



## Walker County Agriculture Update

**April 2019**

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

**“A plant is like a self-willed man, out of whom we can obtain all which we desire, if we will only treat him his own way.”** Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

That quote really sums up the Vegetation Management Series that I have scheduled for April and May. Providing management of your pastures and fields is an ongoing effort that needs timing and knowledge and sometimes finesse. Simply put, some plants will work with you, and some plants will fight you. Knowing the characteristics of the species you are working with will make your efforts more successful and productive.

Glad to have you here! Read on.

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

### Upcoming Events:

#### **Pesticide Applicator Training Class**

**April 1, 2019**

**9:00 AM - 12:30 PM**

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

**\$65.00/participant (includes study materials & manuals)**

**RSVP Required (936) 435-2426**

This class is for agricultural producers needing to obtain a Texas Department of Agriculture Private Pesticide Applicator License to apply State Limited Use and Restricted Use products. (This is NOT a CEU class)

It is recommended that participants contact the Walker County, AgriLife office a week prior to the event to pick up their study manuals and note taking worksheets. For more information, please call the Walker County AgriLife Extension office at 936-435-2426.



## Walker Co Farmers Market Organizational Meeting

April 10, 2019

6:00 PM

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

The Walker County Farmers Market meets before opening each year to discuss dates, elect officers and make plans for the market year. We will be meeting on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> for this purpose. If you are interested in participating in the 2019 Market be sure to come join us.

A brief history regarding this organization: The Walker Co Farmers Market began in the mid 1960's (1965 is the best reference I have ever found). The group was founded in Huntsville with Wesley Sherrill as the County Extension Agent. It has been operating annually each year since and features local produce grown by its members. During this 54-year time span, there have been three County Agents responsible for assisting with the Market coordination: Wesley Sherrill, Hugh Epps, and Reggie Lепley.

## 2019 South Texas Agriculture Symposium: Staying Current in the Changing Times

April 16, 2019

9:00 AM - 12:15 PM

2 Hrs. CEU Credit Available: (1 Gen, 1 IPM)

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

\$15.00/participant

RSVP Required (936) 435-2426 (Please Call In -if we have no internet connection this event will be canceled)

This event will be hosted as a webinar to be shown at the Walker County AgriLife Extension Office. PLEASE RSVP (*If we have known problems with our internet connection, we will need to contact you prior to the event to let you know it has been canceled*) Speakers will be presenting from the AgriLife Research Center in Robstown, TX. This is our chance to learn about issues important to Walker Co from a different set of presenters who we don't often have the chance to hear (A new viewpoint). There are a variety of subjects to be discussed during this half day event. The schedule of presentations and speakers are as follows:

7:30 – 8:00 am REGISTRATION

8:00 Baitfish in Demand: Are you prepared to provide it? (Dr. Andrew Ropicki)

8:30 Hemp: A new worthy enterprise or will it "mellow" out? (Dr. Joshua McGinty)

9:00 Feral Pigs: A problem with solutions! (Dr. Maureen Frank)

9:30 The Bermudagrass Stem Maggot: What is it and What can you Do? (Luke Pruter; 1/2 IPM CEU)

10:00 – 10:15 COFFEE BREAK

10:15 Pasture Weed Management: The latest and greatest (Dr. Joshua McGinty; 1/2 General CEU)

10:45 What's new with Herbicide Brush Control? (Dr. Megan Clayton; 1/2 General CEU)

11:15 Drought Insurance: How to make dry weather work in your favor (Mac Young)

11:45 Identification of and Control Methods for External Parasites of Livestock (Dr. Joe Paschal; 1/2 IPM CEU)

12:15 REMAINING QUESTIONS/ADJOURN



**Walker County 2019 Vegetation Management Series for Ranchers**  
**(Four) Educational Sessions: April 23, April 30, May 9, May 28**  
**8 Total CEU Hrs. will be available/must attend all events for 8 hours credit**  
Location: (see each event announcement below/location varies)  
Time varies by event session  
Cost: \$20 per person for all four sessions -or- \$10.00 per person for individual sessions

