

**News From Your County Agent**  
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**Zavala County**

Grab you coats, blankets and heaters for you to have handy for the cold weather we will be encountering this week. In fact by the time you read this article you will be dealing with the coldest temperatures so far this year in our area. Of course in true southwest Texas fashion this cold spell will only be short lived but of course things may change. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO 4-H CLOVER KIDS FAMILIES!!!**

If you plan on have your youngsters participate in the Zavala County Junior Livestock Show Clover Kids Rabbit Show you need to have your child registered in one of the 4-H clover Kids Clubs (La Pryor, Batesville or Crystal City). What you need to do:

1. Register your child on 4-H Connect or by contacting our office at 830-374-2883 or contact your local 4-H club manager.
2. Get your child's rabbit by December 10, 2017. If you have a rabbit or know where to get one GREAT. If you need help finding one contact the Extension office at 830-374-2883 or contact your local 4-H club manager.
3. Have your child excused from school(with completed 4-H eligibility form) and bring the child and the rabbit to the Zavala County Livestock Show at 9:30 a.m. on Friday January 12, 2018. For more information about this program contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or contact your local 4-H club manager in your community.

**Reminder of Upcoming Pesticide Applicator Training/Meeting On December 28th**

The Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will host its 13th annual pesticide applicators training/meeting for all pesticide applicators who currently hold a valid Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicator license. Licensed commercial, noncommercial and NCPS applicators are required to recertify every year by obtaining five continuing education credits; with one credit each from two of the following categories: laws and regulations, integrated pest management or drift minimization. Licensed private applicators are required to recertify every five years by obtaining 15 continuing education credits, including two (2) credits in laws and regulations and two (2) credits in integrated pest management (IPM), prior to expiration of the license.

This CEU training/meeting event will provide license holders with 6 CEU's which will include 3 general, 1 IPM, 1 Laws and regulations and 1 in drift minimization. The event will take place on Thursday December 28, 2017 at the La Pryor I.S.D. multi-purpose building in La Pryor. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the training will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. There will be a cost of \$10.00 per person. If you plan to attend this event please contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

**Tip of The Week: Make Holiday Decorating Fun But Safe**

I know several of you have already decorated your homes or businesses for the holidays, but if you have not you might want to remember and follow a few safety tips which can keep you away from a holiday incident that you do not want to deal this time of year. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), December is the peak time of year for home candle fires.

Be fire smart as you deck the halls for a festive holiday season with these safety tips from Agrilife Extension and the USFA.

- Water Christmas trees every day. A dry tree is dangerous because it can catch fire easily.
- Make sure Christmas trees are at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents. Also, make sure the tree does not block exits.
- Inspect holiday lights each year before you put them up. Throw away strands with frayed or pinched wires. Read the manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.
- Turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.
- If you do use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where you can not knock them down.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that burns. Never leave a burning candle alone in an empty room.

If you are traveling by car or plane this holiday season there are a few things you might want to consider. Remember you can make holiday travel fun and memorable or it can be a very stressful time of year for those traveling on the road. Whether you are traveling near or far, it is important to keep in mind these basic safety tips to ensure you arrive safe and enjoy this wonderful time with friends and family.

**Rest/Sleep:** The National Sleep Foundation recommends for us all to go to sleep at the same time every night and to rise at the same time each morning. This promotion of regular sleep is known as sleep hygiene. They also recommend sleeping in a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment. And most importantly, avoid large meals before bedtime!

**Child Safety:** Make sure all passengers are buckled in. Also, make sure that all children are in a size-appropriate car seat. Data has shown that booster seats can reduce the risk of serious injury in children ages 1 to 4 by 45%, according to the **Center for Disease Control**. Also, car seats reduce the risk of death in car crashes by 71% for infants. So buckle up!

**Designate a Driver:** Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a night of holiday partying. Also, while on the road, be sure to switch drivers on long trips so that every driver is alert and aware of the road ahead.

**Distracted Driving:** Put the cell phone down! Distracted driving accounts for one-quarter of all crashes. Don't be a statistic and put the phone away. If you are traveling alone stop at a gas station

or rest stop to check your map or make a call. Otherwise simply give phone duty to another person in the car.

Be prepared for heavy amounts of traffic. The holiday season is the highest time of the year in road travels and traffic accidents. Plan ahead and take alternate routes or longer, safer routes avoiding heavy traffic roads. Bring flashlights, matches, extra cell phone, food, and other necessities in the case of a blowout or if caught in a hot Texas winter travel day. Safe travels and have a great week. M.V.

December 4-8, 2017.

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