

# ERATH COUNTY AG PRODUCERS NEWS

erath.agrilife.org

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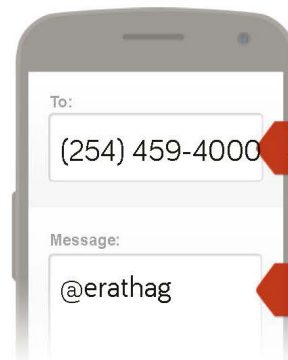
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HAPPY  
FATHER'S  
DAY!  
June 15

## COMMISSIONER STAPLES ANNOUNCES

### NEW, MORE EFFICIENT CONVENIENCE TESTING TO CERTIFY AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE APPLICATORS, WEIGHTS & MEASURES SERVICE TECHNICIANS

*EXAMS NOW OFFERED AT 22 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS*



COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AUSTIN – In an effort to provide better service for Texans, Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples today announced convenience testing to certify agricultural pesticide applicators and weights and measures service technicians will soon be available at 22 sites across Texas. The new exam system increases access for candidates who must pass a certification examination before being issued a pesticide applicator or service technician license.

“At the Texas Department of Agriculture, we are always looking for more efficient ways to serve our constituents,” Commissioner Staples said. “Moving to this examination process makes common sense in today’s marketplace. With the option to take exams daily, we are providing greater opportunities for pesticide applicators and service technicians to get the certifications they need to run a safe and reliable business. This move also allows us to better utilize our limited resources by giving our inspectors more time to focus on risk-based inspection priorities, customer service and improving their response to complaints, rather than hosting testing sessions.”

TDA has contracted services with PSI Services LLC to administer exams necessary to license agricultural pesticide

applicators and service technicians in 22 sites across the state. Additionally, examination sites will be open most days from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Exams will now be scheduled on a date and time that best fits the applicant’s schedule.

Each year, TDA administers approximately 8,000 exams related to pesticide licensing. Expanding the number of testing opportunities eliminates the need for an applicator to wait for

agencies’ mutual goals have been to train and prepare agricultural applicators to make informed, lawful, science-based decisions when using pesticides to produce wholesome, nutritious food, to protect the environment and to protect the public’s health. Those wishing to order manuals or take the private applicator training can contact any of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s county offices, as this educational and training component remains as it currently exists.”

**Extension resources or additional info may be obtained at the Erath Co. Extension Office at**

**(254) 965-1460 or [erath-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:erath-tx@tamu.edu)**

a scheduled testing date or for a TDA inspector to be available to conduct a testing session. Approximately 100 service technicians test each year at the TDA metrology lab or regional offices.

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county extension agents and specialists statewide will work cooperatively with TDA staff to ensure agricultural applicators receive accurate information on pesticide safety education training and testing,” said Dr. Douglas Steele, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service director. “For more than 40 years, our

Extension resources may be obtained at [www-aes.tamu.edu/](http://www-aes.tamu.edu/) or by calling (979) 845-1099.

Pesticide applicators will not experience an increase in the cost to take an exam for the first time, and the fee for the service technician exam will actually decrease.

Another benefit of this convenience examination process is the automation of exam scores, thereby improving

## CONVENIENCE TESTING

### ...CONTINUED

turn-around time for an applicant to receive a license. Agricultural pesticide applicators already licensed will not be affected by the testing changes. The new convenience exams will begin June 1, 2014.

TDA is designated as the state's lead agency in the regulation of pesticide distribution and use. TDA is responsible for licensing pesticide applicators, compliance monitoring, registering pesticides for sale in the state and minimizing unnecessary impacts to agriculture.

TDA's weights and measures program is responsible for protecting consumers and

businesses by ensuring all commercial transactions involving determinations of quantity are fair and accurate. A service company employs service technicians to place devices such as scales, liquid measuring devices and gas measuring devices into service or remove out-of-order tags for noncompliant devices.

For more information on convenience testing, click here or you may call 800-TELL-TDA.

For more information about convenience testing locations and availability, visit [PSIexams.com](http://PSIexams.com).

