

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

What an incredible week of beautiful weather in our area except for one important event. RAIN! While morning temperatures are cold the afternoon temperatures have been very comfortable indeed and are expected to remain that way through the end of our local stockshow. Please make an effort to attend this annual event which starts on Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Zavala Agricultural Exposition Grounds in Crystal City. See you there.

**2019 Texas A&M AgriLife Quail Index Summary Is Now Available**

The numbers are in for this year's Texas Quail Index, and the reigning sentiment across the state appears to be "a slight improvement over last year, but less than we'd hoped for." It's difficult not to feel disappointed with the red letter years of 2016 and 17 still fresh in the minds of many quail enthusiasts, but it looks like we'll have to wait at least one more year before this bust really turns around. With that in mind, we can examine data from each of the Texas Quail Index demonstrations to see what has been going on with quail populations and habitat in 2019. For a copy of the 2019 Texas Quail Index contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or come by 221 north first avenue in Crystal City and ask for a copy of the 2019 Texas Quail Index Summary.

**USDA Proposes Changes to Beef**

Zavala County cattle producers need to be aware of changes being proposed by the USDA affecting beef board of directors makeup. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is proposing to adjust membership on the Beef Promotion and Research Board to reflect shifts in cattle inventory levels since the last board reapportionment in 2017, as required by the rules governing the board.

Under the proposal, total board membership would increase by two members, from 99 to 101, and would include the following changes:

- Domestic cattle producer representation on the board would increase from 92 to 94 members.
- The states of Nebraska, Texas and Wisconsin would each gain one member.
- The Southeast Unit, made up of Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina, would be dissolved.
- Alabama and Georgia would become stand-alone states due to each having enough inventory to qualify for a position on the board.
- South Carolina would be added to the Mid-Atlantic Unit, which would then consist of South Carolina and West Virginia, and would qualify for one member.
- Maryland would move from the Mid-Atlantic Unit to the Northeast Unit, which would then consist of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont, and qualify for one member. The revised representation would be effective with nominations in 2020 for appointments effective early in 2021.

These adjustments are based on requirements of the Beef Promotion and Research Order, authorized by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985. The order provides for a review of geographic distribution of U.S. cattle inventories and the volume of imported cattle, beef and beef products at

least every three years but not more than every two years. After the review, board membership must be reapportioned accordingly. The proposed rule for this action was published in the Federal Register on Dec. 30, 2019. Written comments must be received by Feb. 28, 2020.

Submit comments concerning the proposed change online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or to Agricultural Marketing Specialist Kahl Sesker at [Kahl.Sesker@usda.gov](mailto:Kahl.Sesker@usda.gov) or (202) 253-8253, or send to Research and Promotion Division, Livestock and Poultry Program, AMS, USDA, Room 2610-S, STOP 0251, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.,

### **Tip of the Week: Lessons Learned With 4-H Market Animal Projects**

The Zavala county fair season is a magical time when months-long and even yearlong efforts come to fruition. Projects are judged, resulting in big winners and smaller winners. There are really no losers, as 4-H is about learning new things, interacting with other kids and youth leaders, completing a project, and putting it out there to be critiqued. Since 4-H began more than 100 years ago it has been opening the door for young people to learn leadership skills and how to connect to practical, hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom. Originally centered around agriculture, it has now become the nation's largest youth development organization with projects that go above and beyond agriculture-photography, shooting sports, fashion show, livestock judging, robotics, public speaking, dog shows and the list goes on and on.

The following story has been shared with me by Mrs. Brittney Tullis Carpenter a 4-H parent who has granted by permission to share her story. This remarkable story shows the value of 4-H projects and the impact raising animals has on young people. I never get tired of reading her story and this week being our stockshow week I find it appropriate to share this story with all of you. Of course this story has not gone un-noticed and has drawn both positive and negative reactions. Many said what a wonderful job her son did and how this is what the fair is all about. However, many others — more than expected — took great issue calling it sick, unnecessary and uncompassionate. Others said it was killing for palate pleasure and animal cruelty. Upon reading the story you be the judge.

Proud doesn't even come close when I reflect on what I learned about our 8 year old son this past week. Back in March he decided that he wanted to do the Market lamb project for his first year in 4-H. We made sure that he understood that the end would result in one of his lambs most likely being in the Sale at Fair and fulfilling its purpose as a Market animal. He was set on the task at hand. He knew he would get attached to both ewe lambs, who he named Pork and Beans, and he knew where one would likely end up. He surprised us with his tenacity when it came to early morning feedings before school and late nights nursing a sick one through pneumonia. He worked them every day . Taught them how to lead and brace. He measured and weighed feed and supplements as well as making sure they had clean fresh water at all times. I would catch him hugging and loving on them when he would have a quiet moment . There was no doubt that he loved them.

At Fair we could tell that he was very proud of his finished projects . He faced his fears and walked into the show ring with his head held high and gave it all he had. He built a beautiful partnership with Pork and Beans. As a mom , my heart was so full and I was in awe of my boy. I looked at his dad beaming with pride of his son . Sale day came and we found out that Beans made the cut. Beans and Our boy posed for a picture for their potential buyers in front of a Douglas County back drop,

then their Auction number was painted on Beans's back. At that point, tears started rolling down my sons face. I hugged him and kissed his forehead. But, he was still set on what was to follow. That night, we watched him proudly walk her around the Auction arena and sell her for a number beyond what any of us ever expected. The incredible thing about 4-H auctions is that buyers don't pay just what the animal is worth, they exceed far beyond their market value because they believe in our children's hard work and want to invest in them. He left that auction arena on cloud nine and so pumped for next year.

Sunday came around and we knew it was going to be a rough day . Beans had a color painted on her back which indicated which truck she was to be loaded on. Time came to take her out of the pen and lead her that direction. My heart ached as I watch my child say goodbye to his partner . As much as I tried, I couldn't help but let the tears stream down my face. My boy gave her many hugs and scratches. His father, fighting his own tears asked if our son needed him to take Beans to semi but, our sweet, courageous boy insisted on doing it himself. The barn was filled with many kids and parents that were going through the same thing. What a beautiful thing. These animals are destined for Market (market animals will be slaughtered and processed for meat). How incredible that they land in the hands of children who love them and give them the best care while they are here on this earth . I found myself in a strange place. I wanted to fix my son's heartache, but at the same time I knew how important it was to follow through with the ENTIRE 4-H project. From start to finish. And even though this was tough, we had to allow him this experience. Sobbing, he loaded Beans on the truck , walked her halter back to the sheep barn where he was embraced with many hugs from other 4-H members wiping their own tears because they to just said goodbye to their partners. And through all of this, he actually thanked us for allowing him this experience.

My son is my hero. He is bigger than I ever knew. My son ran the race and finished regardless of his feelings and emotions. He loved his lamb, but he knew what was important. He raised a great product through blood, sweat , and tears, and he completed his project. He never asked to keep her. He never tried to quit. He gave it his all and succeeded. We are a family who loves to eat meat and he wanted to contribute to that in his own way by raising a Market animal. He will never forget Beans but is ready to do it all again next year. This is what 4-H is all about. What extraordinary kids! Good luck to all Zavala county 4-H members who will be participating in the Zavala County Livestock show this week and a big thank you to 4-H parents, 4-H volunteers and 4-H sponsors and supporters. Have a great week-M.V.

January 08, 2020