This series of events can be attended in “the whole” or as of interest by all participants. We would like to see you at all of them; however, you may choose to attend individual sessions as meets your needs. Registration for the entire series of four session is \$20.00 per person (or) \$10.00 per event. This Vegetation Management Series is designed to help walk you through the decision-making process to manage the challenges found in our pasture environments. Educational sessions for this series are as follows:

**\*April 23**

**Plant ID Workshop (Field Exercise) -1<sup>st</sup> of Vegetation Management Series**

**3:00 PM until**

**3 Hrs. CEU Credit (1 Gen, 2 IPM)**

SHSU Gibbs Ranch- Meet under the Tractor Shed at the ranch’s front gate

RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

**Cost: \$20 per person for all four sessions -or- \$10.00 per person for individual sessions**

(Topics) Identification of plant species – Barron Rector, Extension Range Specialist

This event is always a participant favorite, join us as we walk the pastures and wood lines identifying native and introduced plant species with importance to animal agriculture and wildlife management. Discussion will include Interesting facts and control recommendations when applicable. This is a great way to learn how to name the plants you see in your pastures and fields. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes fitting the weather and field conditions. We WILL be WALKING around in the pastures and woods!

**\*April 30**

**Weed Control in Pasture Forages -2<sup>nd</sup> of Vegetation Management Series**

**6:30 PM**

**2 Hrs. CEU Credit (1 Gen, 1 IPM)**

Walker Co AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd, Huntsville, TX 77320)

RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

**Cost: \$20 per person for all four sessions -or- \$10.00 per person for individual sessions**

(Topics) Product selection & recommendations based on target species – Scott Nolte, Extension Weed Specialist

When you know what plants, you are having problems with you then need to know which of the many control options will work for you. Selection of the proper control option to fit your situation is essential to a positive economic return and a desired outcome. Join us to learn what the research has shown as the effective methods for weed management and control.



**\*May 9**

**Understanding Herbicide Products -3<sup>rd</sup> of Vegetation Management Series**

**6:30 PM**

**2 Hrs. CEU Credit (1 Gen, 1 L&R)**

Walker Co AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd, Huntsville, TX 77320)

RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

**Cost: \$20 per person for all four sessions -or- \$10.00 per person for individual sessions**

(Topics) Safety Issues, equipment, calibration, mix compatibility, adjuvants, storage & shelf life – Mark Matocha, Extension Agricultural & Safety Specialist

Proper handling and safety of on-farm chemicals is essential for producers to understand. Learn what the best practices are for storing, mixing, loading, and use of agricultural chemicals. Proper utilization of these products when needed will insure the safety of both the applicator and our environment.

**\*MAY 28**

**Managing Pasture Damage Issues Caused by Wildlife -4<sup>th</sup> of Vegetation Management Series**

**6:30 PM**

**1 Hr. CEU Credit (1 IPM)**

Walker Co AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Rd, Huntsville, TX 77320)

RSVP requested (936) 435-2426

**Cost: \$20 per person for all four sessions -or- \$10.00 per person for individual sessions**



(Topics) Feral Hog Management Options and Methods – John Tomecek, Extension Wildlife Specialist

Our big wildlife problem in pastures and fields are feral swine. What do you do when you have wild hogs tearing up your pastures and fields? Well...there are several options open to each landowner to help control these animals. Some methods are more effective than others. Learn how to make the biology and habit of feral swine work for your management efforts.

**Out of County Events:**

**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 includes lunch.**

**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.

### **Feral Hog Program**

**April 11, 2019**

**8:30 AM -2:30 PM**

**2 TDA CEU(s) available**

**10365 Summer Lane Richards, TX 77873**

**Cost: \$15.00 by April 5, \$25.00 at the door (lunch is included)**

**Register by calling the Grimes County Extension Office: (936) 873-3907**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Grimes County is hosting this educational event to provide information and education regarding Feral Hog Management options. Topics to be discussed include: Laws & Regulations, Wild Hog Transportation Management, Trapping of Wild Hogs, and Feral Hog Control & Management.

