

News From Your County Agent
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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Everybody really got into the Christmas spirit this week thanks to a rare snowfall across our area. This huge snow system even delivered snow to the Rio Grande Valley area of Texas. County agents from that part of the state shared photos of snow covered orange trees, a very rare event for Texas. So if it can snow in Hawaii(November 29, 2017 on the Mauna Kea mountains on the island of *Hawaii*, known as the Big Island, were dusted with snow *Huffington post*). it can snow in Zavala County. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

ZAE To Host A Barn Clean Up On Saturday

In preparation for the 2018 Zavala County Junior Fair the Zavala Agricultural Exposition, Inc.(ZAE) will host a show barn clean-up on this Saturday December 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the stockshow grounds in Crystal City. The ZAE would like to encourage the youngsters that have not yet participated in a clean up to attend, but all are welcome. Some items still remaining on the list are to wash and scrub the white tables and chairs with comet/Clorox, clean the scale, clean the press box, clean up the wash rack, pick up any trash in and outside the building, finish raking up the leftover bedding/shavings, and make sure the bathrooms are clean before and following the 4-H showmanship clinic. If you see any other items that need to be addressed feel free to take the initiative and help get it done. The ZAE will be providing some cleaning supplies and gloves again, but we will need rakes, brooms, and anything extra. We greatly appreciate everyone's help. Hope to see you Saturday. Thank you in advance for participating.

Annual 4-H Showmanship Clinic To be Held Saturday

The annual 4-H showmanship clinic and goat shearing demonstration will take place this Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Zavala Agricultural Exposition grounds(Show Barn) in Crystal City. The scales will be available for weighing all lambs, goats, steers and hogs. A showmanship clinic will be held for everyone interested in participating in preparation for the upcoming Zavala County Junior livestock show in January. Following the clinic and weighing of animals a shearing demonstration will be held to teach 4-H exhibitors and parents alike on how to shear a lamb, goat or pig project prior to the show. For more information regarding this event contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at 830-374-2883. There is NO charge for attending this event.

Zavala County Beef Cattle Producers Invited To Attend Beef Symposium

The Southwest Beef Symposium, jointly conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, is set Jan. 17-18 at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 5200 E. University Ave. in Odessa. "Looking to the Future" is the theme of this year's conference. This may be the year to attend this event as cattle prices have adjusted downward after some very favorable years for cow-calf and stocker producers, in our area and across the state. The opening session from 1-5 p.m. Jan. 17 will address big-picture emerging issues in the global beef industry, the U.S. Cattle Market Outlook, Dr. Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, International Market Outlook and Source Verification. Lee Ann Saunders, IMI Global, Castle Rock, Colorado, Ranch Business Planning and Marketing Options for Cattle

Type, Dennis Braden, Swenson Land and Cattle, Stamford, Economics of Trichomoniasis, Dr. John Wenzel, NMSU Cooperative Extension veterinarian, Las Cruces, New Mexico, the 2017 National Beef Quality Audit, Dr. Dan Hale, AgriLife Extension meats specialist, College Station. Topics on Jan 18 will focus on beef quality and health. Individual early registration is \$75, which includes a prime rib dinner on Jan. 17, lunch on Jan. 18 and refreshments and symposium proceedings. Early registration is required by Jan. 12. To register, or for more information go to <http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/Beef> or contact Bruce Carpenter at 432-336-8585, or Steve Paz, AgriLife Extension agent in Ector County, at 432-498-4071 or Marcel Valdez, County Extension agent-Zavala County at 830-374-2883. Late and onsite registration is \$95.

Tip of The Week: Remember Fresh Christmas Tree Safety

Christmas is only a few day away and I know that almost everyone has already put up their natural, live or artificial tree in their home. If you have a fresh tree the key to making this tree safe for the holidays is to keep it hydrated. Here are a 12 essential safety trips for you to follow so that you can enjoy a safe fresh Christmas tree this season. The 12 days of Christmas tree safety are:

1. When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators, portable heaters, heater vents and TV sets
2. Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption.
3. Keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly. A tree will absorb as much as a gallon of water or more in the first 24 hours and one or more quarts a day thereafter.
4. To maximize freshness and minimize fire risk, keep the tree outdoors for a few days in a bucket filled with water before bringing it indoors to decorate.
5. If the tree seems wobbly, center it in the stand more securely and reposition the bolts or screws. If the stand is too small, buy a larger, stronger stand. The tree stand should hold at least one gallon of water.
6. Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety. Identify these by the label from an independent testing laboratory.
7. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before using.
8. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
9. Use only one extension cord per outlet.
10. Many people these days collect a huge amount of ornaments and want to put them all on the tree. Use thin guy wires to secure tall trees to walls or ceiling; the wires will be almost invisible
11. Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and start a fire.
12. Never use lighted candles on a tree (even an artificial tree) or near other evergreens

According to the National Fire Protection Association Christmas trees were involved in approximately 300 fires annually from 2000-2005. These fires resulted in average of 13 deaths, 21 injuries and 16.8 million in property damage. Enjoy your holidays but in a safe way. Have a great week. M.V.

December 11-15, 2019.

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