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Ag/Natural Resources  
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## Upcoming Dates

- ◆ Ag Valuation Workshop  
TBA
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
Understanding Business  
Taxes 101 February 15,  
2016
- ◆ Lone Star Healthy  
Streams March 4, 2016
- ◆ MG Spring Gardening  
Seminar March 5, 2016
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
Business Insurance  
Needs March 21/2, 2016
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
How To Set up Grazing  
& Wildlife Lease Agree-  
ments April 18, 2016
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
Shaping your Own Fu-  
ture Using Social Market-  
ing May 16, 2016
- ◆ Beef 706 May 17, 2016
- ◆ Beef 706 June 6-7, 2016
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
Ecotourism June 20,  
2016
- ◆ 2016 Generation Next:  
Alternative Ranching  
Operations July 18, 2016

# Ag

# Newsletter

February 2016

## News from our County NRCS Office

Howdy! My name is Trey Bethke and I am the District Conservationist here in Waller County for the USDA-NRCS. The NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service, formally known as the Soil Conservation Service, is an agency of the USDA that offers technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and other landowners/managers to assist them with planning decisions to improve the productivity, efficiency, and the natural resources of their agricultural operations. As an added incentive, we also make available financial assistance in some circumstances to encourage implementation of sound conservation practices.

Stacie has offered to allow me to post a short article in her Extension Newsletter from time to time. So with grass planting season about to be upon us, I thought I would post a couple thoughts about soil fertility and fertilizing in preparation for grass planting.

1. Have you taken a soils test in the field where you want to plant grass? If not, do it right now, before doing anything else associated with the grass planting project. When you get the results pay special attention to the soil pH. Soil pH is the measure of soil acidity and is the key chemical indicator of plant nutrient availability in the soil. Ideally, the soil pH should be between 6.0 and 6.5, however in Waller County, with our normally high rainfall and especially in areas of sandy soils, we often have soil acidity problems.
2. Soil acidity is managed by liming the soil with agricultural lime to raise the soil pH. Ideally, the lime product should be applied before seedbed preparation begins so that it can be incorporated into the soil. The fineness of the lime, time, and adequate soil moisture are key to the lime's effectiveness. If you are working under a budget, I would highly recommend taking care of your soil acidity problem before planting the grass. This is because fertilizing acid soils is extremely inefficient and will cost you money, as much as 70 cents of every dollar spent on fertilizer.
3. I've become a proponent of applying any required phosphorous and potash in the fall/winter before grass planting so that those nutrients can be incorporated into the soil profile as you are preparing your seedbed. Both of these plant nutrients are relatively stable in the soil, so you shouldn't lose much before planting time comes in the spring. It's crucial that these nutrients be immediately available to germinating seeds and developing plant roots.
4. Nitrogen fertilizer can be applied later when you've determined you are going to have a successful stand of grass. Nitrogen is highly mobile in the soil profile, so it's always best to apply nitrogen fertilizers right when the target plants can immediately utilize the nitrogen. Any nitrogen not used pretty quickly by the grass can be lost to the soil profile and the plant, largely by leaching and runoff.

Next month I will discuss a few thoughts about selecting the kind of grass for planting and maybe some more about finishing out your seedbed preparation and fertilizing. Much of this only touches the tip of the iceberg as they say, so if you have questions or thoughts of your own I'd appreciate visiting with you. Call me at (979) 826-2448 extension 3 or email me at [emil.bethke@tx.usda.gov](mailto:emil.bethke@tx.usda.gov).



## Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners are asking if you enjoy gardening and would like to help others in their garden please let them know. Several individuals have approached them as they need younger labor to help with their gardening chores. Also in turn if you need help in your garden from time to time to let them know as well.

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## Winter Supplementation of the Cowherd

About this time of year I get a lot of questions about supplementing the cowherd. My response is based on the status of the cowherd and forage conditions. Dry pregnant cows in mid gestation have the lowest nutritional needs. Depending on the amount and quality of the grass, a protein supplement may be all that is needed. Cows that have calves at side will require additional protein and energy, adding to the cost of supplementation. One other factor I consider is cow fatness or body condition. Cows that are in good body condition will require less supplementation than cows that are thin.

