

# Livestock & Natural Resources Newsletter

APRIL 2008

Texas AgriLife Extension Service—Bexar County Office  
3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 212  
San Antonio, Texas 78230  
(210) 467-6575  
<http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu>



*This newsletter is sponsored by the Texas/Mexico Border Coalition and Risk Management Agency*

## Focus on the Factory Cattle Workshop Series

Released by: Jason P. Ott, CEA –  
Ag Texas Cooperative Extension

The “**Focus on the Factory**” Cattle Workshop Series will be held each Tuesday from April 15<sup>th</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at the Hondo Livestock Auction. This program will offer valuable information to all cattle producers. Participants may *attend one or all sessions*. The workshops will “Focus on the Factory” the momma cow, covering the topics of female management, pasture management, cow nutrition and cull cow management.

Drought and high energy prices are here to stay. The last two years have been marked with record breaking weather conditions that have taken us from extremely dry to exceptionally wet and back to extremely dry. Even with a record year of 41 inches of precipitation in 2007, by the end of last August conditions had begun to change rapidly.

Therefore, recent history should have taught us that if we get back into a “normal” rainfall pattern tomorrow the next drought will not be far behind.

Additionally, energy costs and policy changes have continued to move commodity prices upward. At this time many economists feel that the long term ceiling on commodity prices is not in sight. Cotton economists believe cotton could get as high as \$1.00 lb. This will have many livestock producers reevaluating their supplemental feeding strategies in the future. However, livestock producers will still need to meet the nutritional demand of their cows in order to maintain efficient productivity.

Nutrition status is primarily affected by two major factors: forage quantity and forage quality. These factors vary by season, causing periodic nutrient deficiencies in cattle. Use BCS to make the best use of supplemental feeding. Because forage conditions can change rapidly in range situations, condition scores at weaning and calving provide a guide for managing cows to maintain good condition through subsequent calving and breeding seasons.

This series is being hosted by the Medina County Cattlemen’s Association and Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Medina County along with Howard Billings and Glenn Crain at Union Commission Company. Additional sponsors include

Merial Animal Health and Purina. Dinner will be served during each workshop.

Additionally, pesticide applicators will receive CEUs for participation in the first two sessions. A registration fee will be charged to cover meals and materials. Registration is due by April 10<sup>th</sup>. To RSVP or for additional details contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Medina County at 830.741.6180 or go to <http://medina-tx.tamu.edu>.

## April 30th is the South Texas Peanut Growers

Annual meeting to begin at 2:00 pm at the Jourdanton Community Center in Jourdanton. Several specialists will be on hand to discuss growing peanuts in Atascosa and Frio Counties, included are A.J. Jaks, James Grichar, Michael Baring, Mark Black, and Shelly Nut. We plan to serve a BBQ meal at 6:00, and Jerry Parsons our guest speaker will update us on Agriculture and the present state of Politics affecting agriculture today. We are offering 5 CEUs; an RSVP is requested for meal purposes. To reserve a seat contact Rebecca, Amanda or Joe at 830-769-3066.

## **Castroville Field Day for Winter Wheat Workers**

Texas AgriLife Research will host the Hard Winter Wheat Breeders Field Day on April 22, 2008 at Castroville, Texas. Field trials (5 miles east on 90 and 2 miles south on Mechler. The annual HWW Breeders Field Day is an opportunity for Great Plains wheat workers to get together and discuss common issues and to see experimental lines in the field. The location rotates each year between Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and Texas. The last Texas meeting was 2002 at Bushland.

The AgriLife Research wheat and oat breeding program use Castroville as our primary rust (a foliar fungal disease) screening location. The nursery started in 2000 as a joint effort by Texas AgriLife, Oklahoma State U. We now open it up to anyone that wants to send material down. Last year, we had lines from public and private wheat breeding programs from Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Oregon, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

We will use this field day to showcase the value of south Texas as a rust screening environment. South Texas is often accused (and rightly so) of being the epicenter of rust throughout the Great Plains.

This will be a good opportunity to see first-hand winter wheat varieties suited for this area. Dr. Gaylon Morgan will be on hand to discuss wheat trials with area wheat growers.

## **Farm Pond Management – From A to Z**

This educational program will be held April 30th at the Bexar County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service Conference Room #208.

Registration will begin 6:00 PM and the program begins promptly at 6:20 PM. Program topics will include Farm Pond Overview, Design & Construction. Stocking Rate, Feeding and Fertilization. Aquatic Weed/Brush control and AquaPlant-A Diagnostic website tool.

The program is free, there will be three CEUs offered. Please call in advance due to limited space. If there is a need for auxiliary aids, services or other accommodations due to disability, please contact the Bexar County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service at (210) 467-6575 at least seven days prior to the event to accommodate your needs.