**For more info on  
convenience testing  
call  
800-TELL-TDA.**

**For location info &  
availability visit:  
[PSIexams.com](http://PSIexams.com)**

## EFFECT OF SIZE ON HEIFER GROWTH & REPRODUCTION

*Texas A&M University Beef Cattle  
Browsing Newsletter,  
Dr. Steve Hammack*

Size can be stated as either body weight or skeletal dimension. A commonly used system of skeletal dimension is frame score, determined by height at the hooks. Two spring-calving cow herds were available for study. One herd historically averaged 1220 lb mature weight; the other averaged 1470 lb mature weight. Heifers in this study from those herds averaged frame score 3.50 and 5.56 respectively. (Based on the historical mature weights, a frame score equaled about 120 lb per frame score, similar to that found in other research.) Heifers were grazed on dormant range from mid-October to mid-May, on growing

pasture to early July, and placed in drylot to late September. Heifers were bred during the last 50 days of the drylot period.

Small-frame heifers gained more during the first period, and large-frame gained more during the second and third periods. Overall, large-frame gained 40 lb more (18%). At the start of breeding, small-frame averaged 705 lb (58% of mature weight) and large-frame 841 lb (57% of mature weight). Overall conception rate was 86% for small-frame and 84% for large frame, not statistically different. In drylot, small-frame consumed 20% less feed and development cost was 16% lower. Feed efficiency and cost/lb gain did not differ. Large-frame cost a total of \$21.94 more feed in drylot

(16% more). The authors noted that, as in some previous research, acceptable breeding performance can be realized by developing heifers to 55-60% of projected mature weight, as opposed to 60-65% previously recommended, with accompanying reduced cost.

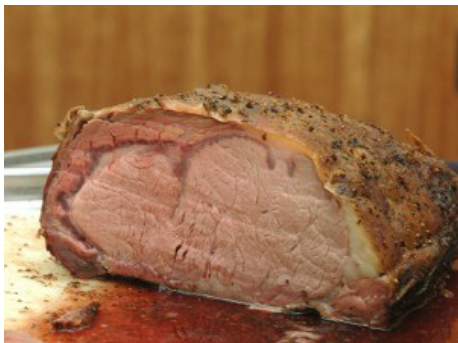
NOTE: Based on projected mature weights in this study, for every 100 small-frame cows only 87 large-frame cows could be maintained on the same nutritional resource.

(2012 N. Dakota St. Univ. Beef Report, p.9)

## TEXAS A&M BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE:

### R.C. SLOCUM TO BE A FEATURED SPEAKER

AT LEAST  
7 CEUs  
OFFERED



The famous Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner will be held as part of the 60th Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course activities. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Blair Fannin)

**COLLEGE STATION** – A look at the past and future aspects of beef cattle production in Texas will be one of the highlights at the 60th Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course scheduled Aug. 4-6 at Texas A&M University in College Station.

“Cattle production in Texas has certainly been a sea of change over the past five years,” said Dr. Jason Cleere, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beef cattle specialist in College Station and conference coordinator. “We think beef short course attendees will want to learn more about what is ahead of us in terms of cattle inventories and how quickly we might rebuild cow herds. And, of course, we certainly are keeping a close eye on the cost of production and how we can fine tune our operations to improve the bottom line.”

The short course has become one of the largest and most comprehensive beef cattle educational programs in the U.S., Cleere noted.

The Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner is one of the highlights of the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension photo by Blair Fannin)

R.C. Slocum, former Texas A&M head football coach and Central Texas rancher, will be one of the featured speakers during the general session on Aug. 4. Slocum will discuss winning and losing in the cattle business, giving first-hand perspectives on the challenges of ranching in today's economic climate.

The cattleman's college portion of the short course provides participants with an opportunity to choose workshops based on their level of production experience and the needs of their ranch, Cleere said.

“These concurrent workshops will feature information on introductory cattle production, retiring to ranching, forage management practices, nutrition and reproduction, record keeping, genetics, purebred cattle, landowner issues and much more,” he said. In addition to classroom instruction, participants can attend one of the popular demonstrations on the morning of Aug. 6.

“There will be demonstrations on fence building, chute-side calf working, cattle behavior, penning and Brush Busters,” Cleere said. “These provide an opportunity for ranchers to see beef cattle production practices put to use.

“The goal of the short course each year is to provide the most cutting-edge information that is needed by beef cattle producers. We think we have information for everyone to take home and apply to their operations.”



