News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

A slight change in the weather over the weekend made us search for the light jackets and sweaters which most of us had put away for the year to stay warm thanks to a weak cold front that visited our area over the weekend. Despite these colder temperatures we are still out of danger of a late freeze and we are well on our way to a nice green spring with lots of flowers to boot. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Texas Panhandle Fires Update

The latest information on the Texas Panhandle Wildfires that burned March 6 & 7 is that a total of 478,935 Acres were Burned and hundreds of livestock were killed and or displaces. County Extension Agents Mike Jeffcoat and J.R. Sprague have set up Livestock Supply Points (LSP) in their counties. CEA Strike Teams and local volunteers and Ag industry organizations are assisting at each LSP. The aims of an LSP are to provide care and feed for displaced cattle for the next few weeks so that cattlemen have a wider window by which to make a management decision about the disposition of the animals. As of this week Livestock Supply Points have adequate hay supplies and they are only taking names of donor contacts in case the is an surge in need of hay in days to come. If you are interested in participating in these efforts you may contact Gray County Livestock Supply Point

Clyde Carruth Pavilion 301 Bull Barn Drive, Pampa, TX Point of Contact (POC) is Mike Jeffcoat, County Extension Agent and you may reach him at 806-669-8033 or Hemphill County Livestock Supply Point Lipscomb County Fair Grounds 202 West Main Street Lipscomb, TX.- J.R. Sprague County Extension Agent and his phone is 806-862-4601. You may also contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 and I can provide you a list of items these LSP's need and recovery efforts continue in the affected areas. Our thoughts are with these producers in our state.

Agricultural Business Development Training Available On April 26th

The demand for locally produced foods throughout Texas provides producers promising business opportunities. Individuals interested in starting an alternative agricultural business may want to attend an informative day at the San Antonio Botanical Garden's Education Building and learn the basics of starting an alternative agriculture business. This event will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 26, 2017 Presentations will focus on developing a business plan, financial planning strategies, and marketing opportunities. Producers will share personal experiences and tips for running a successful alternative agriculture business. Deadline to register for this training is April 20th. You may register online by going to **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q67TSKG** or you may also contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 and I can assist you in registering for this event. Specific questions about this workshop can be directed to Megan Clayton: 361-265-9203 **Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu** . This workshop is sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Southern SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education).

Tip of the Week: Treating Brown Patch Disease in Your Lawn

A call last week from a Crystal City resident about brown patches in a San Agustin lawn reminded me of how this disease seems to take off especially during damp, humid and muggy conditions, which we have experienced recently. The name, brown patch, is not very descriptive of the varied symptom expression caused by Rhizoctonia spp. on turfgrass. Symptoms differ on cool- and warm-season grasses and vary depending on environmental conditions and cultural practices. Turfgrass affected by brown patch generally will exhibit circular or irregular patches of light brown, thinned grass. On cool-season grasses (bent, rye and fescue) during periods of warm, humid weather, a darkened border or smoke ring may develop at the outer margin of the patches. Brown Patch The smoke-ring symptom is not reliable for diagnosis. Symptoms on warm-season grasses such as bermuda grass or St. Augustine grass include circular to irregular patches of blighted turf. Patches up to several yards in diameter commonly develop in the fall, winter and spring when these grasses are approaching or emerging from dormancy, evening temperatures are below 68 degrees F, and rainfall usually increases. Active infections are noticeable by yellow leaves at the edges of patches. Leaf sheaths become rotted, and a gentle tug on the leaf blade easily separates the leaf from the runner. Brown patch usually does not discolor roots. Disease develops most rapidly when air temperatures are between 75 degrees F and 85 degrees F and wet conditions are present and generally subsides when air temperatures rise above 90 degrees F.

All types of lawn grasses grown in South Texas can be affected by brown patch. There are no turfgrass species currently available that are entirely resistant to brown patch. Brown patch is the most common and important disease of 'Raleigh' St. Augustine in this area. In most cases, affected areas are able to recover, but the selection of Flora-TAM (St. Augustine) shows the most potential for being highly resistant.

Control and Management: Water only as needed and early in the day to remove dew and allow the grass to dry quickly. Avoid over fertilization in spring and fall. Improve the turfgrass root system with good drainage and aeration to reduce damage caused by brown patch. The best way to prevent brown patch in the home lawn is by following good lawn care practices. This is much easier and less expensive than the use of fungicides and can be very effective. Here are a few tips:

1. Avoid high nitrogen rates on warm season grasses in mid to late fall. The brown patch fungus readily attacks the lush growth of grass which nitrogen promotes. The use of Texas greensand as a supplement when fertilizing will help adjust the soil pH, thus making essential nutrients readily available. Apply Texas greensand at a rate of 10 pounds per 1000 square feet.

2. Irrigate grass only when needed and to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Water early in the morning. This disease can spread fast when free moisture is present.

3. Avoid spreading the disease to other areas. Remove clippings if the weather is warm and moist to prevent spread to other areas during mowing.

4. Keep lawns mowed on a regular basis to the proper height for the grass species you are growing. Prevent excessive thatch buildup.

5. Provide good drainage for both surface and subsurface areas.

Fungicides can be difficult to rely upon for controlling brown patch in the home lawn, but regular applications can vastly improve appearance. A good "rule of thumb" to follow on warm-season grasses is to initiate fungicide sprays when nighttime low temperatures reach 70° F. Stop applications when nighttime lows are forecast to be below 70° F for five consecutive days. Typically, applications are made at 14-day intervals. If disease is severe enough to warrant chemical control, alternate fungicides to prevent buildup and resistance to the chemical. Slightly better control may be obtained by a liquid fungicide application rather than by granular application. Common fungicides available to homeowners include Bonide Fung-onil Lawn Disease Control, Green Light Fung-Away, Hi-Yield Lawn Fungicide and Bayer Advanced Lawn Fungus Control. Remember prevention is the best tool to use against brown patch disease on your lawn. The information given herein is for informational and educational purposes only and no discrimination is intended to other products providing the same or similar products nor an endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service or this news media is implied. Have a wonderful week. M.V.

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