

ERATH COUNTY AG PRODUCERS NEWS

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Volume 1 | Issue 2

November | 2012

District 8 Farm & Ranch Seminar

Multi-County CEU Event: 7 AM - 4 PM

A multi-county Central Texas program for farmers and ranchers conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in District 8 is scheduled for **December 13, 2012** with the opportunity to earn up to **eight (8) CEUs**.

The District 8 Farm and Ranch Seminar will be offered at a dozen locations across District 8, including Belton, Cleburne, Corsicana, DeLeon, Franklin, Georgetown, Groesbeck, Hamilton, Hillsboro,

Stephenville, Temple, Waco and Waxahachie. The majority of the program will be presented through the Internet with live interactive streaming video, allowing Extension to utilize speakers from across the state. *See page 8 for a list of tentative topics and speakers.*

Of the eight (8) hours offered, five (5) hours will be in General, one (1) hour in Drift Minimization, one (1) hour in IPM and one (1) hour in Laws and Regulations. Licensed commercial and non-commercial applicators will be able to obtain their required 5 hours within the first 5 hours of the program.

If you wish to attend at the Stephenville site, which will be at the **Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center**, please **pre-register by December 10th** by calling 254-965-1460, e-mailing the county

THURSDAY

13

DECEMBER 2012

office at erath-tx@tamu.edu or registering online at <http://erath.agrilife.org/8ceu/>. We will need your name, phone number, address as it appears on your pesticide license, and your TDA Pesticide license number.

Registration cost is \$50.00 per participant, which will cover program cost and a catered lunch. Registration is at **7 - 7:30 am**. Program will conclude at **4 pm**.

If you would like to attend at one of the other locations please contact your local County Extension Agent.

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FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

(from USDA Farm Service Agency November Bulletin)

Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee elections opened on Monday, Nov. 5, and ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is Dec. 3, 2012.

The role and input of our county committee members is more vital than ever. County committee members provide input and make important decisions on the local administration of disaster and conservation programs. With better participation in recent years, we have seen promising increases in the number of women and minority candidates.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can obtain ballots from their local USDA Service Center. The last day for voters to submit ballots in person to their local USDA Service Center is Dec. 3, 2012. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than Dec. 3. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2013.

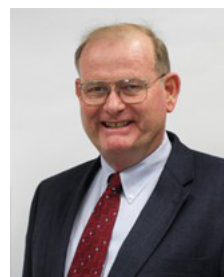
To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. Members serve three-year terms and committees consist of three to 11 members that are elected by eligible producers.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2012 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

AGRONOMICS OF FORAGE SORGHUM & CORN SILAGE SEMINAR

2 HOURS DOPA, 2 HOURS CEUs OFFERED

DECEMBER
20th



Dr. Travis Miller

Dr. Miller's presentation will focus on soil fertility, crop-ping systems and

Extension Programs in Erath, Comanche, and Hamilton Counties will host a forage sorghum and corn silage seminar on **Thursday, December 20, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to noon.**

Registration will be held from **9:30 – 10:00 a.m.** and the meeting will conclude with a catered lunch.

The program is scheduled to be held at the **Dublin Rotary Building** located on Hwy 6, one block east of the Hwy 6 & Hwy 377 intersection.

The program will be presented by Dr. Travis Miller, Professor, Associate Department Head and Extension Program Leader for Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station.

All program cost and catered meal are provided by local sponsors. However, in order for us to have an accurate head count for program supplies and meal, we ask that you please **pre-register** by contacting the Erath County Extension Office at **254-965-1460** or **erath-tx@tamu.edu** or register online at <http://erath.agrilife.org/forage-sorghum-and-corn-silage-seminar/>

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the cornfield." - Dwight David Eisenhower

PHYSIOLOGY OF BERMUDA GRASS SEMINAR

2 HOURS DOPA, 2 HOURS CEUs OFFERED

AgriLife Extension Service offices in Erath, Comanche and Hamilton will host a program on **January 17, 2013** focusing on the Physiology of Bermuda Grass. This program will be held at the **Texas A&M Research and Extension Center** located at 1229 N US Hwy 281.

Registration will be held between **9:30 and 10:00 a.m.** The program is scheduled to conclude with a sponsored catered meal.

Dr. James Rogers with the Noble Foundation in Ardmore Oklahoma will present information covering the aspects of how the plant grows, the impacts of root development of top growth and best management practices to improve yields.

Dairy producers in attendance will receive 2 hours of DOPA credits and anyone with a Texas Department of Agriculture issued Pesticide Applicator License will receive 2 hours of CEU's towards renewal of their license.

