Houston County Extension Office (936) 544-7502 Mon - Fri 8am - 4:30pm

Houston County Summer Agriculture Newsletter

Summer 2013 June 14, 2013

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Dates of Interest

June-July Every Saturday
Farmers Market
Davy Crockett Park
8am - 11am

August 5-7
Beef Cattle Short Course
College Station, Tx

September 6
Houston/Trinity County
Pesticide CEU, Training and Testing

October 24
Cow Country Congress
Crockett, Porth Ag Arena

Inside this issue:

Emergency Preparation for Farmers and Ranchers

Disasters come in many forms. Disasters can be caused from hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, accidents, terrorism, ice storms, and wildfires to name a few.
Texas is home to more than 247,000 farms and ranches where agriculture contributes to more than $100 million annually to the state's economy. Are you prepared for a disaster on your farm?
All disaster plans on the farm or ranch should address three major types of potential loss. First is the safety of family, coworkers, first responders, rescue workers, emergency personnel, pets and livestock. Second is the protection of crops, equipment, machinery, chemicals, water sources, feed sources, and other bulk materials stored on the farm. Third are personal finances, insurance, and other economic losses that may result from loss of life, property, and temporary loss of income.
Farmers and ranchers can do several things to prepare for an unexpected disaster. Consider steps before, during and after a disaster. Farmers and ranchers can keep a good inventory of their property, equipment, and livestock in case of a disaster. Permanent identification of livestock is another key

Continued on page 2

Proper injection sites when working calves

Now is that time of year when producers will schedule the "working" of their calves. Proper injection administration is a critical point in beef production and animal health.
No matter which product is being injected into the calf, there is always a negative relationship between meat tenderness and the injection site.
In fact, all intramuscular (IM) injections will create permanent damage regardless

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component. Photographs of equipment and livestock may aid in the recovery process.

- What if all the fences are torn down by a natural disaster?
- How will you know what livestock are yours and what belongs to your neighbors?

Do not wait until a disaster strikes before developing a plan. Contact your local veterinarian to have supplies on hand so treatment of livestock can be initiated on a timely basis. Minor cuts and abrasions may be treated by the farm manager while major cuts and abrasions may need a veterinarian's assistance. Like people, animals can experience significant stress during a disaster.

Protect supplies of feed and hay supplies before a disaster by moving them to higher ground or other areas on the farm. In low lying areas, it may require livestock to be moved to higher ground as well to prevent losses from flooding. Near barns and other structures, damage can result from flying debris such as tin, loose tools, boards, and more. Secure any loose tools or items that may become flying projectiles in strong wind storms.

After the disaster has passed and it is safe to enter the area, take an inventory of the livestock, equipment, etc. to assess the damage and make a plan for recovery. Be careful around downed power lines and debris that may be present from the disaster. If you suspect a contaminant could be in the water supply, prepare to have it tested to make sure it is safe for your livestock as well. Avoid crossing high waterways as roads or other materials may have washed away in a flood event. Use caution when operating heavy equipment or power tools to remove debris after the disaster.

It may be necessary to shut off all electrical power and other utilities on the farm as the disaster occurs. After a disaster, it may be necessary to check with the local electrical company to make sure it is safe to turn the power back on. If you suspect gas leaks, contact the local gas company for assistance.

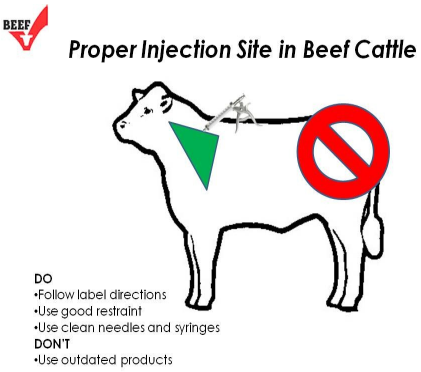
Maps and sketches of the farm layout may be necessary in the recovery process for emergency personnel and first responders. Today there are numerous links and smart phone apps that may be helpful in the emergency preparedness process. Protect your operation before, during and after a disaster.

One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency.
Arnold H. Glasow

Injections continued…..

of the age of the animal at the time of injection. Tenderness is reduced in a 3 inch area surrounding the injection site.

All injections should be given in the neck when possible to stop damage to expensive steak cuts.



