

Medina Co. Agriculture Newsletter

April 2013

Water Day



Water is vital for life. The amount of water available for consumption on Earth is small. Not everyone around the world is privileged enough to have access to clean potable water. Eighty percent of diseases in developing countries are due to the lack of access to clean water. Each year more than five million people die from water-related diseases. Even countries that have been able to provide safe drinking water to its population face occasional water shortages. In 2011, the state of Texas suffered the worst single year drought in recorded history. Economic losses to the agricultural sector alone have been evaluated at \$7.62 billion, making it the costliest drought on record. Communities such as Spicewood Beach, Texas ran out of water and it had to be hauled in by trucks from wells located more than 10 miles away.

We have a water problem. *So let's talk about water!*

The program will be held on May 21st from 9am to Noon. Topics will include: Resource Conservation Through Education, Our Aquifer: Conserving and Managing Ground Water, Rain Water: How To Catch It & What To Do With It, The 40-Gallon Change. Speakers include: Sky Lewey, Resource

Protection & Education Director, Nueces River Authority, Uvalde and Dr. Calvin Finch, Director, Water Conservation and Technology Center, San Antonio

Participants will have a chance to win a rain barrel by participating in the program. Attendees are asked to RSVP by May 17th. A participation fee of \$15 is required. Contact the AgriLife Extension Medina County Office at 830.741.6180 for more information.

Got Sandburs?

Field sandbur, commonly called grass bur, is a summer annual grassy weed that can be found in the southern part of the United States including Texas. This weed is especially adapted to dry, sandy soils but can be found growing in other types of soils as well. The spiny burs of the seed heads can contaminate feeds and hay, thus reducing its palatability and acceptability for livestock. Competition from this grass weed delays bermudagrass establishment and reduces both the forage yield and quality. Unfortunately there have been limited options in the past for controlling sandburs in pastures and hay meadows. Luckily, a new product, Pastora, was developed for the control of sandburs in bermudagrass pastures and hay meadows. Not only does Pastora control sandburs but it also has activity on several other weed issues for us in Texas. A webinar can be viewed at: <http://naturalresourcewebinars.tamu.edu/webinars/pastora-sandburs-and-beyond/>

Wildlife Tax Valuation and Reclamation of Farm Pond Workshop

On June 8th, Atascosa, Frio, and Medina counties will host this Multi-County AgriLife Extension Workshop and Tour in Moore, TX. The program will address the principles of developing a Wildlife Management Plan with the Focus on the 1-D-1 Exemptions. This workshop will be of value to both landowners and Appraisal District Officials.

Helping Landowners and Appraisal Offices understand the site considerations for Stock Ponds and the reclamation and management aspects of Stock and Wildlife Ponds and Water Features will also be covered during this program.

The program will feature a Field Tour: Principles of a Wildlife Management Plan. Other topics include Selecting Ponds and Water Feature Locations and Reclamation of Ponds and Fish Stocking considerations.

Speakers include: State Comptroller's Office; Mike Petter, Wildlife Resource Manager; Matt Reidy, Texas Parks and Wildlife; Natalie Wolff, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Peter Woods, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; and Vance Schulze, Tank Hollow Fisheries.

A participation fee of \$20 will be charged to all landowners and include a catered lunch. Three TDA pesticide CEU's will be offered.

Appraisal District personnel may also obtain 3 CEUs but will be required to pay an additional \$5 for their professional certifications.



Natural Resource Webinars

AgriLife Extension webinars serve as an educational tool for natural resource managers to learn about a variety of relevant topics. TDA licensed agricultural pesticide applicators can earn CEUs through the Texas Range Webinar Series. Each webinar is held during the lunch hour.

Upcoming webinars: May 2nd – How Herbicides Work – Modes of Action, Soil Activity, Half Life and Storage; June 6th – Importance of Plant Identification. Past session can also be viewed!

Log on and learn more at <http://naturalresourcewebinars.tamu.edu/>

Pesticide Applicator Training

Training classes will be offered on May 29 and 30 at 6:30 p.m. Applicants must attend both evenings. The cost of training manuals and training is \$50.00. Participants are encouraged to review the books early to help prepare for the course. At the conclusion of the class, the Texas Department of Agriculture will be on hand to conduct testing. A score of 70 is required before applicators can obtain a license. Please RSVP at 830.741.6180. The training is limited to 15 participants.



Cattlemen's Meeting

The Medina County Cattlemen's Association will meet on May 23rd at 7 pm in Hondo. The presentation will address "Understanding Texas Property Tax System and Agricultural Land Valuation" The meal will be Dutch treat, but please RSVP by May 20th. Anyone interested in cattle production is encouraged to attend.

Color In Cow Herds

A total of 392 producers were surveyed while attending 16 meetings during 2010-2012 of the Genetics session of the Kentucky Master Cattleman program. The survey found that 66% of producers said color is “very important” in bull selection, while only 4% said it is “not important”. On the question of what does color of sire impact, 41% said “color” while 5% or less said “birth weight”, “weaning weight”, or “carcass traits”; however, 49% said color of sire affected “all of the above”.