The largest beef educational event in the country! Coordinated by Texas AgriLife Extension

Participants can receive the Texas Department of Agriculture private pesticide applicator's license training during the short course and can earn at least seven pesticide continuing education units if they are already licensed, Cleere added.

An industry trade show will be held during the event, featuring more than 120 agricultural businesses and service exhibits.

Registration is \$180 per person and includes educational materials, a copy of the 600-page Beef Cattle Short Course proceedings, trade show admittance, admission to the prime rib dinner, lunches, breakfasts and daily refreshments.

Registration information and a tentative schedule will be mailed to previous participants in May, but also can be found on the short course website at <http://beef.tamu.edu>.

Producers can also register by contacting Cleere's office at 979-845-6931.

**Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course is the place to earn BQA and CEU credits all in one spot.**

Producers can register online at <http://beef.tamu.edu> or contact Cleere's office at 979-845-6931 and Youth (ages 13-18) can register for the Youth Track Program.

## A Transformational Journey



## From Battleground to Breaking Ground



Are you a ...

- Military Veteran or Active Duty Military
- Small farmer or rancher
- Woman Interested in agri-business
- Beginning farmer or rancher

AND

Interested in Farming or Ranching?  
*Attend a FREE Workshop focusing on*

- Agriculture Business Planning
- Start-up Issues and Risk Management
- Business Plan Development
- Possibilities for farming/ranching with a disability
- Financial Funding for agriculture enterprises

### FREE Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

**When:** June 28, 2014  
8:30am-4:30pm

**Where:** Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service  
Bell County Office  
1605 N Main St.  
Belton, TX 76513

**Register:** online at [TXAGRABILITY.TAMU.EDU](http://TXAGRABILITY.TAMU.EDU)

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United States Department of Agriculture  
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empilosi@ag.tamu.edu      [www.txagrability.com](http://www.txagrability.com)



## NEW SMARTPHONE APPS HELP FARMERS & RANCHERS

### FERAL HOG MANAGEMENT APP

By Mark Tyson, M.S., Extension Associate; James Cash, Student Assistant; Dan Gaskins, B.S., Extension Associate



Feral hogs are a major problem for agriculture and wildlife management in America. In Texas alone an estimated 134 million acres of land, has habitat components that would

allow feral hogs to flourish. Their population is growing and now estimated to be about 2.6 million and conservatively, they cause about \$52 million in damages annually to

agriculture, alone. Feral hogs were linked to poor water quality issues, disturbed native ecosystems, destroyed landscapes and gardens, and more recently, damage costs associated with vehicle collisions.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has developed a new app that provides a wealth of information on the legal strategies that can be employed to reduce the number of these nuisance animals. This technique-based app makes it easy for landowners and land managers to understand and implement the management techniques presented. Vivid photographs provide users with detailed examples that will help them further understand these management activities. They will find information on recognizing feral hog damage, signs,

baits, trapping and other reduction methods.

This app draws on science-based information and years of experience, placing it all in an easy to use format. It contains information on everything from snare building to strategic shooting, bait recipes to trap design and much more. With this app, a landowner will be able to identify and implement highly effective feral hog management techniques.

Price: \$0.99

Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch

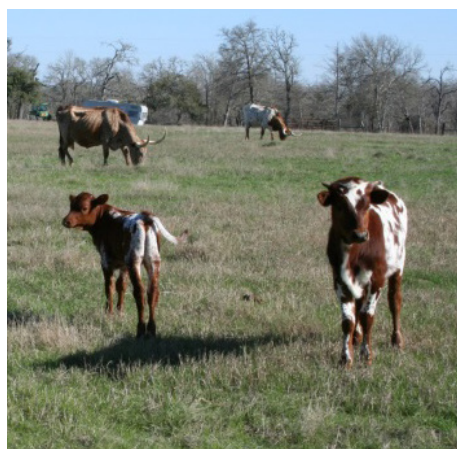
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/feral-hog-management/id784847089?mt=8>

### STOCKING RATE CALCULATOR FOR GRAZING LIVESTOCK APP

Determining a stocking rate for livestock producers has just become easier with the release of a new mobile smartphone app, "Stocking Rate Calculator for Grazing Livestock". The Wildlife and Fisheries and Ecosystem Science and Management Extension units worked together to develop this app, which is now available for iPhone and other Apple devices at the iTunes store for only \$0.99.

