TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Erath County Extension Office
112 W College St., Rm 109
Stephenville, TX 76401
Lonnie Jenschke CEA - Ag/NR
l-jenschke@tamu.edu | 254-965-1460

ERATH COUNTY AG PRODUCERS NEWS

erath.agrilife.org

Volume 1 | Issue 1 Summer | 2015

The Big Five

Mesquite, Prickly Pear, Ashe Juniper, Yucca & Weeds

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Erath County will host an Ag Seminar on The Big Five on August 25, 2015 at 6:00 pm at the AgriLife Research & Extension Center at 1229 N US Hwy 281 in Stephenville.

TOPICS & SPEAKERS:

- Lonnie Jenschke, Erath County Ag Extension Agent, will talk on Plant Identification.
- James Jackson, Texas A&M AgriLife Research - Range Specialist, will speak on Pasture Managent.
- Gerald Hobson with Bayer Chemical will speak on Range & Pasture Weed & Brush Control
- Ethan Westfall with Dow Chemical will speak on Herbicides for Weed & Brush Control.

The AUGUST 25TH seminar will provide participants with the opportunity to receive two CEUs. (1 General and 1 IPM)

Program registration cost is $10.

Please pre-register by Monday, August 24th!

Call **254-965-1460** or send email to **erath-tx@tamu.edu**

DEER & WILDLIFE NEWS:

Chronic Wasting Disease has hit the media. Get the facts at:
http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/
or
http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/facts/

IN THIS Issue

TEXAS A&M BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE:

Dr. Peel to discuss cattle market outlook

MORE THAN
10 CEUs Offered

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

COLLEGE STATION – Historic high prices in the cattle market and future trends will be one of many important topics discussed in-depth at the 2015 Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course scheduled Aug. 3-5 at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Dr. Darrell Peel, Oklahoma State University livestock economist, will be one of the featured speakers during the general session Aug. 3, discussing the cattle market outlook and current supply/demand factors that beef producers will want to consider in maintaining their own operations.

"High prices certainly have been welcomed among cattle producers here in Texas and abroad," said Dr. Jason Cleere, conference coordinator and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beef cattle specialist in College Station. "Many are wondering how long this trend will continue and are evaluating the economics of restocking and/or increasing their herd size. We have several topics throughout this year's short course that will address these issues and more."

Other featured speakers during the general session include Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist at KKTV-Colorado Springs, who will provide a weather outlook. Dr. Rick Machen, AgriLife Extension livestock specialist, Uvalde, will discuss hot topics in the beef industry.

The short course is the premier beef educational event in Texas, attracting more than 1,400 attendees annually, Cleere said. The short course features 20 sessions covering basic practices, new technologies and other important industry topics.

"These concurrent workshops will feature information on introductory cattle production, forage management practices, range management, nutrition and reproduction, record keeping, genetics, purebred cattle, landowner issues and much more," he said.

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

Participants can earn at least 10 Texas Department of Agriculture 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. Cleere said the famous Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner is always a highlight of the short course.

Registration is $180 per person before July 30 or $220 afterwards, 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.

Register online at:
www.beefcattleshortcourse.com
or 979-845-6931

Planning for a PRESCRIBED BURN

Bunch Grass or Bare Ground

Has your ranch been receiving a lot of rain lately? How much rain have you really gotten?

A study conducted by Texas A&M Research at Sonora reported that areas with bunch grasses resulted in over 75% rainfall infiltration, or water entering the soil, compared to areas with bare ground which resulted in only 25% rainfall infiltration. In addition to reducing rainfall runoff, having plant coverage provides organic matter to the soil further increasing water infiltration and slowing the flow of water so it even has a chance to infiltrate. Roots of plants also grow with the water they take up; promoting a deep root system that can better survive and respond during droughts or grazing. Proper pasture management is important whether we are in drought or good conditions. Make sure and pull cattle off when grasses get short.

Planning for a prescribed burn this winter should begin NOW! It is important to decide what areas you will be burning so you can rest the pasture from grazing in order to build up valuable fuel.

Planning for a prescribed burn this winter should begin NOW!
For more info visit: http://erath.agrilife.org/ag-publications/pasture/

Here's how to begin preparation on the fire guards:

- Start now by shredding the fire guards, or area around the burn unit, as soon as it's dry enough to get in the field. They should be 1 to 2 disc-widths wide or 3 times the height of the plant vegetation.
- Disk the fire guards 2-3 days after shredding
- 3 months later - repeat disking
- Disk one last time right before you burn, but be sure they are still drivable

Rain Infiltration for bunch grasses
Over 75%

Rain Infiltration for bare ground
25%

AG MATTERS

Texas Department of Agriculture Sid Miller is launching a digital newsletter,"AG MATTERS". This publication will be used as a tool to provide you with the most up-to-date information about what's happening at TDA and throughout the agriculture industry. The Ag Matters newsletter will hit your inbox the first Tuesday of each month. The first one has been sent.

