

News From Your County Agent
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My wishes and hopes are that each and every one of you had a wonderful Christmas filled with much joy and happiness among friends and family. It just amazes me how fast this year has gone by and it will not be long for 2019 to do the same thing. I wish there was a way to slow down the passage of time but unfortunately that is not possible. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Pesticide Applicators CEU Meeting To Be Held Friday

The annual Zavala Agrilife Extension Service pesticide applicators training and CEU meeting will be held this Friday, December 28, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the La Pryor School multi-purpose building located on U.S. Hwy. 57 in La Pryor. Licensed private applicators are required to recertify every five years by obtaining 15 continuing education credits (CEU's), including two (2) credits in laws and regulations and two (2) credits in integrated pest management (IPM), prior to expiration of the license. There will be 6 CEU's offered at this training-2 in laws and regulations, 1 in IPM, 1 in drift minimization and 2 in general. There will be a \$10.00 fee for attending the meeting to cover training materials. Individuals that plan to attend must bring their pesticide applicators license or license number with them to register for the course. For more information about this event please contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Camp Opportunity Available This Summer For 4-H Youth

Applications are now being accepted for Mission Possible Camp Mentors. Youth who will have completed the 8th grade in May or June of 2019 are eligible to apply. Mentors will work with the Mission Possible Leadership team and Texas 4-H Center Summer Staff to provide a safe and fun environment for all! Mentors will attend a training starting on June 30th and then attend Mission Possible camp July 1-3 working with the other mentors and campers.

This year the application is a google form and can be found on the 4-H Center Website-texas4hcenter.tamu.edu. Click on the "Camps" button and then scroll down and click the "Mission Possible Mentor Service Learning Opportunity". The application will be submitted upon completion. All applications are due on March 19th and applicants will be notified with a decision by April 2nd. If you have any questions please Cari Snider, Extension Program Specialist- 4-H Youth Development-Program Coordinator Texas 4-H Conference Center at (325) 784-5482.

Tip of The Week: Selecting a Girl Name For Rudolf The Red Nose Reindeer

Almost every Christmas season I like to share a little scientific humor but factual about Rudolf the Reindeer, perhaps the most famous reindeer of them all. Perhaps it really is not humor but rather the plain truth which we have been avoiding for many Christmas's now. What I want to share with you is why some day we should change Rudolf the red nose reindeer name to Rudolphina, Rosario, Raven or maybe Reta. Why you might ask. Well being a county Extension agent animal science is one of our areas of expertise and it is my duty to make sure we truly have valid animal facts including reindeer physiology.

First reindeer and caribou are the only deer where both males and females have antlers. For all other members of the deer family, Cervidae, only the males have antlers such as our beloved south Texas whitetail. Reindeer are the domesticated cousins of wild caribou—and are usually about 8 to 10 inches shorter and can be trained to pull a sleigh. Pull a sleigh they can, however flying around on Christmas night under the direction of a big fellow in a red suit might take an aerospace engineer to figure that one out and not a county Extension Agent.

While male reindeer shed their antlers at the beginning of winter (late November to mid-December), the females retain their antlers until after they give birth in the spring. Therefore MALE reindeer don't have any antlers at Christmastime. So you can't picture Rudolph as a big red-nosed macho male because he has cast his antlers already and could not have arrived on your doorstep with his antlers on, looking handsome. Instead it is a female reindeer who does have antlers at Christmastime.

I just wanted to remind people that it is never quite so straightforward and even females develop weapons when it comes to the real world of protecting their babies. As I mentioned before of the forty different species of deer in the world, only in reindeer do females have antlers in the winter time. These females drop their antlers in spring, growing them back in time for winter when they need their antlers to compete with other females over holes they dig in the snow to reach lichens and to provide food for their babies. Now that we have the reindeer facts let's face it, myself and other animal science gurus are probably right to state that all of Santa's reindeer are females because they're always pictured with antlers. Perhaps there is a magical reason why they fly and why the lead reindeer has a glowing red nose. We have grown accustomed to always referring to Rudolf as the most famous macho reindeer in the world and I am afraid that changing Rudolf's name to a girl's name is out of the question, but it was worth a try. Have a wonderful Christmas week. M.V.

December 24-28, 2018.