

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Cooke County

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Spring 2011 Newsletter

In Appreciation of Those Who Provide Our Food

Farming is long hours and hard work with little pay. Those that choose this occupation as a career usually find it very rewarding. Most farmers would not trade jobs unless they had to in order to support their families. They would not be happy sitting behind a desk all day. They marvel as they watch the seeds sprout and grow or witness the birth of the newborn calves. The farmer knows hardship when nature seems to turn against all that he has worked for. He picks up, puts his trust in God and continues on. Farmers experience firsthand the change of each season, amazing sunsets and beautiful starry nights.

Nearly two million people farm or ranch in the United States. Almost 90 percent of U.S. farms are operated by individuals or family corporations. And American agriculture provides jobs-including production agriculture, farm inputs, processing and marketing, along with retail and wholesale sales--for 15 percent of the U.S. population.

Almost 30 percent of today's farmers and ranchers have attended college, with over half of his group obtaining a degree. A growing number of today's farmers and ranchers with four-year college degrees are pursuing post-graduate studies.

America's farmers and ranchers are true professionals. Besides growing the food we eat, the man driving the tractor knows a lot about conservation, the environment, plants, animals, chemicals, animal health and nutrition, mechanics, insects, crop rotation and pasture rotation, etc. They attend continuing education programs as well as being trained and certified in the use of agricultural chemicals. Farmers test and evaluate the soil before administering fertilizers. Farmers and ranchers don't spend hard-earned money on costly fertilizers and nutrients unless they absolutely safe to do otherwise doesn't make good business sense.

On average each America's family farms each produce food and fiber for 155 people in the US and abroad while earning only about 19 cents for every dollar you spend on food. As you and your family sit down to your next meal remember to give thanks for the farmers who supply our food. We would be lost without them.

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Locating Buffalo Wallows

"Buffalo wallows" may or may not be the result of bison in years gone by. What they are is a more or less oval area of compacted soil. They can be a few inches deep to about 1 yard. Often the soil type and the vegetation in and around the wallows can vary from that of the land surrounding

it. Wallows often retain water for weeks following rainy periods during the growing season.

Shirley Lusk is looking for land with buffalo wallows. She is working with North Central Texas College to develop a plant data base for Cooke County.

She is especially interested in the vegetation that grows in these wallows.

If you can be of assistance in locating buffalo wallows please contact Shirley at: (940) 384-1824.

If you would like to be on our email list for notices on any upcoming events on CEU's, Horticulture, Cattle, Equine or Marketing Club please send us an email at ahopper@ag.tamu.edu.

Private Pesticide Applicator Training 2/08/2011



People interested in spraying or purchasing Restricted- Use pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides or rodenticides) for their own usage should be aware of the Private Applicator Training Session Scheduled for February 8. This course will begin at 8:00 A.M. at the meeting room in the Muenster State Bank which is located at 1601 W. Hwy. 82 in Gainesville.

The course is required prior to Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administering a test. The study material for

the course is \$35; there is no fee for the test.

Successful completion of the test allows Texas residents to send necessary documentation and \$60 to TDA's State Office in Austin, from which they will receive their Private Applicator License.

Foaling Seminar 2/15/11

February 15, 2011 at 7:00 PM, in the Gainesville Civic Center, equine enthusiasts from around the area will have an opportunity to learn more about issues relevant to their industry. This program is free to the public and will feature informative speaker presentations, product demonstrations, and networking opportunities for professional and recreational horse owners. The Gainesville Civic Center is located at, 311 S. Weaver, in Gainesville TX.

Topics for the night includes:

Care After Foaling

Dr. Brett Spencer

Difficult Foaling

Dr. Kris Crowe

Equine Pasture Issues

Wayne Becker and Chuck Jones

Please RSVP to 940-668-5412.



Tri County Farmer & Rancher Symposium 2/23/2011

Persons already holding a TDA Pesticide Applicator's License (Private, Commercial, and Non-Commercial) can receive 5 CEUs on February 23. The program will begin with registration at 8:00 A.M. and conclude by 3:30 P.M. It will take place at North Central Texas College's Field House at 1525 W. California St in Gainesville.

Categories for the CEUs will be as follows: 3 general, 1 Laws and Regulations and 1 Integrated Pest Management. This will fill all the requirements for Non-

Commercial and Commercial Applicators for the year, and will fill 1/3 of the CEU requirements for Private Applicators during the course of their 5-year license period.

There is a \$10 fee at the door and a meal will be served. Please RSVP to (940) 668-5412 so that we will know how many meals to order.



Quail Appreciation Day 3/25/2011

Texas AgriLife Extension in Cooke and Grayson Counties will host a "Quail Appreciation Day". Dr. Dale Rollins, Professor & Extension Wildlife Specialist, will be the major presenter for this program. The complete program is not planned

as of yet. However, participants can expect a 6-hr effort that combines some classroom time with some time outdoors for habitat assessment. This program will take place in the Mountain Springs Community Center. Stay alert for more details coming soon.



Basic Ag Field Day 4/14/2011

Location: Myers Park and Events Center, McKinney, TX

Time: 8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

This year we have tried to design the program with more demonstrations than lectures covering both horticulture and livestock.

Some of the topics include:

- Calibrating Sprayers
- Dealing With Feral Hog
- Hoop house set-up
- Irrigation
- Raised Beds
- Trellises
- Rainwater Harvesting
- Tour of demo gardens (earth kind)
- Basic cattle handling (best brand sites, BQA)
- Small ruminants (vaccinations, worming, handling)

We will also again have a large trade show in conjunction with the field day Registration

Instructions: Please pre-register. Early Bird Registration Fee through April 1 is \$20 per person, Regular Registration Fee through April 12 is \$30 per person, Fee on the Day of the Event is \$40 per person. Register online at:

<http://www.noble.org/WebApps/Events/EventPages/AgEvents.aspx> or call us here in the office for other registration information.