One of the most common problems livestock managers deal with is determining the best number of livestock to have on the land without harming their resources. Being overstocked beyond what the land can handle may lead to overgrazing, resulting in issues such as

decreased forage production, erosion problems, and degraded wildlife habitat and water quality. This app allows the user to quickly and easily calculate a stocking rate for cattle,



horse, sheep, and goat operations.

This app is applicable anywhere because it is based on actual forage production as measured by the rancher. Ranchers may need to do some work to obtain a forage production on their property, but is easily done and a video within the app demonstrates how to obtain this forage production value from their land. You can manipulate the number and type of animals, grazing months, and remaining available forage.

Funding for the development of this app was provided through a Renewable Resources Extension Act grant.



## I'll bet the beef is good.

It had better be. The Texas Beef Quality Producer program is all about the food.

The TBQP program was developed to assist cattlemen in producing a safer, more wholesome food product. Better beef management practices help deliver a better meal for the all-important consumer. Get ready to participate in an upcoming Texas Beef Quality Producer training near you.

The TBQP program is built upon a proven system of Best Management Practices. This half-day session allows producers to become BQA trained. You should get your seat reserved now because producers are finding the benefits go well beyond the ranch gate... through the livestock market, to the feedyard and most importantly, all the way to the consumer.

Our nation's Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programs are vital. They help cattlemen give the consumer a wholesome eating experience – even with market cows and bulls. And a good eating experience with beef brings the consumer back for more.

Call or go online to RSVP for your seat.

Stacy Fox, TSCRA, [sfox@tscra.org](mailto:sfox@tscra.org)

**800-242-7820 • [www.texasbeefquality.com](http://www.texasbeefquality.com)**

**A collaborative effort of:**

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION



**Next Event: Fort Worth, Texas - June 26, 2014**

Please RSVP to:

TSCRA at 800-242-7820



Training programs cover Beef Quality Assurance, industry updates, record keeping, environmental stewardship and proper management practices associated with genetic selection, cattle handling, culling, vaccination, drug use and more.

***Can't make the next training?***

**BQA certification is available online! Visit [www.texasbeefquality.com](http://www.texasbeefquality.com)**

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## GENETIC RELATIONSHIP OF PERFORMANCE TRAITS & REPRODUCTION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY BEEF CATTLE  
BROWSING NEWSLETTER,  
DR. STEVE HAMMACK

Records from 156,506 *Bos taurus*, mostly crossbred females were used to assess genetics of reproduction and its relationship to performance. Reproductive traits studied were age at first calving, calving within first 42 days, interval between consecutive calvings, and survival to next lactation. Performance traits studied were dystocia, linear type traits (describing skeletal, muscular, and functional characteristics of an animal), live weight and price, carcass traits, and subjectively scored weaning quality and docility.

Heritability of age at first calving was 0.31, but was only 0.01 to 0.06 for the other reproductive traits. Genetic correlations between reproductive traits indicated:

- heifers younger at first calving calve later, but thereafter as cows calve earlier,
- females younger at first calving have shorter lifetime calving intervals but also leave the herd earlier (have lower survival),
- heifers calving earlier continue calving earlier as cows and have shorter calving intervals, but with little effect on survival,
- cows calving earlier have shorter calving intervals and longer survival,
- females with longer calving intervals have shorter survival in the herd.

Reproduction was generally lowly correlated with performance traits, except that heavier, more muscular cows

had reduced performance for some reproductive traits. The authors concluded that "breeding goals for muscularity and live weight or growth rate should be cognizant of indirect response to selection that may cause any deterioration in reproductive performance".

(*J. Animal Sci.* 92:1412; *Animal & Grassland Research Center at Cork, Ireland and Irish Cattle Breeding Federation at Cork, Ireland*)

## FAREWELL

July 15th will be my last day as a County Extension Agent with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Erath County. I recently accepted a new position as an Assistant Professor focusing on Extension Education with Tarleton State University in the Agricultural and Consumer Sciences Department within the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. It has been a pleasure serving as the County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Erath County for the past three years as well as serving Falls, Hamilton and Comanche Counties during my 14 years with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. I have truly enjoyed working with each of you and in my new role with Tarleton I will continue being involved with Extension programs in Erath County and across the state.

- Whit H. Weems, CEA-Ag/NR



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