JANUARY 17th

Registration cost is \$10.00.

Please pre-register by contacting the Extension Office at 254-965-1460, erath-tx@tamu.edu or register online at <http://erath.agrilife.org/>.

BEEF CATTLE SEMINAR

GENETICS & LIVE CATTLE EVALUATION

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Erath County will host a Beef Cattle Seminar on **March 7, 2013 from noon – 4:00 p.m.**

The program will be held at the **Tarleton State University Ag Farm** and focus on several components of genetics and live cattle evaluation.

The seminar will discuss genomic testing, genetic traits, value of genetics in the beef cattle herd and understanding EPD's (Expected Progeny Differences).

In addition, we will have fat steers available that have been fed by our 4-H Youth participating in the Erath Pasture to Packer Program. Live



cattle evaluation will be covered, focusing on selection and quality of fed cattle. A follow up program will be held towards the end of March

MARCH 7th

discussing carcass traits of beef cattle, and we will have the opportunity to see the carcasses of the Pasture to Packer calves utilized during the live evaluation.

Registration is \$10.00 per person and we ask that you **pre-register on or before March 5th.**

You can pre-register by calling **254-965-1460**, e-mailing your name, address and phone number to erath-tx@tamu.edu or register online at <http://erath.agrilife.org/>

The program will begin at noon with a sponsored meal and conclude at 4 p.m.

----> **Read more about the Erath Pasture to Packer Program on page 7.**

EXPERTS EXPLAIN:

NEW CATTLE TRACEABILITY RULE & IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS



The Texas Animal Health Commission in Austin has recently announced details of the New Cattle Traceability Rule.

Below is a news release prepared by the TAHC explaining the new rule that will go into effect January 1, 2013.

AUSTIN - A requirement for adult cattle in Texas to have an approved form of permanent identification in place at change of ownership will go into effect January 1, 2013 according to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). The Commission amended its rules in June of this year to enhance the effective traceability of beef cattle movements in Texas, which is the cornerstone of disease control activities. Implementation of the changes was delayed by the Commission to ensure cattle producers understand the requirements and can prepare for the changes.

The amended rule permanently cancels the brucellosis test requirement for adult cattle at change of ownership, which was unofficially suspended in the summer of 2011. Although testing of adult cattle is no longer required with the rule change, all sexually intact cattle, parturient or post parturient, or 18 months of age and older changing ownership must still be officially identified with Commission approved permanent identification. This change primarily affects beef cattle, as dairy cattle in Texas have had an even more stringent identification requirement in place since 2008.



Texas Agricultural Experiment Station photo by Dr. Monte Rouquette

Before August of 2011, official identification devices such as eartags were applied automatically at the time a brucellosis test was performed. The inadvertent loss of the identification devices applied to cattle when brucellosis testing stopped has threatened TAHC's ability to effectively trace cattle as part of any ongoing disease investigation.

The TAHC routinely performs cattle health investigations where the identification and location of exposed/infected animals is critical to success. For example, 30 Brucellosis reactors, over 300 Bovine Trichomoniasis affected bulls and 22 bovine tuberculosis cases have been

investigated by the TAHC to date in 2012. The new traceability rule will help preserve the TAHC's ability to identify and trace animal movements quickly and effectively, no matter which disease is involved.

A complete list of acceptable identification devices/methods may be found at www.tahc.state.tx.us, but the most commonly used devices include USDA metal tags, brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags, US origin 840 series Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID), and breed registration tattoos, freeze or fire brands which uniquely identify the individual animal. See page 5 for acceptable forms of official identification (taken from TAHC web-site.)

The Erath County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Stephenville will serve as a cattle tag distribution point for TAHC.

(Tags have been ordered, but have not yet arrived. Call the Extension Office to check for availability.)



Free USDA metal tags will be provided by the TAHC to producers wishing to use them. Tags may be picked up at the Erath County Extension Office in Room 109 of the Erath County Courthouse Annex located at 112 W College, Stephenville. We will also have tagging pliers that may be checked out for your use, to be returned after tagging. Call to check for availability.

A complete list of acceptable identification devices/ methods may be found at www.tahc.state.tx.us

Producers are encouraged to contact their veterinarian or TAHC to determine which method of tagging will be best for their operation.