Annual Small Grains Field Day 5/11/11

We will tour the AgriPro/JH Bayer Sons small grain plots in Muenster. Stay alert for more details as the time nears.

Upcoming 4H Events

4-H Livestock Show—Sunday, February 13th

The 4-H Livestock Show will be held February 13th at the Callisburg Ag Barn and Ag Building. Check-in begins for all species at 12 noon. The show will then start promptly at 1 pm. The order of the show in the Ag barn will be: 1-Dairy Cattle; 2-Beef Cattle; 3-Dairy Goats; 4-Goats; 5-Sheep and 6-Swine. In the Ag Building running at the same time will be: 1-Poultry; 2-Clover Kids; and 3-Rabbits. The order of the swine classes will be: York, White OPB, Black OPB, Crossbred, Hampshire and Duroc.

Cooke County Youth Fair—February 22 thru 26

Livestock/Equine exhibitors will show their animals at various locations this year. The following is a shorten show schedule, for full details please refer to the 2011 CCYF Rule Book, it is light brown this year.

Tuesday, 2-22-11, Equine at the NCTC Equine Center – 9 am

Wednesday, 2-23-11, Callisburg Ag Barn – Poultry-11 am then Swine-2 pm

Thursday, 2-24-11, Muenster Ag Barn – Sheep-12 noon then Goats-2 pm

Friday, 2-25-11, Valley View Ag Barn – Rabbits-9:30 then Beef Cattle-1 pm

Saturday, 2-26-11, Valley View Ag Barn – Buyers Luncheon 12 noon then United Way Picture-12:30 and then the Premium Sale-1 pm

NOTE: The FCS/Home Economics Show will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 403 N. Oak in Muenster. Viewing 9-2 on Friday February 25th.

Low Volume Irrigation

Efficient irrigation is one of the key Earth Kind practices for conserving water in the landscape. Low volume irrigation systems (sometimes referred to as drip or trickle irrigation) are among the most effective means of achieving significant water savings. Despite the tremendous potential for water conservation, these systems are not widely used in residential landscapes.

Like conventional overhead irrigation systems, low volume systems require proper design, installation, maintenance and operation for optimum water savings and plant performance.

Design: Unlike overhead irrigation systems, the primary design goal of a low volume system is to apply water to a uniform soil depth, either directly to the plant root zone or in a limited area. Water is delivered at or below the surface of the planted area versus to the surface of the planted area.

Benefits of low volume irrigation are numerous. One of the most important benefits of low-volume irrigation is the potential to reduce or **eliminate water waste**. Low-volume systems do an excellent job of applying water to meet specific plant needs. The rate of application also more closely matches the soil's infiltration rate, and water is directly applied to the plant root system/zone to maximize water use efficiency and reduce losses through evaporation. Since water is directed exactly where it is needed most, very little is wasted on the areas between widely spaced plants, OR on streets, walks and gutters.

Numerous studies have shown that low-volume irrigation is more effective at maintaining optimum **plant health** than conventional, overhead systems. The top half of a plant's root system absorbs up to 70 percent of the plant's water and nutrient intake. Because low volume systems apply water at or below the soil surface, these systems do an excellent job of meeting plant water needs, reducing stress and enhancing plant health.

Common Low Volume Irrigation Systems include both soaker hoses, porous hoses and drip irrigation. Drip systems typically use polyethylene pipe to deliver water to a small drip emitter. Emitters come in a variety of sizes, shapes and specifications. Drip emitters can be spaced evenly along the delivery pipe or clustered at specific locations within the landscape area. Drip irrigation can be surprisingly simple to use and is certainly the most precise irrigation system around and can be used for a wide variety of irrigation needs.

Pregnancy Testing in Cattle

The economic value of annual pregnancy testing and culling of open & sub fertile cows and heifers has been well documented: with positive effects on herd fertility, weaning weight per cow, and income per cow. In addition, the identification and removal of open females allows supplemental feed and pasture costs to be better controlled. Knowing expected calving dates coincide with those of their present herd.

Rectal palpation of the fetus, and/or uterine-placental structures has been a long-practiced method of determining pregnancy in cattle; and it will likely continue as a popular method. Palpations advantages are that it is still a very quick method of determining pregnancy and it requires very little in the way of equipment. It does however require extensive training and practice, especially if performed during the very early stages of pregnancy (30-65 days). Most beef ranchers utilize rectal palpation pregnancy checks during the fall, at weaning, when it is generally easier to detect a large fetus at 3 to 6 months of age. Still, with rectal palpation, errors can and do occur.

The BIOPRYN® test is a new method to determine pregnancy. It utilizes a laboratory procedure to test tail- or jugular- bled animals for pregnancy. It is essentially a "yes/no" test and is 99% accurate on pregnant cows and about 95% accurate on open cows. Blood collections are shipped by commercial carrier to a laboratory. Results are available by fax or email within 27 hours after arrival at the lab. Cost of the test is minimal plus the purchase of blood collection equipment and shipping.

Ultrasound has many uses for reproductive diagnostics in cattle, including pregnancy determination. However, using it as a method for routine pregnancy determination on animals in later stages of gestation is often not cost-effective. This is due to the high cost of ultrasound equipment and/or ultrasound service. Still, there are situations where ultrasound might be the best way to examine the uterus and/or pregnancy. These might include early pregnancy determination, fetal sexing, or determining the number and/or viability of embryo(s)/fetuse(s). Pregnancy may be detected as early as 26-28 days, but examinations will be more accurate if they are performed after 30 days.