



**February 2019**

## **Walker County Agriculture Update**

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

**“More grass means less forest; more forest less grass. But either-or is a construction more deeply woven into our culture than into nature, where even antagonists depend on one another and the liveliest places are the edges, the in-betweens or both-ands..... Relations are what matter most.”** Michael Pollan

This is our current dilemma in a growing population area such as Walker County. Is it beneficial to change what we see and experience for another view or experience? The land use questions which are asked of me by new landowners rarely deviate from this base concept regardless of the topic at hand. I like being able to talk about the land and then teach the in-between or both-ands.

Glad to have you here! Read on.

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

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **Spring Garden Expo**

**February 23 & 24, 2019**

**9:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Feb 23-Saturday)**

**11:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Feb 24-Sunday)**

**Walker County Fairgrounds (3925 SH 30, Huntsville, TX)**

**\$3.00/participant (children under 12-FREE)**

**Free Parking!**

The Walker County Master Gardeners have announced their first Spring Garden Expo will open to the public on Saturday, February 23 at 9:00 a.m. The Expo will cover two days, Feb. 23 and 24 and will be held at the Walker County Fairgrounds located at 3925 SH 30 in Huntsville, TX. Saturday hours are from 9:00 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Parking is free at the Fairgrounds.

The Spring Garden Expo is an indoor event packed with exciting and informative educational events that include hands-on and demonstrations from local experts. Speakers will present timely information on outdoor living and gardening in the areas surrounding Walker County. Presentations will feature LEAF-PRO gardening tips from Master Gardeners, and there will be an “Ask The Master Gardener” booth.

Scheduled Garden Expo presentation topics (current):

## Saturday

- 11:00 AM Helpful items for your garden bag.
- 12:00 Noon Bee aware about bees.
- 1:00 PM Meet your County Agent.
- 2:00 PM Cool weather herbs.
- 3:00 PM Tomatoes.
- 4:00 PM All about seeds.

## Sunday

- 12:00 Noon Herbs & cooking tips.
- 1:00 PM Chickens in the garden.
- 2:00 PM Propagation of your favorite plants.
- 3:00 PM Vermicomposting: Composting with worms.

There will be a variety of clubs and associations that will offer information on such topics as beekeepers, native plants, herbs and much more. There is a designated Children's Activity Zone with an entertaining assortment of crafts, games and educational activities. There will be a Garden Shop offered by Walker County Master Gardeners at the Expo. A concession area will also be available.

A wide selection of vendors will be on hand with items for your yard, garden, patio, porch or containers. Sponsors for the Garden Expo include: Landscapers Pride, Scotts Miracle-Gro, Brookshire Brothers, Encore Azaleas, Southern Living Plant Collection and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

Each family will receive a 'goody' bag, while supplies last, stuffed with information, brochures and other items. There will be a raffle available. Stop by the Seed Ladies booth for a special surprise.

There will be a \$3 donation per adult to attend the Expo. Children under 12 are FREE! For more information, please call the Walker County AgriLife Extension office at 936-435-2426.

## **Walker County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale**

**March 9, 2019**

**Walker County AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd., Huntsville, TX 77320)**

**8:00 AM until 2:00 PM**

Featured plants include: Tomatoes, Peppers, Herbs, Roses, Native, Ornamentals, Perennials, Spring Bulbs, Shrubs, Trees, and much more! Bring your garden wagons! Great info available on growing plants in our county with educational seminars for the green thumbs. Fun for the family!

## **Out of County Events:**

### **East Texas Pasture Management (5 CEU's available)**

**February 22, 2019**

**TX A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, Overton, TX (1710 N. Hwy. 3053, Overton, TX 75684)**

**Cost: Participant/\$25.00 person before 2/20, \$35.00 onsite**

**Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2691>**

During this program, Drs. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Jason Banta, and Mark Matocha will cover these topics:

- Spraying Equipment
- Soil Fertility and Fertilizer
- Drift Management
- Laws and Regulations of Pesticide Use

- Herbicide Cost and Residual Control

Attendees with a pesticide applicators license will receive 5 pesticides CEUs. Attendance at the program also includes access to spreadsheets for calculating herbicide and insecticide cost per acre.

## **2019 Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course**

**February 25 - 28, 2019 (core curriculum)**

**March 1, 2019 (irrigation)**

Scotts Miracle-Gro Center, College Station, TX (3100 F&B Rd. College Station, TX 77843)

Cost: Participant/\$645.00 person before 2/25 core curriculum only; \$810.00 core curriculum + irrigation

Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2722>

### **CORE CURRICULUM - Monday, Feb 25 – Thursday, Feb 28**

The Texas A&M Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course is a four-day course designed for turf professionals and enthusiasts looking to expand their knowledge of turfgrass systems and best management practices. This course moves linearly from site preparation and appropriate species selection to establishment, cultural practices, and pest management. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from a wide range of experts with unique problem-solving perspectives. The objective of this course is to empower turfgrass managers to make confident, well-informed decisions through a combination of applied and theoretical knowledge. Participants will spend time both in the classroom and engaged in group and hands-on activities.