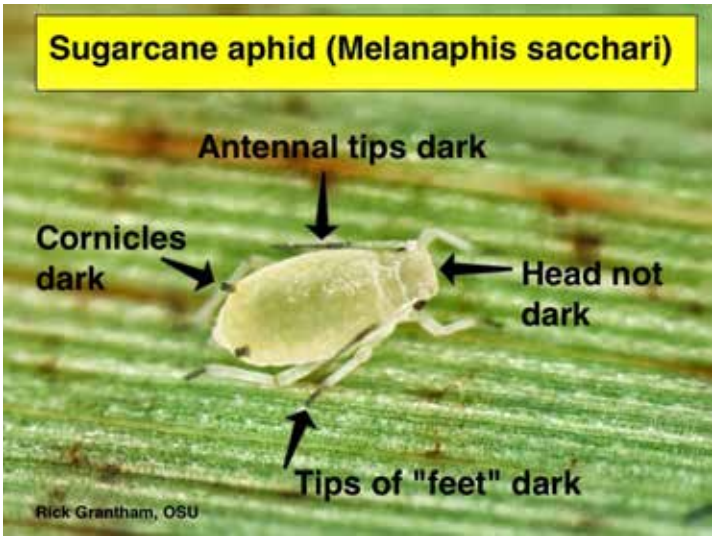
To subscribe go to the Texas Department of Agriculture website at: http://texasagriculture.gov/

Select the News & Events tab then select Subscribe to Publications and complete form online. It is as simple as typing in your name, e-mail, select topics of interest and hit submit.

This will be a great opportunity to keep up with agriculture in the state of Texas.

SUGARCANE APHIDS SIGHTED IN ERATH COUNTY

How to recognize & treat them



Mesquite treated by a new chemical, Sendero, shows signs of mortality,

Sugarcane Aphids have been sighted in Erath County. Producers need to be scouting sorghum fields regularly. The aphids reproduce very quickly and once reaching threshold fields need to be treated or harvested.

Sugarcane aphids are distinct from other common aphids in sorghum, in part because the cornicles, antennae and feet all have dark tips. They are often light green to yellowish-whitish-green in color and can be either winged or wingless.

Winged aphids arrive in fields with the aid of wind, and founding adults can be found anywhere on the plant. However, populations usually begin to increase on the undersides of lower leaves in the plant canopy and then rapidly move up the plant as population size increases.

Sugarcane aphids produce large amounts of honeydew, a sticky, sugary substance that coats leaves and reflects sunlight. As populations grow from a single founder event in a field, circles of honeydew-coated plants often develop. With time and the proper environment, honeydew often becomes coated with dark sooty mold and infested leaves appear black.

More sugarcane aphid information can be found on http://txscan.blogspot.com

HYBRID PEARL MILLET

AN ALTERNATIVE TO SUGARCANE APHID-SUSCEPTIBLE SORGHUM FAMILY FORAGES

Hybrid pearl millet at Tucumcari, NM, courtesy of NMSU

With the widespread presence of sugarcane aphid (SCA) in Texas in 2014 and the apparent expansion occurring again in 2015 for this damaging aphid to Texas sorghums—grain, forage sorghum, sorghum/sudan, etc.—growers interested in annual forage and grazing may have another option that appears to be largely unaffected by SCA. Hybrid pearl millet (HPM) is a leafy forage that may fit some grazing and haying operations.

Field observations in several Texas areas in 2014 by producers, county ag. extension agents, and millet breeders found little to no SCA in HPM. Furthermore, April testing by USDA indicates that HPM is essentially a poor host of sugarcane aphid (e.g., was largely resistant to SCA).

The Dept. of Soil & Crop Sciences has developed a summary of potential hybrid pearl millet use as an apparent alternative, at least for some acres, among Texas forage producers who seed annual crops like sorghum/sudan. "Hybrid Pearl Millet as an Alternative to Sugarcane Aphid-Susceptible Sorghum Family Forages" is posted online at http://publications.tamu.edu/#forage

Additional key millet points include:

- Entomology testing and field observations suggest that hybrid pearl millet is a poor host for sugarcane aphid.
- Although two insecticides are labeled for use in sorghum family forages to control SCA, both require withdrawal of livestock for 7 days.
- Hay and forage growers, especially on smaller acreages, may be less willing or less able to spray for sugarcane aphid. This could be particularly damaging to a forage crop as leaf area is lost thus making HPM more attractive for growers even if forage yield potential may be lower.
- Millet, which is very small seeded, is best adapted to sandier soils, but it also tolerates high pH soils better than sorghum family forages due to a different iron uptake mechanism, and it does not develop prussic acid potential like sorghums.

