

**News From Your County Agent**  
**By Marcel Valdez, CEA-ANR**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
**Zavala County**

Everyone involved with the 2018 Zavala County Junior Fair should be thankful that this annual event was held last week and NOT this week. By the time you read this column we will be in the middle of a super cold week so do your best to stay warm, remember your pets, plants and pipes and don't venture out in the roadways if you don't have to. Back to the show! The 2018 Zavala county livestock show and sale was a tremendous success generating over \$119,000.00 from the sale of animal projects. Thank you buyers!!

**Important Agriculture Labor Compliance Seminar Set For February**

On Tuesday, February 13, 2018 the San Antonio District Office of the U. S. Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division, will be offering the agriculture compliance training seminar in Uvalde at the Uvalde Fairplex located at 215 Veterans Lane, Uvalde 78801. The seminar will be for agricultural related employers, and will provide information and guidance on the different regulations pertaining to agricultural employment.

I recognize your time is valuable especially for those of you associated with spinach production at this time of year but I encourage you to make time or send a representative to attend this event. Again growers, packers, shippers, of agriculture products and agricultural buyers are encouraged to attend. To attend this meeting you are encouraged to pre-register by calling the US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division at ( 210) 308-4515.

**Extension To Offer Auxin Specific Training For Producers-Date To Be Announced Soon**

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will conduct a series of auxin trainings for producers across Texas including one for the Winter Garden(Zavala, Uvalde, Frio, Medina) area. The Texas Department of Agriculture has required a special auxin-specific training in 2018 for those applying the new auxin formulations of dicamba. These trainings extends to and includes licensed TDA applicators and any unlicensed person who will be making applications of Xtendimax, Engenia and FeXapan under a licensed applicator. This training is not required for those using range and pasture dicamba products.

I am currently working with Samantha Korzekwa the Uvalde County Extension Agent on the Date, time and location for the training to be held in the Winter Garden. The program will be one hour and will provide one Texas Department of Agriculture laws and regulations continuing education unit. The training will focus on new label changes and drift precautions. Dicamba is offered in many formulations, but this training will focus on the new labels mentioned because they are temporary labels and misuse could cause the industry to lose the new formulations. More information on the trainings will be coming soon through this media, Extension Service County Websites, producer newsletters and social media.

**Tip of the Week: Care of Fruit Trees After A Severe Freeze**

Many times we do not know how severe fruit tree damage is suffered following an extreme freezing event like the one we experienced this week until the spring. I would like to offer some tips on what to look for and what to do after we emerge from the extreme cold this week.

During the winter, fruit trees can withstand very cold temperatures. As fruit trees develop in the spring and buds start to swell, they lose the ability to withstand cold winter temperatures. The young, actively growing tissues will be damaged or killed by warmer and warmer temperatures. Swollen fruit buds can often withstand temperatures in the teens without any damage. As the buds open, temperatures in the low 20s can cause harm, but leave other buds undamaged.

Don't jump too fast to prune what appears to frost or freeze damage on your citrus tree. Rather, remove any damaged fruit and then wait to scope out the rest of the damage in several months. Though heavy pruning is not ideal, it is necessary when moderate to severe damage occurs in the canopy of the tree. Unfortunately, if the damage extends below the bud union -- the area where the tree was grafted onto the rootstock -- little can be done to save the tree.

Wait to trim damaged limbs in late spring or early summer so you can clearly determine which branches are truly damaged and which ones are not. In Zavala County you might know how much damage you have as early as late February to the middle of March. If you prune earlier, you can inadvertently remove healthy branches. Also, some branches can appear healthy but later die off from freeze injury. Therefore, if you prune too early, you might have to conduct a second pruning at a later time as damaged limbs become more evident and show signs of freeze damage.

Disinfect your pruning tools before use and between trees to prevent the spread of disease. Many times freeze damage parts of a tree are ideal for the development of fungus and other tree diseases therefore treat your pruning tools as if you have an ugly disease in the trees that might have been damaged by this latest freeze. A rag moistened with a simple bleach and water solution made with one-tenth bleach and rubbed onto the blades works well. Depending on thickness of the limbs, use a sharp saw, loppers or shears.

Remember to cut each damaged limb back 2 to 3 inches into living wood. Ideally, prune just above the topmost sprout, right at a healthy branch. Make cuts straight and flush with the parent branch. Do not leave stubs if possible.

And finally paint pruned stems that face the sun and have little sun protection with a white latex paint diluted with 50 percent water. This is especially necessary for larger branches that have been pruned. Let us keep our fingers crossed and hope that any damage to your fruit trees is minimal but like I said only time will tell so keep a close eye on your trees as temperatures begin to warm up in the spring. Have a great week and STAY WARM. M.V.

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