### **IRRIGATION - Friday, March 1**

Participants will also can register for an optional 8-hour Irrigation Water Management of Commercial Landscapes short course with the Texas A&M School of Irrigation. This course is approved by the TCEQ for 8 CEUs for Licensed Irrigators, Irrigation Technicians, and Irrigation Inspectors. This course is designed for landscape professionals including contractors, licensed irrigators and managers of turf areas, but is useful for anyone interested in landscape water conservation or learning more about irrigation water management.

## **Ranch Management University**

**April 1 - 5, 2019**

G. Rollie White Visitor's Center, College Station, TX (7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy. College Station, TX 77845)

Cost: Participant/\$500.00 person before 3/22

Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2761>

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. Planning for profit, horse production, financial assistance programs, connections between agriculture and health, fundamentals of lawn management and ag laws Texas landowners need to know will also be discussed. Additionally, several wildlife management topics are covered for those interested in managing white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, feral hogs, and honey bees. 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, calibrating sprayers, and inoculating legume seed. Various forage species, including bermudagrass, small grains, annual ryegrass, and clovers are studied by workshop attendees. A demonstration covering hog trap management will also be given. Plenty of time is allowed for interaction with Texas A&M University faculty with expertise and experience in all management facets of the soil-plant-animal interface and wildlife management.

NOTE: all meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) and a RMU workbook with all Power Point presentations, contact information, glossary, etc. and a flash drive containing hundreds of relevant publications are provided.

## **Ranchers Leasing Workshop**

**April 9, 2019**

**Nacogdoches Expo Center, Nacogdoches, TX (3805 NW Stallings Dr. Nacogdoches, TX 75964)**

**Cost: Participant/\$50.00 person before 4/8 (or) \$80.00 per couple**

**Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2773>**

Over 800 Texans have participated in these programs over the past two years, 100% would recommend it to a friend!

Program Topics:

Half-day seminar, participants will be able to ask questions, interact with attorneys and economists.

Unique program focusing specifically on grazing, hunting, & livestock leases, including:

- Legal necessity for having leases in writing
- Economic considerations in setting lease rates
- Key terms to include in lease arrangements
- Landowner liability considerations for landowners and tenants

All participants receive their own copy of the Ranchers' Agricultural Leasing Handbook, which contains checklists and sample lease language.

Program Objectives:

1. Explore the potential economic and strategic benefits of incorporating leases into operation.
2. Understand the importance of reducing agreements to written instrument.
3. Gain basic knowledge of contract law and common lease terminology.
4. Develop strategies to evaluate, negotiate, & draft agricultural lease agreements.
5. Learn basics of landowner liability law and limited liability statutes.

Registration fee includes lunch.

## **2019 Grassfed Beef Conference**

**May 30 - 31, 2019**

**TX A&M Rosenthal Meat Center, College Station, TX (3805 NW Stallings Dr. Nacogdoches, TX 75964)**

**Cost: Participant/\$275.00 person before 5/15, \$300.00 5/16-5/24, or \$325.00 onsite**

**Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2788>**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is pleased to announce the 7th conference focused on grassfed beef production.

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, join us for this year's Grassfed Beef Conference. We're excited about the interest among participants and the outstanding lineup of speakers that will come together for this information-sharing opportunity. Here's a chance to learn more about beef production... from pasture to plate.

Here's a quick preview of the agenda:

- Overview of the US Beef Industry
- Defining natural, grassfed and organic, Where can you best fit

- Growing forage – the fundamentals that allow for the production of high-quality grass finished beef
- Cattle types suited for grassfed beef
- Forage-based nutrition for cattle. Can actively growing forages meet your nutritional demands?
- Preventative herd health
- Handling Cattle for Wholesome Beef
- Carcass fabrication... a demonstration. Understanding what you have to sell
- Consumers... and their expectations
- Taste of Texas Beef
- Marketing a unique product
- Sustainability

**Reprints of information can be useful - If you have it, you need to be watching for this plant:**

### **Grassbur (Field sandbur)**

With sandy, acidic, low nitrogen type soils you can expect to encounter this annual grass plant sooner or later... Here is a good, quick read on identification of Field sandbur with a link for an even better set of illustrations: <https://foragefax.tamu.edu/2019/01/18/weed-of-the-week-grassbur-field-sandbur-sandbur-etc/>

Keep in mind that chemical control options for pasture and turfgrass will not be the same products. If you noted my description of the environment where this plant is commonly found, you know what needs to change to ultimately solve the situation. Soil pH and nitrogen fertilizer will help greatly by encouraging the growth or establishment of desirable plants. The problem is that can become an expensive situation depending on where you are working to modify those environmental conditions.