## **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

### **Additional Items and Information of Note:**

#### **Spring Calf Management Tips**

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

Texas is one of the few states that can go from the dead of winter to the beginning of summer in five days. Fortunately, the calves that are coming now in pastures throughout the bottom half of Texas will be the prime beneficiary of the better weather as will the green that is beginning to appear in pastures from the Sabine to the Rio Grande. Now is the time to consider a few economically beneficial few calf management tips.

First, when possible, your calves should be identified. A good ear tag will help you remember the birthdate and dam of the calf, and later at weaning and marketing, his growth rate and market value. Calves born early in the season weigh more at weaning (about 2-2.5 lbs. more per day of age) and calves that are born earlier are generally out of more adapted (and fertile) cows. Calf weight at weaning and marketing will assist you in deciding which cows are more productive and produce more valuable calves.

Second, as soon after birth as possible, castrate bull calves that you are not intending to raise and dehorn all calves. Doing these practices at a very young age reduces the pain of the procedure and increases the speed of recovery. Castrated calves are more desired by the feeding industry and they

bring more dollars per pound when marketed as their carcasses will quality grade higher and be more valuable. The downside to castration is the steer calves will weigh less at weaning than bull calves but using a calf growth implant when castrating will offset the loss of gain. Dehorning or disbudding will improve the appearance and uniformity of the calves and reduce the potential for injury to you and other animals. If genetically homozygous polled bulls or cows are used, dehorning will not be necessary.

Finally, vaccinate your calves for the Blackleg or Clostridial diseases, especially if their dams have not been vaccinated and the calves are over a month old. This vaccination will protect calves from these “sudden death” diseases. All the commercial vaccines provide excellent immunity from these diseases and all calves should be vaccinated and boosted according to the label.

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

### **TIMING IS EVERYTHING, AND COMPOST HAPPENS.**

#### **When the switch goes click...**

You know there are things which must be done right now. Not tomorrow, not this afternoon, right now! We all know there are a variety of reasons for this such as simple timing, personal schedules, weather conditions, and even sometimes just because.

I ran into one of these situations the other day after the Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale. I found myself telling a few of the gardeners that I would need to go home and get the plants I had purchased into the ground today, or they may never get planted.

During the sale, I bought a few native perennial plants for the flower beds around my yard. Plants that don't require a lot of attention after they are established are a good thing for me.

Sometimes I mention having a crystal ball. Maybe, I just know how my circumstances function.

#### **TIMING IS EVERYTHING, AND COMPOST HAPPENS.**

By Reggie Lepley

I placed the key in the ignition, turned it to the left heating up the glow plugs and held it. After the appropriate short wait, I turned it back to the right fully and, Click.

Nothing but a click.

It was a loud click but just a click, nothing more. I tried it again, same result. I noticed the battery indicator at this point, hmm. So, the next step is to pull the tractor cowl and start looking for the battery charger to hook everything up and get the charging process started. Well...

I immediately lost one of the cowl bolts in the sand.

I had really wanted to turn my compost pile with the tractor and move compost over to the planting site. That didn't happen. Instead I spent the afternoon checking the battery, charger, all the connections and tapping on the starter. I wasn't convinced the problem was really the battery at this point.

Anyway. One week & two days later, the tractor has a new battery.

Life tends to get busy quickly. I didn't get the compost moved for that planting bed and I have held off planting there because I really need the compost in first. I did plant seven other plants that I could get away with not planting into fresh compost. I'm a very serious gardener -I used a post hole digger.

I really like homemade compost. I like it to the point that I have a serious compost pile. Remember the tractor part of the issue?

This all started years ago when we held the Master Composter program in Walker County. That activity eventually led to the Master Gardener program being established here. The real legacy of the Master Composter program was that it was a grant funded activity which taught me what I would later need to know about grant program management when our Master Gardeners developed the LEAF-PRO educational program.