Acceptable forms of official identification: As of October 4, 2012

- USDA alphanumeric National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags (USDA silver metal ear tags)
- USDA brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags (USDA orange RFID and alphanumeric metal ear tags)
- Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) tags, including 9-digit American ID number
- Official breed association registration tattoo (uniquely associated with an animal)
- Official breed association registration freeze or fire brand (uniquely identifying the animal)
- A commercially produced cattle-style clip, flap or button tag that identifies the owner and includes a unique animal

number in the herd.

- The TAHC also is considering approval for other types of identification.
- USDA approved 15-digit Animal Identification Number (AIN) tags for official identification of individual animals.

Four forms of official AIN tags are available:

- ☐ Manufacturer code prefix "900" series RFID tags only acceptable if traceable back to herd owner.
- ☐ USA prefix RFID tags
- ☐ Country code prefix "840" series RFID tags. (Producers who use the "840" series must have their premises registered.)
- ☐ Country code prefix "840" series non-RFID tags. (Producers who use the "840" series must have their premises registered.)

MARKET COWS

Sometimes we tend to think calves are the income from a beef cow herd, but calves are only part of the story. In a typical herd where replacement heifers are saved for breeding, about 50% of income is from steer calves, 30% from heifers not retained for breeding, and 20% from marketed breeding stock. Producers need to pay attention to factors affecting the value of marketed breeding stock. That may mean such things as increasing sale weight and body condition, if done economically, and marketing when prices are higher. Fall (especially October) has historically been the worst time to sell packer cows and bulls because marketings are typically highest at that time.

(Information from Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack.)



QUAIL DECLINE IN TEXAS

By MARIAH BOX *Sophomore Wildlife and Fisheries student at Texas A&M University and volunteer with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Wildlife and Fisheries unit*



(photo by Vince Smith)

Texas is viewed as the last stronghold of wild quail hunting. It is well known that quail populations across the state have been declining, and the drought in 2011 was a major blow to population numbers. Although wild quail population numbers are on the rise this year, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Wildlife Specialist and Texas A&M professor Dr. Dale Rollins isn't sure that the good weather will be enough to bounce quail numbers back from a 5-year decline. "There will be many ranches in the state that say, 'Hey, we want to give our populations a break from hunting this year, we want to allow them to recover a little bit, and hopefully have good weather this year, so we have better breeding populations next spring. And then we'll see a nice increase in our core population in the fall of 2013,'" Rollins told **StateImpact Texas** in a recent article that examined the issue. This article is very insightful and gives the reader a glimpse into Dr. Rollins' extensive research.

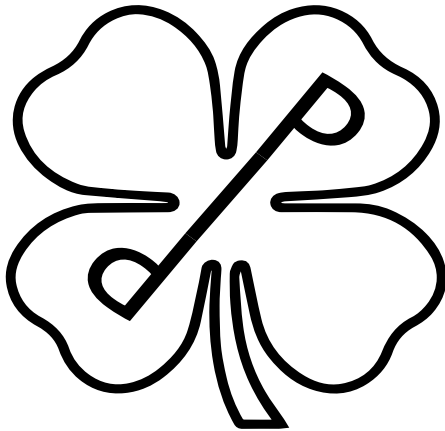
Thankfully, I have been able to experience some of that research firsthand. I was blessed with the opportunity to intern for Dr. Rollins this summer on the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch in Fisher County where he serves as Executive Director. The Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch is dedicated to preserving and enhancing quail populations in the Rolling Plains of north Texas. The idea of the ranch was first conceived by a group of bobwhite hunters after a successful hunt. These hunters had a simple wish to continue doing what they loved, hunting quail. They realized that in order to continue to be able to hunt they needed to take action. Bobwhite populations had already been depleted further to the east and they knew that it was only a matter of time before the same thing happened in the west. With the help of The Conservation Fund, the Research Ranch was built on a 4,700-acre ranch in Fisher County with the purpose of preserving the heritage of bobwhite hunting in the rolling plains. Their mission statement, "To provide land managers, and other stakeholders, with timely, relevant technology and management schemes for enhancing quail populations in the Rolling Plains of Texas. To sustain Texas' wild quail hunting heritage for this and future generations." demonstrates what wildlife management should look like at its core.

Wildlife management is all about proper land stewardship. Managing populations so that they neither become too large or too small. The Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch does just this through their research. They develop the best

techniques for land management that will benefit quail populations by enhancing the habitat.