Information provided by Calvin Trostle, Allen Knutson, Vanessa Corriher-Olson Texas AgriLife Extension.

HAY Moisture and Temperature

At baling, the moisture content of hay for large round bales should not exceed 18%; for small square bales, moisture content should not exceed 20%. One way to get consistent readings with a moisture meter is to use an 18" length of 2" diameter PVC pipe with a threaded cap on one end. Pack the harvested forage into the PVC pipe, then insert the moisture meter into the hay to obtain a reading.

The temperature of hay baled will increase during the first few weeks after baling ("sweating" or "going through a sweat".) It is mainly caused by microbial activity, though it can include some final plant respiration.

At a moisture content of greater than 20% up to 35%, mold production becomes a great concern because it consumes nutrients in the hay and reduces its nutritive value. Mold also creates heat from respiration and produces toxins that make the hay less palatable. While mold-related heat up to about 120° F does not damage hay nutritive value, higher temperatures can. Protein breakdown begins at temperatures above 120° F and browning begins at about 140° F. This browning reaction can further increase temperature and take forage nearly to the point of combustion.

- **Hay temperatures less than 120° F are considered safe.**
- **Between 120 and 140° F: monitor closely (check temperature daily)**
- **Between 140 and 180° F: hay is likely to spontaneously combust, consider calling local fire department**

(Information from Dr. Vanessa Corriher, Extension Forage Specialist, Overton)

Texas AgriLife Extension Service photo by Wayne Becker

WET WEATHER MAY TRIGGER PARASITE PROBLEMS

FOR SHEEP AND GOAT FLOCKS

West Texas, along with much of the state, has been in various stages of drought for so long that sheep and goat parasite problems may be the last thing on a producer's mind. But with recent rains, stomach worms are likely to soon be a large problem for many flocks across the entire state, said Dr. Reid Redden, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service state sheep and goat specialist at San Angelo.

"Internal parasites, specifically roundworms and coccidia, can be among the most damaging problems for sheep and goats," he said. "Most flocks have some level of parasitic infection but may never show symptoms until optimum conditions occur such as those we are experiencing now."
Redden said during drought, parasites have a tough time surviving. Populations remain small and are rarely a problem. But when wet weather returns, parasites quickly get the upper hand and their populations explode.

"Stomach worms can actually stop their development inside the animal during adverse times and go dormant through a process called hypobiosis," he said. "Then, when worm survival conditions improve during warm, wet weather or when the host animal's ability to resist parasitic infection declines, such as during lambing, the worms suddenly get going again."

Redden said the best control programs prevent parasitism prior to outbreaks. Dewormers or anthelmintics can enhance these control measures, especially when administered during hypobiosis before the eggs contaminate the pasture. "However, misuse of anthelmintics can lead to resistant parasites. These drugs can be a powerful tool, but for long term-parasite management, dewormers cannot be the only preventative treatment," he said.

The most damaging parasitic roundworm is the Haemonchus contortus or barber pole worm. When spring arrives, they begin to lay eggs, as many as 10,000 a day, spreading them across pastures through the animal's manure. The eggs hatch into larvae, and with the aid of wet weather, move from the manure to plant leaves where other sheep eat them, thus completing the life cycle, Redden said.

Affected sheep become anemic, lose weight, become weak and often develop "bottle jaw," due to fluid accumulating under the jaw. Though various levels of loss of production are the major economical losses, death of the animal from a parasite overload is not unusual.

If anthelmintics are used, he advises:
– Treat only the animals that need treatment. Routinely treating all animals can lead to populations resistant to the class of dewormer being used. Leaving some parasites in the animals and on the pasture that are susceptible to the dewormer being used improves its effectiveness in later treatments. Treating only those animals that chronically need deworming also allows the manager to cull them in favor of more resistant individuals.
– Conduct fecal egg counts to determine if the dewormer is working. Doing so will also alert the producer that it's time to switch classes of dewormers once a dewormer drops below an effective level. However, using multiple classes of dewormers at the same time should be avoided unless advised by a veterinarian.

"Should a parasite infestation get out of hand, it's important to note that parasites cannot be spread in drylot conditions," Redden said. "When large problems occur and dewormers aren't working, pen the animals until the problem is under control.

"New Texas A&M AgriLife research has shown that feeding harvested juniper can reduce fecal egg shedding and improve the effectiveness of the anthelmintic ivermectin. Other high tannin-containing forages have been shown to produce similar results."

The bottom line is that each property must develop its own parasite management plan, because no single program is appropriate for all operations. The plan should include a good rotational grazing management plan, smart drenching and attention to genetic selection. "These protocols will differ from property to property based on environmental conditions, type of sheep or goat, flock management and past parasite exposure," Redden said. "If questions still remain, it's always best to consult your veterinarian or your county's AgriLife Extension agent for specifics regarding anthelmintics and those management practices that will make their use the most effective.
"Rain is a good thing, especially here in dry West Texas, but it often comes at a price. As with most emergencies though, the damage can be lessened through preparation, management and a strong follow-up plan," Redden said.