If you test your hay or forage you might find that it is the only supplement you need, that it meets the nutritional requirements of your cows. More likely than not however, it will be deficient. However at least you will know what you need to supplement with, and more importantly how much. Feed costs are a large part of cow expenses and knowing what is needed and how much to feed can reduce that cost considerably. In addition to feeding the right amount of supplement and saving money you improve the performance of the cow's fertility and milk production and her calf's growth.

You will have to supplement more energy when it is cold and wet than when it is just cold but dry. The amount of standing forage you have due to stockpiling or grazing will also affect your feed costs. Protein supplementation when deficient can improve the digestibility of poor quality roughages significantly.

Form of supplementation is less important than cost per unit of nutrient. When supplementing protein (but not energy), the amount can be doubled or tripled and fed every other or every third day reducing travel and labor. Whenever possible feed should be placed in bunks or troughs to minimize waste and reduce cost.

Once you know what and how much you need, consider labor and travel in your costs.

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## Evaluating and Improving Cow Body Condition

As winter has finally settled in, it might be a good time to take a minute and look at the body condition score of your cows. Cow body condition score is a good indicator of the nutritional status of your cowherd. They range from one, very thin, to nine, obese, but the critical scores are four, five and six. A cow with a body condition score of four has the last few ribs (but not the backbone) showing while a cow with a condition score of five has no ribs showing and is usually considered ideal. A cow with a condition score of six has hooks and pins that are rounded in appearance due to fat cover.

Good cow body condition is important to fertility, including rebreeding after calving, but also helps in providing energy for the stress of calving and in providing higher quality colostrum. Thin cows take longer to rebreed after calving, have more calving stress and lower quality colostrum.

A cow usually loses a condition score at calving so cows that are in a body condition score four or lower will be more difficult to rebreed.

The difference in body weight between each of these three scores is about eight percent or about one hundred pounds. Since cows are lucky to maintain their weight during winter, you should evaluate and supplement your cows, if necessary before calving. Cows on dry or frosted forage might need protein supplementation to meet protein needs and improve digestibility. Cows on very low quality forages or hay may need both energy and protein to regain the necessary body condition. Testing hay or forages will help you determine their nutritional needs.

## Name that Plant? Algerita, Desert Holly

Algerita, sometimes called desert holly, is a hardy, cool-season evergreen shrub. It grows to be 3 to 8 feet tall. Its bark is reddish-brown to gray and has yellow wood.

Each leaf has three stiff, spiny, blue-green leaflets that resemble those of holly. From February to April its yellow, clustered, fragrant, cup-shaped flowers bloom and are followed by bright red berries.

Deer and other herbivores, including cattle, eat the young leaves and the berries are consumed by a wide array of birds and small mammals. It is also used as cover by birds and small mammals.

### Habitat

Algerita is found on rocky slopes and pastures and prefers alkaline soils. It is often found growing near live oaks and mesquite.



## Knowing When to Assist at Calving

Some of you are or will be calving replacement heifers and I thought it would be a good time to review the process in case you are wondering when you might need to assist. Calving is generally divided into three stages. The first stage is when the mucous plug inside the female's cervix begins to dissolve and the cervix begins to dilate. This may take several hours. The female may wander off to be alone during this time. This stage ends as the calf's nose and feet enter the birth canal.

The second stage is the actual delivery of the calf. The fluid filled "water bags" that surround and cushion the fetus are expelled and the calf is pushed through and out of the birth canal. This usually takes less than an hour in cows and less than two hours in heifers. If the process lasts longer, veterinary assistance may be required. Cows that have had previous calves deliver more quickly, often in 30 minutes or less.

The third and final stage of calving is the expulsion of the placenta or "after birth". This usually occurs within eight to twelve hours after calving. If the placenta is still in the cow after twelve hours it is considered "retained". Do not attempt to remove it by inserting your hand and "unbuttoning" it. Prevention of infection of the uterus is important and veterinary advice is recommended.

Most difficult calving can be avoided by using "easy calving" bulls that have high accuracy and high calving ease Expected Progeny Differences and cows with acceptable pelvic area. Cows that calve easier come back into estrus and rebreed more quickly.