## **Importance of Turf Grasses in the Environment:**

Some individuals and organizations continue to question the need for turf grasses in our landscapes; believing that turf grasses waste water and require too much pesticides and fertilizers that can be harmful to the environment. With the extended drought condition in many areas of the country, turf grasses are coming under even

more scrutiny. It is important to recognize that turf grasses provide many benefits to the environment.

Listed below are some of the major benefits of turf grass.

1. Turf grasses act as a great air filter. It is estimated that turf grass areas trap some 12 million tons of dust and dirt in a year's time. Just one acre of grass can absorb hundreds of pounds of fossil fuel-created sulfur dioxide in a year.
2. Turf grass growing in lawns can act as a sink for carbon dioxide. This process, referred to as "carbon sequestration". This ability of a plant to take up carbon into its leaves, roots and other plant parts: is seen as a way to reduce excess carbon in the air from the burning of fossil fuels which, it is theorized, causes global warming. Researchers at Colorado State and USDA-ARS estimated that golf course greens and fairways alone can sequester up to 1 ton of per hectare (2.47 acres) of carbon per year.

3. Turf grasses act as nature's air conditioner. In a city block of eight homes, the front lawns have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air-conditioning. Without turf grasses in the urban areas, temperatures would rise significantly.

4. Turf grasses are a good source of oxygen. A 2,500 square foot lawn can produce enough oxygen for a family of four.

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5. Grass contributes greatly to improving the underlying, existing soil. The lawn is continually improved topsoil by producing new plants with roots that have their own life cycle, adding organic matter as plant parts die off and decompose.

6. Grass/soil systems have the ability to trap large amounts of water. A healthy 10,000 sq.ft. lawn can absorb more than 6,000 gallons of rainwater without noticeable runoff. The water nourishes grass, trees, shrubs and flowers before soaking through the topsoil to replenish groundwater.

The turf grass industry is a huge business in Texas as well as the United States. In the United States, the turf grass and green industry generates approximately \$ 147.8 billion dollars in annual sales (over \$12 in Texas alone) and provide a livelihood to a substantial portion of the population in many far reaching areas of the country.

**Dr. James McAfee and Dr. David Chalmers, Summer 2006 Texas AgriLife Extension Service**

## Fluorescent bulbs could be required



It looks like all U.S. homes soon will have to use energy-efficient fluorescent lights, based on an RISMedia announcement this week.

The U.S. government has approved new lighting requirements that likely will

mean the end of the traditional incandescent light bulb perfected in the 1870's, according to the publishing company's report. Compact fluorescent bulbs, expected to replace traditional bulbs, use just a quarter of the electricity of standard incandescent bulbs. They also last about 10,000 hours each, or 10 times longer, according to RISMedia.com, a site that reports real estate news and trends.

One caveat about fluorescent bulbs: They contain small amounts of mercury and should be taken to a recycling center rather than thrown away.

Source of information:

<http://rismedia.com/>

## Seven Ways to Fight Dumping

1. Monitor your operations as much as possible. Maintain human activity around your farm, since illegal dumpers prefer remote locations. Consider forming something like Neighborhood Watch, where your neighbors can keep an eye on your place when you're not there, and vice versa.
2. Build gates, fences or other barriers to prevent would be dumpers from entering farm roads. Some growers even install cables around their fields or orchards to prevent vehicles from driving down tree rows.
3. If you see someone you believe is dumping trash illegally, call the local sheriff's department. Try to take down the license plate

4. number and other identifying features, if possible.
5. If you're a victim of illegal dumping, call the local law enforcement to report the pile.
6. Look through the trash pile to see if there are pieces of identification and turn them over to the law enforcement.
7. If the pile is near a road, contact the county sheriff's department or highway patrol, since it could pose a vehicle hazard.
8. Clean up trash as soon as possible. Much like graffiti attracts additional tagging, a garbage pile will attract other dumpers.

### You are Invited to a Drought Planning Tools Field Day

Thursday, April 24, 2008  
8:30 am – 4:45 pm

Texas AgriLife Research & Extension Center  
7887 U.S. Highway 87 North  
San Angelo, TX 76901

Individual registration, including lunch, is \$10 by April 18 and \$25 thereafter.

To register or for more information, please call  
325-653-4576

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Jerry Warren, CEA-AG [jw-warren@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jw-warren@ag.tamu.edu)

Nelson Diarte, CEA-NR [nadiarte@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:nadiarte@ag.tamu.edu)

Annette Pawelek, Secretary [apawelek@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:apawelek@ag.tamu.edu)



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