

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

Hot and for the most part dry was the norm for most of the past week, however, chances for rain are in the forecast for this week so hopefully by the time you are reading this column you will be checking your rain gauges....let's keep our fingers crossed. Greetings to all of you and thank you for reading this week.

**It's Steer Validation Time**

It's hard to believe but steer validation for the 2019 Zavala County Junior Fair will take place this coming Saturday. 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 validation process contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

**The Goat and Sheep Predator Management Board Elections Take Place Next Month**

The Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will assist the Sheep and Goat predator management board with its required elections this summer to replace one director from each of the 3 districts in the state. Goat producer in Zavala county is interested in participating in this election as a candidate you must submit your nomination to the Sheep and Goat predator management board by July 9, 2018. You may obtain a nomination form from the Zavala County Office located at 221 north first avenue, Crystal City, Texas. For purposes of this statewide election Zavala County is in district 2 along with 13 other counties from Bandera to Schleicher and Tom Green counties of the Sheep and Goat Predator Management Board For more information about contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

**Tip of the Week: Managing Parasites on Pets During The Summer**

As we continue with our hot summer pets are just what the parasites need to feed on those animals. Unfortunately, these parasites are numerous and would love to make your pet their new home. Spring and summer means that flea and tick season has arrived, and mosquitoes are also out and about and ready to pass on heartworm disease to dogs and cats. Other parasites, less well known but still important to protect your pets from, include roundworms, hookworms and whipworms.

**Ticks**, a type of arachnid, are small external parasites that feed on the blood of a host, usually deer, small mammals or birds, and just as easily dogs, cats or humans. They are often found in wooded or forested areas, in tall grass, brush or woodpiles and are common along hiking or deer trails or even in your backyard. They move onto a host as it passes by and then attach to the skin by using the mouthparts to embed their head so they can feed on the host's blood. Through this connection to the bloodstream they can pass diseases such as Lyme, Ehrlichia and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. While many modern flea control products can also kill ticks, they are difficult to manage

because the majority of reproducing ticks are on their natural wildlife hosts so re-infestation easily occurs when pets spend time outside.

**Fleas** are insects, with the predominant species being the cat flea, and are parasitic, feeding on the blood of a host. They are spread from animals outside—other pets, feral cats, raccoons, opossums, etc.—which constantly re-infest yards, patios and porches. Once the flea gets on your pet and feeds on its blood, it begins laying eggs. The eggs fall off and contaminate rugs, carpets, and animal and human bedding, all of which must be cleaned and treated to eliminate the infestation. One flea can lay 50 eggs per day!

Symptoms of a flea infection are itchiness, scratching/chewing, hair loss and scabbing of the skin, and a visual inspection might turn up flea “dirt,” black or brown specks that are actually flea feces. Fleas can also transmit tapeworms and Bartonella (Cat Scratch Fever in humans) as well as cause flea allergy dermatitis (an allergic reaction to flea saliva), and anemia if the infestation is severe. Though small, they can be seen moving on the pet if the hair is parted, especially over the rump. Many flea control products have been developed; let a veterinarian advise an integrated flea control program using an insect growth regulator and adulticide treatment.

**Heartworm** is a long thread-like worm which causes cardiac and circulatory problems in dogs. Symptoms include coughing, lethargy and weakness, and severe infestation can be fatal. In cats, the larvae migrate through the lung and create extreme inflammation which may cause an asthma-like respiratory condition. Unfortunately, some cats show no or few signs other than sudden death. Prevention with this parasite is absolutely key, and fortunately is also easy. Many monthly products are available, for both dogs and cats.

**Roundworms** are an intestinal parasite commonly diagnosed in dogs and cats. It is spread through feces-contaminated soil, by eating the tissue of host animals or from mother to offspring. Signs of intestinal parasites include an increase in flatulence, soft stools, blood in stool, diarrhea, weight loss in heavy worm burden cases, and vomiting. The adult roundworm looks like thin spaghetti and may be seen in an infested animal's feces or vomitus. Multiple treatments may be needed to eliminate this parasite but most heartworm preventatives also control re-infestation.

Pay attention if your pet starts to exhibit unusual behavior, and keep a good relationship with your veterinarian. Regular screenings can find diseases and parasitic infestation so they can be treated. But as always, it's better to prevent than to cure, and your veterinarian can suggest and prescribe preventative medications which can save both you and your animal friend a lot of pain and discomfort. Have a great week. M.V.

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