## Central Texas Beef 706

The Texas Beef Council (TBC) and Texas AgriLife Extension Service have teamed up to present a special Beef 706 program, a three-part series of hands-on sessions focusing on beef quality management and marketing opportunities. This program is available to beef cattle producers from Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee, Waller, and Washington counties.

The checkoff-funded program is designed to help producers maximize profits and have a better understanding of the production process after their cattle enter the feedyard. Session 2 will be held May 17, 2016 at OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex in College Station. During this session producers will get an inside look into the feeding industry and see the progress of their feeder calf chosen in the first session. Producers will also learn more about factors impacting feedyard performance.

For more information see flier attached in back. If you missed the first session you may still attend the 2nd and 3rd.



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## **Lone Star Herbicide Resistance Screening Program**

**Not detecting resistance early enough can be a costly mistake! We test the samples as a complementary service at no cost to you! Just ship the seed to us and we will send you the results.**

**Please include the following details with the shipment:**

Weed species collected\*: *pigweed, etc.*

Crop in which the weed was found: *cotton, corn, wheat, etc.*

Location of the field: *county, specific address/intersections or GPS location if possible*

Suspected resistance: *to which herbicides*

Management history: *the crop rotation and herbicide program, if known*

Contact details: *your name, phone number and e-mail*

*\*collect seed from about 10-15 plants within the suspected resistant patch, put them in a paper bag (avoid ziplocs if you can) and dry them as much as you can before you ship*

**Ship your samples to:**

Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan, Texas A&M University, 370 Olsen Blvd - Mail stop 2474, College Station, TX-77843-2474

**Contact:**

Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan | Office: 979-845-5375 | Cell: 479-387-1674 | E-mail: [muthu@tamu.edu](mailto:muthu@tamu.edu)

# Generation Next

## Our Turn to Ranch Webinars

### Join us for a 12-Webinar Series Agricultural Business Start-Up School

- ✓ Gain ideas for operations you can add to an existing ranch
- ✓ Learn options for setting up grazing & wildlife leases
- ✓ Discuss business types, tax info, & insurance needs
- ✓ Exposure to all the latest land management tools & techniques
- ✓ Taught by professionals in each field and topic

**GENERATION  
NEXT**  
*Our Turn to Ranch*

*One Monday of every Month  
during the noon hour  
January-December 2016  
Watch from your computer!*

Course Includes: 12 webinar classes of Expert Instruction and  
a Generation Next School Completion Certificate

Registration Fee: \$120

To Register: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/GenNextWebinar>

Or call 979-845-2604

Contact: Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu or 361.265.9203

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# **2016 Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch**

## **Webinar School – noon to 1 pm**

**January 11<sup>th</sup>** (early because of MLK day)

- Setting up a New Agriculture Business

**February 15<sup>th</sup>**

- Understanding Business Taxes 101

**March 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Business Insurance Needs

**April 18<sup>th</sup>**

- How to set up Grazing and Wildlife Lease Agreements

**May 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Shaping Your Own Future Using Social Marketing

**June 20<sup>th</sup>**

- Ecotourism

**July 18<sup>th</sup>**

- Alternative Ranching Operations

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**

- Understanding Market Fluctuations

**September 19<sup>th</sup>**

- Planning Land Use and Surveying Your Resources

**October 17<sup>th</sup>**

- Agricultural Apps for Smartphones and Tablets

**November 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Land Management Toolbox

**December 19<sup>th</sup>**

- Targeted Wrap-Up Session

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# 2016 East Texas Fruit & Vegetable Conference

**Feb 16, 2016**  
Nacogdoches Expo Center

**3**  
**CEU's**

## TOPICS INCLUDE:

**Fungicide Trial on Pumpkins**  
**Insect Pesticides**  
**Grape Diseases**  
**Olive Problems**  
**Organic Tomato Production**  
**Organic Pesticides**  
**Kiwis @ SFA**  
**Tecnology on the Farm**  
**SFA GARDEN TOUR**