Through LEAF-PRO education, Walker County Master Gardeners have educated numerous people via environmental education topics related to horticulture. Composting is an important part of recycling nutrients from unwanted plant materials and ultimately reducing the organic bulk waste which may otherwise go into our landfills. We talk about composting regularly around here.

My compost pile got serious when the kid started raising 4-H projects. A horse that goes in the stall rather than the pasture will make you find something to do with all that material (stuff). Then there were two, and then three horses. Lots and Lots of stuff! And that wasn't the end of it. She added five to six goats per year and eventually, the goats were joined by four to six sheep each year.

We had stuff. There is a reason I call it stuff when I'm discussing compost although references are usually green or brown in those discussions.

The only items you can't (shouldn't) put in your home compost pile is kitchen scraps containing meat, and oils. Additionally, it is good practice to not include seed heads from weeds in your compost pile. Leaves will naturally compost over a 5 month to 2-year period if left to themselves. With proper management, this process can be sped up considerably. Incorporation of nitrogen sources such as livestock manure or other organic wastes, 40-70% moisture, regular aeration, and smaller sized particles of dry landscape waste (those processed in a chipper/shredder unit) will assist in accelerating the composting process. Proper mixtures and management can easily create compost in one to two months if not sooner.

**What Makes Compost, well... Compost?**

The success and science of compost is based on the carbon to nitrogen ratio. Ideal proportions for the C:N ratio is a 30:1 ratio by weight. The C:N ratio is reached by utilizing mixtures of various landscape and garden wastes. Dry materials (brown stuff) such as straw, wood chips and fallen leaves are high in carbon and low in nitrogen. Fresh plant material (green stuff) such as grass clippings, pruned leaves, fresh plant material, kitchen scraps and manures are high in nitrogen and low in carbon.

**What Do I Put My Compost In?**

For a successful composting project, the first step is to utilize an appropriate holding unit. The exception is when you go to a full tractor sized compost pile, you can do away with this part and just make a pile that can be accessed by your front-end loader. I like locations where you can get to the pile on all sides with the equipment for turning. Smaller home sized setups can be purchased; however, recycled fencing supplies work just as well. A materials list includes: 10-foot length of 36-inch-wide chicken wire or field fence, heavy wire for tying, three or four metal posts for support (if needed). The fencing material can



be made into a circular shape that is approximately 3 feet in diameter (the magic number). Other materials such as leftover concrete building blocks or recycled lumber can be utilized just as easily. A real secret of successful compost bins is ease of access for regular turning of the pile during the composting process.

So, What Is the Recipe for Compost?

Layers... Layers... First in the compost pile is a 6-inch layer of bulky brown material (wood chips & brush trimmings work well). Next add a 6-inch layer of high carbon material such as leaves, straw, hay or a mixture of all. Water thoroughly. Add a nitrogen source such as manure or fertilizer (do not utilize products with herbicides such as weed & feed mixtures). If livestock manure is available, apply a 1 to 2-inch layer. When utilizing commercial fertilizer, add 1 cup of ammonium nitrate or 3 cups of 10-10-10 per each 3 bushels of brown stuff added to the pile. Other sources of organic nitrogen include blood meal, and cottonseed meal. You may choose to add 1/4-inch layer of soil or completed compost to introduce beneficial microorganisms into the compost process. As each layer is added, mix them with the previous layer to help inoculate the pile. Next add a 3 to 4-inch layer of high nitrogen material (green stuff). Now the process can start over with a layer of brown stuff and repeat as before until your compost pile is about 3 feet tall.

Just so you understand. Animal manure is serving as the nitrogen source in your compost mix. It really isn't the green or brown stuff mentioned in the recipe above, regardless of its color.

Be prepared to turn the compost every week or two depending on how the process is going. If it seems to slow down, you may need to add moisture or nutrients to kick the process back into gear.

If you are using a tractor to turn the pile, keep your battery in good order. Anybody want to come over and help me find that cowling bolt?

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