**\*\*This is frustrating...my apologies: If any of these links beyond this point don't work for you- search them with a quick copy & paste into your search engine. (They/Some are being difficult to work with for me right now. They may work in the email version and not in the pdf.-anybody know an IT person?).**

[Quick Guide to Weed Management in Pastures & Forages](#)

(Older publication) [Controlling Field Sandbur \(Grassbur\) in Turfgrass](#)

### **Raised Garden Beds**

The phone calls about raised bed gardening for vegetables have ticked up over the past couple of weeks. Our Walker County gardeners are ready to get outside and play in the soil!

We have some great examples of raised bed vegetable gardens here at the AgriLife office in our LEAF-PRO Demonstration Garden, plus there is excellent AgriLife information on the web. Look at this online info set (videos & publication) if you are wanting to help combat soils that don't drain well, or you are wanting to do something different in your fight against weeding throughout the whole garden area. This type of planting option works well in small spaces such as back yards also:

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/raised-garden-beds/>

### **Vegetable Planting Chart**

Since it is that time of year to be getting ready for some serious vegetable garden activity, here is the link to the Walker County Vegetable Planting Guide. Each vegetable species on this chart has a link built in to direct you to the Aggie Horticulture pages with information on growth, care, and management of

the vegetable. See the Vegetable Planting Chart link on this page:  
<https://walker.agrilife.org/publications/horticulture/>

## ***In This Issue:***

### **HOW COMPLICATED CAN IT BE?**

**Well, there is that...**

I was in the office talking to a landowner just this past week. The discussion was progressing difficultly due to the satellite issues that were revolving around us. These subjects would veer in then dart away only to return as they were pulled back into the conversation by the gravity of the issue. You might guess I've been watching the TV's Science Channel by that description.

Another good archetype (*you bet, I looked that word up*) of that conversation would be: Flies in the barnyard.

Any time the IRS, Appraisal District, rain, cattle prices, feed prices, pasture conditions, timber prices, insect problems, weed issues, and agricultural income enter a somewhat mutual discussion, you have lots of subjects to swat at.

Anybody that has swatted at flies in their barnyard knows full well that you can't and won't hit them all.

As usual, there were thoughts that lingered with me to the point where I felt compelled to delve deeper so I would be better prepared for the next similar conversation. And that's when I rediscovered some useful resources. I say rediscovered as I had seen this set of information before but, it has been added to and further developed. Nice surprises are good things. Here is one of those nice things for our beef producers.

### **HOW COMPLICATED CAN IT BE?**

By Reggie Lepley

Our conversation on beef cattle production in Walker County was progressing deeply into income potential, return on investment, profit and then loss characteristics of small herd beef cattle operations. If you have ever fielded these subjects in a conversation you probably know it's not a very fun subject. More so when you are looking at your checkbook.

Fascinating yes, but fun, no because of all the what if's that could come into play.

As a somewhat educated individual who studied animal science with the intention of making that field their career, it is never easy to talk about how decisions can possibly negatively impact an enterprise. It is often required to say that this doesn't work for everybody every year. On the other side of the coin, sometimes you can even say, this doesn't work for anybody almost any time.

Which production option(s) might you be interested in: cow-calf, stocker/feeder, heifer development, bull leases vs. owned, selling vs. keeping cull cows, hay production vs. purchase? The list even goes on, and on.

There are lots of options out there.

Farming and ranching enterprises with exceptionally tight margins require thinking in, outside, and around “the box”, with additional views from boxes on all sides of “The Box” in question. It isn’t uncommon for boxes three or more down the line to affect the one you are working on under real conditions. Those who have been “there” and done “that”, totally understood what I just said.

I can handle that type of theoretical discussion; however, I’m not an economist by training.

Economists tend to be either-or type people, I am not. I can easily transition off into the grey areas of print or thought. I believe in creative options and solutions when I find them. You may have noticed that by some of the people I choose to quote in the lead in for my newsletters. Another’s message may not match yours; although, some of their message may make you think.

We need more critical thinking based on education in the world today.

Economist types can break things down into dollars where if all the inputs are correct, you will see the outcome in either black or red ink, assuming conditions don’t change mid-stream. Remember, this is agriculture we are talking about, markets and weather are guaranteed to change. “That box” containing any agriculture is always subject to changing conditions.

If you are still reading you are probably asking, “So how do you develop information to show the what-if type information?”. The answer to that is to utilize a decision-making aid & plug in the current actual numbers, then try it with the less optimum, and then possibly with the “Oh Heck” set of numbers.

Informed decisions can then be made.

Decision aids are useful, but where do you get them? I had seen a few tools that our AgriLife “Econ” guys built to support our beef producers, so I went looking for them. I was pleasantly surprised to find an extensive list of decision aids which any producer could select and apply as needed. I wasn’t surprised to find them; however, I was pleased to see that they have been greatly added to, expanded and updated. These tools are posted openly and run with Excel spreadsheets.

Those of you who would like to have some aid helping to make your ranching decisions need to invest some time and look. <https://agecoext.tamu.edu/resources/decisionaids/beef/>

You may just find something valuable.

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.

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