### SPONSORS:

**Irrigation Mart, Inc.**  
**Farm Bureau**  
**Certis USA**  
**Wildroot Organics**  
**Bayer Crop Science**

**RSVP WITH**  
**PAYMENT by FEB 12**

**\$30 cost**  
**\$50 for couples**  
**\$20 for current MG**  
**\$5 late fee after Feb 12**

**Registration: 8:30am Program: 9:00am**  
**Nacogdoches Expo Center, 3805 Stallings Dr.**

**FOR MORE INFO**

**Ricky Thompson 936.560.7711**  
**R-Thompson@tamu.edu**

**Joe Masabni 903.834.6191**  
**jmasabni@tamu.edu**

**Call 936.634.6414**  
**for early**  
**registration and**  
**payment**

Educational programs of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Anyone needing special assistance at an Extension Program should contact the Texas Agrilife Extension Office at 936.560.7711 at least one week prior to the program or event.

Waller County Master Gardeners Association is proud to host our

# Spring Gardening Seminar

Saturday, March 5, 2016



**Time:** 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Lunch Included  
**Where:** Waller County Road & Bridge Annex Bldg.  
775 Business 290 East  
Hempstead, TX 77445  
**Fee:** \$25.00 per person Pre-registration only—  
closes March 3. Mail or drop off at:  
Waller County AgriLife Extension Office  
846 6th St.  
Hempstead, TX 77445  
Checks payable to WCMG Association  
**CEUs:** Master Gardeners Only  
**Questions:** Call the Extension Office at 979-826-7651  
M-F, 8AM-5PM or  
Email [wallermgardener2013@gmail.com](mailto:wallermgardener2013@gmail.com)

### Featuring:

- ▶ Paul Eyre - Vegetable Gardens
- ▶ Herman Auer - Fruit Trees
- ▶ Trey Bethke - Soils
- ▶ Pam Romig - Bees

**\*\*\*Lunch Included\*\*\***

Plants & Garden Items  
for Sale

**\*\*\*Door Prizes\*\*\***

*Individuals with disabilities who require auxiliary aide service or accommodations in order to participate in Extension programs are encouraged to contact our office to discuss specific needs 5 days prior to program dates.*

Facebook—Waller County Master Gardeners

[www.txmg.org/wallermg](http://www.txmg.org/wallermg)



## TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University 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.*



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# CENTRAL TEXAS BEEF 706

Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Lee, Waller, Washington

## For More Information Please Contact:

### Travis Gonzales

Austin County  
(979) 865-2072

### Dusty Tittle

Brazos County  
(979) 823-0129

### John Grange

Burleson County  
(979) 567-2308

### Scott Willey

Fayette County  
(979) 968-5831

### Keeton Ehrig

Lee County  
(979) 542-2753

### Stacie Villarreal

Waller County  
(979) 826-7651

### Kara Matheney

Washington County  
(979) 277-6212

The Texas Beef Council (TBC) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service have teamed up to present a special Beef 706 program, a three-part series of hands-on sessions focusing on beef quality management and marketing opportunities. This program is available to beef cattle producers from Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Lee, Waller, and Washington counties.

The checkoff-funded program is designed to help producers maximize profits and have a better understanding of the production process after their cattle enter the feedyard.

Session one will be held **January 19, 2016** at Cattlemen's Livestock Auction Center in Brenham, TX. Here industry experts will discuss factors effecting feeder calves. Producers will then choose a calf to monitor through the production system at the following two sessions.

Session two will be held **May 17, 2016** at the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Research Farm in College Station, TX. During this session producers will get an inside look into the feeding industry and see the progress of their feeder calf chosen in the first session. Producers will also learn more about factors impacting feedyard performance.

Session three will be held **June 6-7, 2016** at the meats lab at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. This two-day session will allow producers to see their finished cattle and participate in a hands-on exercise that takes their chosen fed cattle from session one through the harvest, grading and fabrication process. In the final session, industry experts will discuss the cattle's value highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of marketing cattle on a grid versus a live basis.

Beef Quality Assurance Credits will be offered over the course of the program to all interested participants. **The cost of the program will be \$50.00/participant and can be paid at the first session on January 19th.**

**To RSVP and Register for this program, please contact your local County Extension Office.**

For more information on this and other checkoff-funded programs, please visit [www.TexasBeefCheckoff.com](http://www.TexasBeefCheckoff.com) or call 1-800-846-4113.