As for how much Angus breeding is required for Certified Angus Beef, 11% said 100% Angus, 19% said 75% Angus, 36% said 50% Angus, 20% said 25% Angus, and 13% said 0% Angus. Only 13% gave the correct answer of 0% Angus. CAB requires a coat color of 50% or higher black to be preliminary accepted and then carcasses must be in the upper 2/3 of Choice or higher; but there is no requirement that CAB carcasses have any Angus genetic background. The authors concluded that some producers may make breeding decisions on misconceptions of requirements for value-added branded beef programs. (J. Animal Sci. 91 Suppl. E 1:32; Univ. of Kentucky)

NOTE: There is no doubt that Angus is the primary source of black color in the U.S. cattle herd; but numerous breeds have developed pure black or mostly black cattle, many of them genetically pure for color. Producers who market at weaning or after growing should certainly be aware of the presence and extent of any price differences based on physical features, including color.

On The Horizon...

June 25th – Crop Tour, 5 CEUs

Many Thanks

Brush Control Field Day

The Brush Control Field Day on April 9th was a great success. I greatly appreciate the support of Tony Haass for providing the location, as well as, Ewald Tractor and Dwain Lutz for providing skid steers for the program. We would also like to thank Dr. Lon Shell and John Gilliland for demonstrating their Model X Tree Puller. Those interested in more information can contact them at 512.353.7648.

Corn, Milo, and Cotton Variety Trails

We would also like to thank Paul Aelvoet, Bryce Britsch, Jared Boehme and Harold Weiblen for serving as cooperators on these variety trials for 2013. Results of past variety trials can be found at <http://varietytesting.tamu.edu/>.

Soil Fertility Management

Interested in learning more about soil fertility and plant nutrition? The links below contain very in-depth recorded presentations by Dr. Sam Feagley, Dept. of Soil and Crop



Sciences, on soil fertility and plant nutrition by topic that may be of interest to you and can be viewed at your leisure: Nitrogen:

<http://bit.ly/AgriLifeNitrogen>

Phosphorus:

<http://bit.ly/AgriLifePhosphorus>

Potassium and Secondary Nutrients:

<http://bit.ly/AgriLifePotassium>

Micronutrients:

<http://bit.ly/AgriLifeMicronutrients>

Each program runs for about one hour.

Take the 40 Gallon Challenge

As the drought worsens, our local water supply continues to decrease as we are currently in Stage 2 of Mandatory Water Restrictions.



To help facilitate water conservation, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is strengthening its challenge to Texans to save millions of gallons of water annually as well as money on their monthly water bills. The 40 Gallon Challenge is a program that calls on residents and businesses to reduce their average water use by 40 gallons per day, according to Dr. Diane Boellstorff, AgriLife Extension water resources specialist in College Station.

Boellstorff became involved in the voluntary national program in 2011, serving as the Texas representative. After one year, she and AgriLife Extension economist Dean McCorkle in College Station completed an economic impact study in November, which showed that Texas participants, based on average municipal rates, were saving an estimated \$299,000 a year, in addition to the water savings.

“At the time that we did the impact statement, we were able to count 80 programs from 89 counties, and participation continues to increase,” she said. “For example, the impact statement mentions 1,050 participating households saving 71 million gallons of water annually, but today’s numbers are 1,152 participating households saving 80 million gallons annually.”

That change has come in only three months. Boellstorff said many AgriLife Extension agents are beginning to deliver the program in their local counties. She is also making presentations to spread the program across the state.

This water resource conservation tool is one of many programs initiated and supported through the Southern Region Water Resource Project, funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute for Food and Agriculture. Dr. Mark McFarland, AgriLife Extension state soil fertility specialist in College Station, is the project director.

The 40-Gallon Challenge allows Texans to compete against other Americans who are taking the challenge in their states. At the program’s website, www.40gallonchallenge.org, Texans can pledge to adopt water-saving practices and see how many gallons of water they can expect to save. The website also shows the most popular practices being pledged, the practices that are saving the most water daily, and counties and states that are pledging the most daily savings, Boellstorff said.

Currently, the top water savers in Texas are “reduce irrigation station runtimes by two minutes,” “use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks,” and “fix a leaky toilet.” In Texas, the three counties registered to save the most gallons are Collin, Ellis and Wichita.

To start saving water and take the challenge, go to the website; <http://www.40gallonchallenge.org/> and complete the checklist of water-saving practices, its time for Medina County residents to make a mark on the map. The checklist includes both indoor and outdoor water-saving tips.

Facebook

Remember you can find us on Facebook as *Medina County Agriculture*. Don’t forget to “Like” us and you can follow the goings on of AgriLife Extension in Medina County.



Next Generation Agricultural Conference

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Capital Farm Credit invite you to attend the Next Generation Agricultural Conference on May 23rd and 24th at the Brazos Expo Center in Bryan, Texas. The conference is free for those who register by May 21. Late registration is \$50. Lunch and breakfast will be provided both days.

Discussion topics include:

Analyzing the Performance of Your Operation; Growing Your Operation and Advice from a Lender; To Lease or Buy; The Next Generation of Texas Agriculture; Budgeting Tips; Real Farm and Ranch Success Stories; Southern Plains Ag Economy; Developing This Year's Marketing Plans for Your Ranch; Managing Risk;

The View from the Bottom Side of the Fiscal Cliff; Hay Preservation; Challenges and Opportunities in Rebuilding the Cow Herd.

Additional information can be found at the following link.

<https://www.capitalfarmcredit.com/news/next-generation-ag-conference.htm>

To register go to <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/> and use the keyword: generation or call (979) 845-2604.

Hotel information can be found at <http://www.visitaggieland.com/Where-to-Stay/Hotels-Motels-Inns>.

Best Regards,

Jason P. Ott

County Extension Agent

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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