

News From Your County Agent
By Marcel Valdez, CEA-ANR/4-H/Co. Coord.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Zavala County

Greetings to all of you and thank you for reading this week. I had an opportunity to make a site visit early Monday morning at the Pryor Ranch just south of La Pryor. The purpose was to discuss brush management practices and develop a plan of action to improve grass and forage production on the property. I was overwhelmed by how well our native range and pastures, including those that are improved have responded to recent rains. Several sections have a tremendous abundance of forage which is of excellent quality due to these rains a few weeks ago. This is the same for other ranches in Zavala County and for the most part livestock producers are enjoying the current range and pasture conditions.

Private Water Well Screening Set For November 1, 2017

Zavala, Dimmit, Frio, Atascosa, and McMullen Counties of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is hosting a water well screening on Wednesday, November 1st at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices for Zavala County at 221 N 1st Ave in Crystal City, Dimmit County at 539 Industrial Boulevard, in Carrizo Springs, Frio County at 400 S. Pecan Street, Pearsall, TX Atascosa County at 25 E. 5th Street Leming, TX, and McMullen County County Courthouse, HWYS 72 &16 Tilden TX in to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water screened.

Results will be available on Friday, November 3rd, at your Local County Extension Office. If results indicate high levels of contaminants then owners are advised to get a full water test done by a certified water testing lab. If samples submitted are within tolerable limits the well owner do NOT have to do any additional testing and thus save the cost of a full blown water test. The screening is presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. According to John W. Smith, AgriLife Extension Program Specialist private water wells should be tested annually. It is very important that only sampling bags from the Zavala, Frio, Atascosa, McMullen or Dimmit County AgriLife Extension offices be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results.

Area residents who want to have their well water screened, will need to pick up a sample bag and sampling instructions from the Dimmit County AgriLife Extension office (call 830-876-4216 for more information), Frio County AgriLife Extension office (830-334-0099), or Zavala County AgriLife Extension office (830-374-2883). McMullen County AgriLife Extension office (361-274-3323) or Atascosa County AgriLife Extension office (830-596-8997)

The cost is \$15 per sample and samples must be turned in by 10a.m. on November 1st. Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, high salinity and presence of hydrocarbons. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with fecal coliform bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms. Water with nitrates at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption. Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood

to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible.

Salinity as measured by total dissolved solids will also be determined for each sample. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste, and using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants. For more information, please contact your local County Extension Office . To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, please visit <http://twon.tamu.edu>. Support for the Texas Well Owner Network program is provided through Clean Water Act nonpoint source funding from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Reminder 4-H Participation Fees Due

All of the lamb, goat, steer and swine validations have been competed in Zavala County as of this weekend. 4-H members and families have been logging into the Texas 4-H Connect website to complete the 4-H enrollment process. Of course some of these are taking time due to some issues with the system or many forget their log on credentials since most people do not use the system but once a year. You are reminded that you need to complete this process as soon as possible so that all enrollment information is up to date and complete in the system. If you are having problems completing the enrollment process contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. When you complete the information be sure to pay the \$20 dollar 4-H participation fee by credit card or by check or cash to the Extension Office. You are not a member until you complete this process, pay your \$20 dollar participation fee and receive your 4-H 2017-18 membership card.

Tip of the Week: Army Worms and Their Control

If you are a wheat, oat producer or even an avid lawn care person you might have noticed some spots in your lawn or field that are bare and for all practical purposes gone. If you look closely you will find the fall armyworm. This worm has four large spots on the upper surface of the last segment of its body. Along the middle of the larva's back is a wide, yellowish-gray band with a dark, black stripe just below the yellowish-gray band. This destructive garden pest gets its name because it travels in small insect armies and consumes just about everything in its path.

According to Dr. Knutson, agricultural entomologist with Texas A&M Agrilife extension, two species of armyworms attack forage and field crops in north Texas. The fall armyworm is most abundant during August through early November in north Texas and feeds primarily on bermudagrass, wheat and rye grass, although it attacks many other crops. The true armyworm is common during April and May when it attacks wheat, rye grass, winter pastures, and seedling corn and sorghum. Both caterpillars can occur in very large numbers, can consume a crop almost overnight, and will move in large masses or armies to adjacent fields in search of food. Armyworms attack many different kinds of plants and when food is scarce, they can feed on plants not normally attacked. The fall armyworm apparently does not overwinter in north Texas. Moths fly north from south Texas each year to re-infest the area. Outbreaks in the Zavala County area usually occur in late summer and fall and follow periods of rain like we have had a few weeks ago, which create favorable conditions for eggs and small larvae to survive.

Management: The key to managing fall armyworms is to detect infestations before they have caused

economic damage. Fall armyworm larvae feed primarily during the night and during cloudy weather. During the day, look for armyworms under loose soil and fallen leaves on the ground. The presence of chewed leaves can indicate armyworms are present. Small larvae chew the green layer from the leaves and leave a clearing or a window pane effect and consume only a small amount of foliage. For this reason, infestations can go unnoticed unless the field is closely inspected. Once larvae are greater than 3/4 inch, the quantity of leaves they eat increases dramatically. During the final 2-3 days of feeding, armyworms consume 80% of the total foliage consumed during their entire development. For this reason, extensive feeding damage can occur in a few days.

The density of armyworms sufficient to justify insecticide treatment will depend on the stage of crop growth and value of the crop. Seedling plants can tolerate fewer armyworms than established plants. Infestations of 2-3 armyworms per square foot may justify treatment. Hot, dry weather and natural enemies limit armyworm populations. Insect parasites such as wasps and flies, ground beetles, and other predators help suppress armyworm numbers. Diseases such as insect viruses and fungi can also be important. However, these natural enemies can be overwhelmed when large numbers of migrating moths lay thousands of eggs in a field. Armyworms often infest fields of volunteer wheat and weedy grasses in ditches and around field margins. Destruction of volunteer wheat and weedy grasses can eliminate these sources of armyworms.

Fall armyworms feed any time of the day or night, but are most active early in the morning or late in the evening. Susceptible fields or lawns should be scouted by counting the number of army worms in a square foot area in 8 different sites. Divide the total worm count by 8 to find the average number of armyworms per square foot. Be sure to take samples in the interior of the field because this pest is often heaviest near the field margins. Sometimes, only the field margins require treatment. The threshold level ranges from two to three larvae per square foot for seedling wheat. For older plants, three to four larvae and obvious foliage loss justify control measures. Thresholds in improved pastures and lawns vary with conditions but treatment should be considered when counts average three or more worms per square foot. Insecticide choices vary with the crop but the following (with product names and grazing restrictions in parentheses) are labeled for use in pastures include carbaryl (Sevin®) (14 days), malathion (0 days), methomyl (Lannate®) (7 days), methyl parathion (PennCap®-M) (15 days) and various biologicals such as Dipel®(0 days). Insecticide labeled in lawns and turf include halofenozide (Mach® 2), bifenthrin (Talstar®), cyfluthrin (Tempo®, Bayer Advanced®), carbaryl (Sevin®) permethrin (multipl brands) and spinosad (Conserve® and others). For more information about armyworms contact the Zavala County AgriLife Extension Service and as for Extension publication B-1220. Remember always follow all pesticide labels and instructions for their use, including all precautionary statements. The use of any pesticide is always the users responsibility. This information given herein is for educational and information only. Reference made to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination in intended and no endorsement of any product is made by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Have a great week. M.V.

October 23-27, 2017

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.