## **Session #1 - January 19, 2016**

### **Cattlemen's Livestock Auction - 2405 Highway 105, Brenham, Texas**

#### ***Feeder Cattle Evaluation and Management***

- 5:30 Dinner provided by Texas Beef Council  
6:15 Welcome  
Factors that impact the value and marketability of feeder calves  
View Feeder Cattle  
Auction - groups purchase feeder calf for the remainder of the series  
Panel of Experts - will discuss the value of each feeder calf and answer questions from participants  
Overview of remaining sessions in the series  
9:00 Adjourn

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## **Session #2 - May 17, 2016**

### **OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex 7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy, College Station, Texas**

#### ***Feeder Cattle Performance Evaluation***

- 12:30 Lunch Provided by Texas Beef Council  
1:15 Welcome to OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex  
View Video from Cattlemen's Livestock Auction of Sale Cattle  
Review Cattle Health and Performance Data  
2:00 Cattle Feeding Performance  
Live Evaluation of Finished Cattle  
Tour of OD Butler Jr. Animal Science Complex Facilities  
Overview of FINAL 706 Session in College Station at Rosenthal Meat Science Center  
3:00 Adjourn

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## **Session #3 - June 6-7, 2016**

### **Rosenthal Meat Science Center - College Station, Texas**

#### ***Day 1***

- 9:00 Morning Session at Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center  
Review of Carcass Evaluation  
Review Video of the Market Finished Steers  
Carcass Grading and Grid Marketing Demonstration  
Harvest Floor Demonstration/Meat Cutting Instructions  
Noon Lunch  
1:00 Afternoon Session at Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center  
Carcass Fabrication  
6:00 Leave for Dinner at Beef Center at Od Butler Jr. Animal Science  
Complex and Live Cattle Handling Demo  
8:00 Adjourn

#### ***Day 2***

- 9:00 Beef Quality Management Genetics and Selection  
Taste Panel - Factors that Impact Beef Eating Quality  
12:30 Lunch  
1:30 Wrap-Up Review - Feedyard, Carcass, Boxed Beef Data  
2:00 Adjourn

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved for Monday night, June 6th at:

**Ramada - College Station  
(979) 846-0300**

Group Name: Beef 706  
Group Rate: \$90/night

Room block/rate available until **April 14, 2016**. If you plan to spend the night please book early as this is the week of Texas State 4-H Roundup and area hotels will be full.

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Cooperative Extension Program

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Service  
Waller County Office &  
Cooperative Extension Program**

846 6th Street  
Hempstead, TX 77445

Phone: 979-826-7651  
Fax: 979-826-7654

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University 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.

**We're on the web**  
<http://waller.agrilife.org/>

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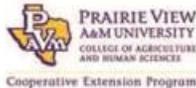
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# 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference

Thursday, February 4, 2016



The 31st annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference is a celebration of vegetable production along the upper Gulf Coast region. Counties of Waller, Wharton, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, Colorado, and Austin join with Fort Bend to put on this event focusing on teaching sustainable practices to help producers maximize efficiencies and profitability. We have something for every producer, and as always, we will offer 5 continuing education credits for TDA license holders.

**Early Registration: \$20.00; Door Registration: \$25.00**  
Thru January 25th

### Registration

Register online at [agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend](http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend)  
Register by phone: 979-845-2604

For general questions, please contact Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034



Thursday, February 4, 2016, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
(Registration: 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.)  
Lunch Included

Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Buildings B&C  
4310 Highway 36 South, Rosenberg, Texas



Find us on  
**facebook.**  
Fort Bend  
County Extension



Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are required to contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 281-342-3034 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made. The Texas A&M University System, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners' Court of Texas cooperating.

- Vegetable Disease Management
- Strawberry Project Update
- No Till and Low Till Practices
- Variety Breeding Updates
- Irrigation for Small Acreage
- Laws & Regulations Update
- Integrated Feral Swine Management

**Earn 5 CEU's**  
for Licensed Pesticide Applicators

**Afternoon break-out sessions**  
*Choose what's right for you!*

Program sponsored in part by

