of our wetter weather and the soil will have to hold up to the hooved traffic without allowing the plants to be destroyed. Overseeding your perennial warm season pasture can help provide firm footing but keep in mind an overseeded stand will typically produce much later than those on machine prepared seedbeds.

While we are here close to the thought, do not plant cool season forages in your hay fields. That will only reduce the early emergence of the perennial warm season hay forages, which is not a good thing.

If cool season forages are something that will fit your needs, one of the next questions is; How much do you need? Planning this portion of your management efforts is key to being successful. Wildlife food plots are oftentimes recommended to be established on about 6-10% of your managed acres. Depending on the place you are working, that can be an excessive number so adjust accordingly. Planning wildlife food plots many times is like the real estate business: location, location, location. Just because you build it, they may not show up.

For the ranchers, stocking rates on cool season forages follow along some basic guidelines. When stocking winter pastures with calves, a general 600 pounds of body weight per acre is desired. For example, this works out to (1.5) 400lb calves/acre, or (1) 600lb calf/acre, or (0.75) 800lb calf/acre. With good moisture and proper fertilization that stocking rate can be increased.

Knowing how to adjust based on conditions is the area where knowledgeable ranchers become great grass farmers. Just in case you haven't learned this yet: Successful grass farmers make profitable ranchers.

So, you say you want to graze cow calf pairs? The equation changes a bit there. If you are limit grazing (requires adequate fencing & daily labor), you can figure 4 pair per acre with a 2-hour graze time each day (or a 4-hour graze time every other day). *BTW: Once the cows get used to the process it's not usually that difficult to move them. Electric fences are popular options for managing many cool season forage plantings.

Why is a 2-hour graze time the magic number? Any longer than that in the grazing pasture and cattle will start to lay down.

Not interested in the labor to open and close gates with a daily cattle drive involved? Planting larger amounts of relatively expensive cool season pasture and allowing cattle to lay down in it may not be very feasible unless you have lots of space. Ryegrass plantings often are more popular than the small grains for unrestricted grazing utilization. This mainly goes back to being able to over seed larger areas. I didn't say small grains wouldn't work for this, it just requires a bit more expense for land prep.

If you have read this far, it is now time to mention that a combination of prepared seedbed planting with prescribed grazing management and free grazed overseeded plantings is probably the ticket the livestock types have been looking for.

When grass cover is short (you can see the ground), over seeding of ryegrass is a good and effective option. If you can't see the ground, you need to graze it harder or mow before you overseed. Keep in mind one of those management practices can return money, one costs money. Remember what I said about profitable ranchers?

Ryegrass works in this over seeded situation because the seed is very small, makes good seed to soil contact with rain, and you are planting a bunch of seeds to the acre. Even though over seeding works for this forage species, is planting into a prepared seed bed better? Yes, but you have more trips across the field and if it doesn't rain then you must deal with those consequences. You will always have faster germination and greater production with prepared seed beds.

I have seen very successful over seeded ryegrass fields where the seeder was on the tractor pulling a drag harrow behind and the entire planting process happened in one pass. The heavier that drag harrow is the better/faster germination you will see. The reason for the increased effectiveness is because you encourage better soil seed contact with such an implement.

Small grains require a prepared seed bed for an effective planting unless you utilize no-till planting equipment. That is an expensive but very nice equipment item to have available. Since we have reached this discussion, let's go just a bit deeper on explanations.

There are various approaches beyond over seeding to providing cool-season forages. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative in meeting your needs.

1. Small grain, ryegrass, and/or cool season legumes planted on a prepared seedbed. This requires annual seedbed preparation and establishment, but can provide early, high production of forage.
2. Small grain, ryegrass and/or cool season legumes sod seeded into established, permanent warm season grass sods. Sod seeded preparations call for little expense beyond equipment & fuel costs, but forage production will be later and reduced because of warm season grass competition. These methods do provide for production from land while the summer grass is dormant. Disking the sod lightly or otherwise retarding the summer growth in the fall will encourage earlier establishment and growth of the cool season species.

Selecting your forage specie often means basing the decision on planting method, soil type/location, method of utilization, yield potential, desired time of production, cold tolerance, disease resistance, and availability of good-quality seed.

Mixtures of small grains and ryegrass are often planted, but usually do not produce more total forage than a single variety. This can lengthen the production period and hedge against failure caused by winter kill. Mixing varieties of the same species within a single planting offers no advantages.

Comparable Characteristics Of Winter Pasture Crops						
	Oats	Wheat	Rye	Ryegrass	Triticale	Clover
Fall	E	F	G+	G+	G	P
Winter	F	G	G	G	G	P
Spring	G	G	F	E	G+	G
Late Spring	P	P	P	G	F	G-E*
Winter Hardiness	P	F	E	G	G	F-G*
Disease Tolerance	F	F	G	E	F	E
Grazing Quality	E	E	E	E	E	E
Hay Quality	G	G	G	E	G	F-G*

E=EXCELLENT; G=GOOD; F=FAIR; P=POOR
 * Depends on the Variety of Legume

When you look at the chart above, you should be able to see why I personally like seed mixes for many pastures and all food plots... Let me clarify that even more for you.

I like to hedge my bets; to better rephrase that, I don't like betting at all.

We know this planting is going in the ground for growth during the cool part of the year. I want a planting that will survive the cold when we have that type weather. I like early production, and I also like late production. It costs money to plant these pastures, so I want to get everything I can out of the expense created by the process.

Most importantly everything on the list provides excellent grazing quality, so that item is locked in first. When I need early production, I choose oats and ryegrass. When I want cold protection, I choose rye

and then ryegrass, and then wheat in that order. When I want late production, I choose clovers and then ryegrass.

I like to mix cool season species to address the utilization I expect to create for that planting. Those of you who read my articles should have picked up that I like to hunt during October. When I really want to up the early factor for pre-frost food plots, I will mix in a fast maturing warm season legume into the cool season mix to provide a very early high-quality component to the fall planting. Cow peas work great, I have had luck with peanuts and late maturity group nine soybeans as well. Frost will kill those plants but in most years with moisture, the animals already got them first.

One item I will mention is that if you go to the trouble and expense of developing these forage plantings, utilize them properly. I can understand protecting the cool season forage during the establishment phase; however, once they develop their root system it is time to let the livestock harvest some nutrients. I remember an early personal lesson related to cool season grazing management.

Many years ago, I watched the establishment process of some nice wheat fields. These were in the western part of Central Texas. I noticed that once the grass had developed good top growth, the rancher turned his sheep into the field and grazed it almost down to the ground. To me it seemed that he was utilizing the forage much too early, so I asked about the process. In that country it gets exceptionally cold and repeated grazing was utilized to harden the wheat as protection against extended freezing temperatures common to the area. My lesson of the moment was match your management to your specific conditions and adjust appropriately.

Successful grass farmers make profitable ranchers.

By planning and then managing your grazing effort you will benefit from all that these exceptionally high-quality forages have to offer. There is much more to know about cool season forages in our part of Texas, here are two links for additional information:

<https://agrifecdn.tamu.edu/coastalbend/files/2018/05/Annual-Winter-Pastures-for-East-Texas.pdf>

<https://stephenville.tamu.edu/topics/forages/forage-species/cool-season-annuals-perennials/>

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