

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

June does not arrive until Friday which typically marks the start of hurricane season (as I mentioned in a previous news article) however subtropical storm Alberto couldn't wait and put a damper on many Memorial Day observances in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Of course the stubborn high pressure system that is planted on top of Texas will keep us hot and dry. According to professional experts there is no hope for rain over an extended period of time, therefore you need to start a drought watering pattern for your lawn starting this week. (Please see my tip of the week in this week's column)

Steer Validation Deadline Approaching Quickly

This is a reminder for all 4-H families that are contemplating raising a steer project for the 2019 Zavala County Junior Fair is fast approaching. All steer exhibitors must have their steer projects in their possession by Saturday June 23, 2018 and have these animals validated on this date. The steer validation process will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday June 23rd at the Chaparrosa ranch in La Pryor for ALL steers that will show at the local show or at any other stockshow in Texas during the 2019 show season. For more information regarding the steer deadline, locating a steer project or the steer validation process contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

2018 Farm Bill Was Defeated On House floor.

The 2018 farm bill was defeated by a 213-198 vote on the house floor a few days ago on capital hill. The current farm bill expires at the end of September, which leaves some time for lawmakers to get their work done. Congress will be in session all of June and three weeks in July before leaving town for the summer recess. There is a need to see both the Senate and House bills in conference where both chambers can work out detail of the bill by August so that a final package can be passed before the September 30, 2018 deadline. I will provide you with more information once this bill is considered again for another vote.

Tip of the Week: Watering and Lawn Care During a Drought

Zavala county and most of Texas except (East Texas) is under a high pressure dome which creates extreme heat and extreme dry conditions. This will cause us to go into a drought mode pretty quickly both for the care of our landscapes and livestock and pets as well. Proper watering during a drought will help you save water and keep you lawn alive and looking nice.

First ensure that the water reaches a depth of 4inches after each watering. Use a trowel to open a small test hole a few hours later to ensure the soil is sufficiently damp. By noting the duration of watering required to achieve this level of dampness, future irrigation can be more accurately applied. The average hosepipe sprinkler delivers up to 200 gallons of water per hour. If it is assumed that the sprinkler covers an area of 97 sq ft, in one hour it delivers about 22gal per sq. yd.

Even in June or July, one square yard only needs 4½ gallons every seven days. On that basis, 12 minutes' steady sprinkling per 97 sq ft) should be enough. In practice, sprinklers vary considerably in their area of coverage, so the number of minutes required may not be exactly 12. By spacing jam jars over the lawn to catch the water, total water delivery can be estimated. Allowing the sprinkler to run until 1 inch of water has been evenly collected in all the jars approximately equals the correct rate of water application. So in summary lawns rarely need to be watered every day. You can keep your lawn healthy by applying 1 inch a water per week by deep watering. Remember deep watering NOT frequent watering. Once you have applied the water the proper way during a drought you will have to mow. Remember to mow your grass taller than normal about 3 ½- to 4-inches tall to help the grass to conserve water and tolerate the hot soil by shading it's self a little from the sun. For more information about proper lawn watering during a drought contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and ask for publication B-6126 titled "Keeping your lawn Alive during a drought". Have a great week. M.V.

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