

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

Easter has come and gone and I hope all of you had a nice Easter weekend. According to statisticbrain.com total annual spending on Easter candy is about \$2.1 Billion in the United States which means that if you are like most folks you will be enjoying left over Easter candy for a while perhaps even into the 4th of July weekend. At least a pleasant Easter surprise was much appreciated by those of you that were fortunate enough to get some measurable rainfall late last week, making things a lot greener for most of us just in time for Easter.

Steer Tag Orders Being Taken Now

Currently major show steer tag orders are being taken at the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. There will be only one tag order for Zavala County for these tags. Steer exhibitors that plan to show a steer project in any major show in Texas must have their steer projects validated with an official state steer validation tag. Those of you that will show a steer project in Zavala County ONLY and will not show outside of Zavala County DO NOT need to order a state validation tag. Validation fee for Steers \$15 per head if ordered from April 1-April 20. Tags will go up to \$25 per head for orders placed from April 21-June 23. Both major show and county show steers will be validated on Saturday June 23, 2018. For more information on ordering tags or the steer project validation process contact the Zavala county office of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Extension Reminds Producers To Keep Eye Out for Respiratory Acidosis in Newborns at Calving Time

Despite a cow-calf producer's best efforts relative to providing desired herd genetics and ease of birthing through bull selection and heifer development, some cows or heifers still need assistance at calving time. It's important to remember that every baby calf has a certain degree of respiratory acidosis, one reason why producers need to keep as close an eye as possible on newborns. Acidosis is the result of oxygen deprivation and accumulation of carbon dioxide that results from passage of the calf through the birth canal. The excess of carbon dioxide results in a buildup of lactic acid.

Typically, a healthy calf will pant vigorously shortly after birth, its body working to auto-correct the lack of oxygen and the excess of carbon dioxide and its by-products. Unfortunately, some calves may be sluggish and slow to begin this corrective process. It's imperative that newborn calves begin to breathe as soon as possible, and that means producers need to be both watchful and knowledgeable about how to render assistance. To stimulate the initiation of the respiratory process, first manually clear the newborn calf's mouth and nasal passages of fluids and mucus.

The old timers method of hanging the calf over a fence is not the best method to initiate breathing even if some swear that it works, but it is not the best method. The weight of the calf on the fence restricts the movement of the animal's diaphragm muscle. This diaphragm activity is necessary to expand the lungs to draw in needed oxygen. A better method is to briskly tickle the inside of the calf's nostrils with a straw. This will usually initiate a reflex action such as a snort or cough in the newborn, expanding its lungs and allowing air to enter. Expect the calf to pant rapidly for a few minutes after the snort or cough, panting is the natural response, increasing oxygen intake and promoting carbon dioxide release and allowing the calf to reach normal blood gas concentrations. Good luck to all during this calving season.

Tip of the Week: Timely Spring Fertilizer Applications For A Lush Lawn

Lawn quality is generally measured in terms of color, density and uniformity. Cultural practices, particularly fertilization, largely determine lawn quality. A fertilization program should include timely fertilizer applications in amounts and formulations that meet the requirements of your lawn. Excessive nitrogen applications stimulate production of leaves and stems and increase the mowing requirements. Higher water requirements, increased thatch and increased susceptibility to insects and diseases also results from excessive application of nitrogen. Poor timing of fertilizer applications, such as mid-summer and early fall applications of soluble nitrogen, also increases the likelihood of chinch bug and brownpatch problems in St. Augustine lawns.

In the Zavala County area in early spring there is usually enough residual nitrogen to maintain grass through several mowings. The first application of fertilizer should be made after the second or third mowing. If the lawn appears vigorous and healthy at that time, delay the first application until May. In the absence of soil test information, apply a fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 2-1-1 ratio at a rate equivalent to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

Bermudagrass lawns require supplemental applications of nitrogen at 45- to 60-day intervals between spring and fall fertilizations. These applications should not exceed 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Occasionally, St. Augustine grass may need a supplemental application of nitrogen to enhance color during the summer. Use organic or slow-release nitrogen sources on lawns during the summer. Summer fertilization of St. Augustine grass growing in moderate shade should be avoided because of increased disease activity. St. Augustine lawns may require periodic applications of iron sulfate or iron chelate to prevent iron chlorosis. A foliar application of iron sulfate at a rate of 6 to 8 ounces per 1,000 square feet effectively eliminates the symptoms of iron chlorosis. These applications may be needed several times during the growing season. Iron chelates should be applied according to the manufacturer's directions.

Fertilizers can be distributed with a broadcast (cyclone) or drop-type spreader. Uniform distribution is essential to prevent light and dark streaks across the lawn. For better distribution, divide the fertilizer to be applied into two equal lots. Apply one lot lengthwise and the other crosswise over the lawn like a checkered pattern. Choice of the type and grade of fertilizer material to use depends on soil test recommendations. In every fertilizer analysis (such as 12-4 8), the first number represents the percent nitrogen (N), the second number represents the percent phosphorus (P₂O₅) and the third number represents the percent potassium (K₂O). This is why a soil test is so important so that you know what your lawn needs and how much. Contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service on instructions and information on how to have a soil test down for your lawn. Remember timing and distribution of fertilizer applications, as well as rate of application, are important considerations in a lawn fertilization program. Timing applications of fertilizers needs to correspond to grass requirements rather than to the convenience of the homeowner can reduce maintenance problems during the growing season. Have a nice green up week. M.V.

April 2-6, 2018.