While the main cause of population decline is believed to be due to habitat loss and fragmentation, Dr. Rollins and the RPQRR staff are also looking into other potential sources for the problem. They have discovered both an eye worm and a cecal worm in wild quail populations across Texas. Operation Idiopathic Decline, or OID, is the manifestation of these discoveries. OID is a biannual trapping effort on several ranches across the western and southern regions of the state. Oral, tracheal, and cloacal swabs are taken randomly from trapped birds. Blood, feather, and stool samples are also taken from the birds. One in every three birds is harvested for testing purposes. The remaining quail are released back into the wild. Mosquito and tick traps are also set out at each trapping site. All of the samples and data gathered at each site are then transported to Texas Tech University where they are tested for a variety of parasites and diseases. This is a massive ongoing project requiring the cooperation and collaboration of various land owners, Texas Tech University, and the staff at the RPQRR.

Although it is true that quail population numbers are declining, rest assured that they are getting great help from some amazing people. For more info about the RPQRR, visit <http://www.quailresearch.org/>. Dr. Rollins also sends out a monthly e-Newsletter that you can sign up for from the RPQRR homepage. You can also find RPQRR on Facebook and Twitter.



Erath PASTURE TO PACKER Program

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Erath County has implemented a Pasture to Packer beef cattle program for Erath County 4-H Youth. The program is designed to teach young children the economic and production facets of an agricultural project, while also teaching them valuable leadership skills.

Each youth participant will feed their calf at their own location for approximately 150 days. During this process, the youth will have to keep records on feed

January

- Educational seminar on market livestock and marketing beef to the consumer

March

- Educational seminar on genetic traits of beef cattle
- Educational seminar on live cattle evaluation
- Cattle will be pooled and evaluated on the hoof prior to harvest
- Educational program on evaluating carcasses, carcass quality, grading

Anyone interested in learning more about the Erath Pasture to Packer Program or interested in purchasing beef from one of the 4-H youth participants, please contact Whit Weems at the Extension Office at 254-965-1460 or w-weems@tamu.edu.

performance and cost associated with the project. Following is a calendar of events:

August

- Complete application and interview
- Contact program lender to work thru a projected cash flow, discuss record book requirements & receive general financial guidance

September

- Attend educational program on feeds and feeding, and market selection
- Select calves from a pool of 700 lb. steers, gathered from local livestock auctions
- Learn chute-side manner, vaccination protocols, etc.

December

- Field trip to cattle empire feed lot in Kansas

and cuts of meat

- Youth will market their beef according to their own marketing plan

April

- Awards banquet for participants, their families, and sponsors
- Awards will be presented based on interview, record books, live cattle evaluation and carcass traits and quality.

In summary, this program is not designed to profit the youth a great deal in a monetary sense. It is designed to give them a very valuable experience---from interviews and bank visits, to daily care of their cattle, combined with the marketing side and industry knowledge of where and how our food is processed.

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Texas Agrilife Extension Service programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in Extension activities are encouraged to contact us at 254-965-1460 to determine how reasonable accommodations may be made.



Multi-County CEU Event (continued from page 1)

Tentative topics and speakers for the District 8 Farm and Ranch Seminar on December 13, 2012:

- **Livestock Management and Impacts on Water Quality**, by Dr. Larry Redmon, Agrilife Extension Service state forage specialist, College Station
 - **New Technologies and Herbicides in Brush Control**, by Will Hatler, Agrilife Extension Service rangeland specialist
 - **Managing Fire Ants and Mosquitos**, by Dr. Sonja Swinger, Agrilife Extension Service entomologist, Stephenville
 - **Aerial Mapping to Develop Brush Control and Herbicide Use Plans**, by Amy Hays, Agrilife Extension Service geospatial specialist, College Station
 - **Drift Minimization**, by Dr. Matt Matocha, Agrilife Extension Service, agricultural and environmental safety specialist, College Station
 - **Cover Crops: Reducing Herbicides and Controlling Weeds**, by Dr. Gerald Smith, Professor, Texas A&M Agrilife Research, Overton
 - **Fertility and Herbicide Management of Bermuda Grass**, by Dr. Vanessa Corriher, Agrilife Extension forage specialist, Overton
-
- Private Applicators License holders must obtain **15 hours of CEU's every five years** to renew/recertify their license. These hours must be from
- 2 hours of Laws and Regulations
 - 2 hours of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
 - and any mix of these and General hours to equal the required 15 hours of CEU's.
- Licensed commercial and non-commercial applicators are required to recertify every year by obtaining five continuing education credits with one credit each from two of the following categories: laws and regulations, integrated pest management or drift minimization.



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For more information on any of the articles or activities listed in this newsletter, please contact the Erath County Extension Office at 254-965-1460 or visit us on the web at: erath.agrilife.org



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