Horse Care & MANAGEMENT TIPS for Flooded Areas

by L.A. Redmon, D.H. Sigler & T.B. Hairgrove

Recent heavy rains and flood events have caused a number of horse owners to be concerned about pasture conditions and potential hazards associated with fl ood events. The following discussion outlines steps to be taken to ensure the safety of horses in pastures following heavy rainfall events.

SOILS

Depending on the soil type in the pasture some pastures may be safe for horses to return to almost as soon as the rainfall event ends. Soils that are sandy in nature, because of their high infi ltration rates and low water storage capacity, will support animal traffic more rapidly than clay soils. Ifthe pasture is comprised of clay soils, it may be a good idea to keep horses out of the pasture for a week or so after therainfall event ends to reduce the potential for surface compaction and prevent horses from bogging in the soft soil.

FORAGES

Soft, waterlogged soils may increase the horse's ability to pull plants from the soil, thus destroying valuable forage plants. Ensure the soil has initiated drying and plants are fi rmly anchored in the soil prior to returning horses to the pasture. In the event of

extended submersion, water will need to runoff, infi ltrate, or evaporate and allow plants to initiate recovery from being submerged for an extended period of time. Make sure plants have regained a dark green color, indicating a return to optimal photosynthesis, before subjecting forage plants to the close harvesting associated with horse grazing. Because of the potential delay in returning the horses to the pasture, owners and managers should have alternate sources of nutrition and places for exercise available.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

During flood events, high water can transport unwanted materials into the pasture. Prior to returning horses to the pasture, scout the pasture for any items such as boards with nails, sheet metal, fence material, or other objects that may puncture or cut a horse. Also, be sure there are no potentially hazardous materials such as propane bottles, gasoline cans, or other fl ammable materials that may have inadvertently floated into the pasture. If any unfamiliar containers are located in the pasture, ensure no hazardous materials have been spilled. Typically, flood waters dilute hazardous materials to a safe level, but be on the lookout for any concentrations of such substances.

DISEASE

Horses forced to stand in flooded pastures are prone to develop thrush, sole abscesses and greasy heel. Frequent observation and care of feet are critical in these environmental conditions. Horses that consume moldy hay or feed as result of fl ooding conditions may be prone to digestive upset (colic). As the water recedes and stagnant areas remain, diseases associated with mosquitos and midges (i.e. West Nile Virus, irritation and allergies associated biting insects) are more likely. It is very important that all horses' tetanus vaccinations remain current. Horses often experience puncture wounds in muddy and poorly drained areas, these wounds may go unnoticed until it is too late. Check with your veterinarian about other diseases that may be common in your area and recommended methods of protection.

SUMMARY

Flood waters can transport more than just water across the landscape and horse owners should carefully inspect their pastures prior to turning horses back into the pasture for exercise or grazing. If you have questions, contact Lonnie Jenschke, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agent in Erath County at 254-965-1460 or l-jenschke@tamu.edu.

Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association

2015 ANNUAL CONVENTION

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21
SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

LET'S GET

MOTIVATED!

Held at the Farm Bureau Conference Center

7420 Fishpond Road • Waco, Texas

TOPICS:

Lessons in Chrismas Tree Sales & AgriTourism - by Gray & Mollie Anderson, owners of one of Louisiana's most popular agri-tourism destinations

Successful Retailing in a Seasonal Farm Market - by Michael Bauer of the Dallas Market Center

Food Service Kitchen Design on the "Pick Your Own" Farm - by Joe Robertson of Right-Way Facility Services

Farm Liability & Recreational Land Use, What About Insurance? - by David Hanover, senior field underwriter for Texas Farm Bureau Insurance Companies in northeast Texas

Cottage Food Production and Food Handing Requirements - by Cheryl Wilson, chief compliance officer, Texas Department of Health

The Tree Farm as an Outside Event Venue - by Marianna Wilson of Mainstay Farm

Implementing the Check Off - by Beth Walterscheidt, USDA central region director

Get more details and registration info at: www.texaschristmastrees.com/

TEXAS Christmas Trees

LIKE us on facebook!

facebook.com/ErathAg

Join in the conversation and get the most current news, updates and info on our facebook page.

Receive FULL-COLOR, *interactive* newsletters & updates in your INBOX when you subscribe to our email list. Subscribe at Erath.AgriLife.org or call the office at 254-965-1460.

Texas AgriLife Extension offers you practical, how-to education based on university research. Reference to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas AgriLife Extension is implied.

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

Lonnie Jenschke
County Extension Agent
Ag & Natural Resources