Always give injections according to the label and if there is an option to inject either subcutaneous or intramuscular, ***always*** choose subcutaneous

Walnut Caterpillars in Pecans

Bill Ree, Extension Program Specialist II – IPM
Statewide Pecan IPM Programming (Bryan, TX), reports **walnut caterpillar** activity on pecan. Pecan producers or those with urban pecan trees should be watching for this insect. The real damage will occur when the larvae reach the 5th (last) instar. This is the stage when the larvae is black with long white hairs (pictured). Walnut caterpillars feed together in large numbers on pecan leaves, but do not build silken webs like fall webworms. Larvae eat leaves, leaving only the mid-ribs and leaf stems. Large infestations can defoliate entire trees. This insect is found throughout Texas east of the Pecos River. Although economic infestations are uncommon, severe and widespread outbreaks of walnut caterpillar have occasionally occurred in Texas.
Walnut caterpillar moths emerge in spring, depositing eggs in masses of 500 or more on the undersides of leaves. The egg masses are round, about the size of a half-dollar and are not covered with hairs or scales. Eggs hatch in about 10 days; larvae feed for about 25 days. Young larvae are reddish-brown with yellow lines running the length of the body. Full-grown larvae are about 2 inches long, black with grayish lines and are covered with long, soft, gray hairs. Larvae congregate in large masses on the trunk and scaffold branches to shed their skins before crawling back to complete feeding on leaves. These final-stage larvae consume most of the foliage, and defoliation can occur very quickly. Mature larvae crawl to the soil to pupate. A generation is completed in about 6 to 8 weeks. There are two to three generations each year.
Because walnut caterpillars do not build tents or webs, infestations often go unnoticed until leaf damage becomes obvious. To detect infestations early, look for egg masses or leaf feeding. Egg masses can be detected at night by shining a flashlight on the undersides of leaves and looking for white spots about the size of a half dollar.
These insects can defoliate a tree in 3 - 4 days.

Infestation signs:

- colonies on branch terminals
- a mass of cast skins on the main trunk or scaffold limbs
- a lot of frass on sidewalks or driveways
- branch terminals with missing foliage but leaf rachis still intact

Control options:

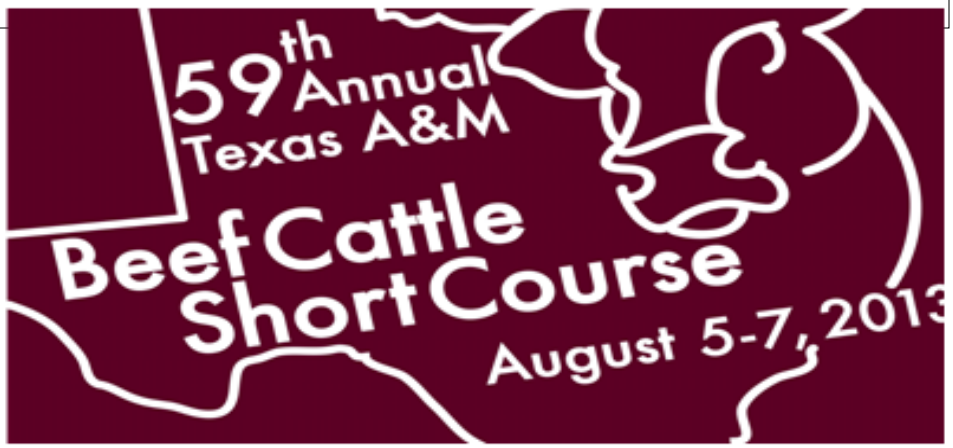
- For homeowners - *Bt*-based insecticides and products with spinosad (ex: Green Light Lawn and Garden with Spinosad)
- For commercial producers - Intrepid, Confirm, Belt, Delegate are preferred.
- For organic producers - Entrust, certified Bt insecticides, Azera and Neemix.

See Walnut Caterpillar Pictures on page 5

Free Field Day

On June 27, the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton will host a free ***Horticulture Field Day***. The morning field day showcases the extensive annual bedding plant variety trials that are conducted at A&M at Overton, including sun and shade annuals and other specialty plants. Visitors get to vote for their favorites at both the North Farm, where the tour begins, and at the demonstration garden at the Center. After a catered lunch, Dr. Brent Pemberton, A&M AgriLife Research Horticulturist at Overton, who is responsible for the trials, and Jimmy Turner and Jenny Wegley of the Dallas Arboretum, will give highlights in the auditorium of new plant introductions and results of plant trials. For more details, visit http://flowers.tamu.edu

2013 TAM Beef Cattle Short Course



The 2013 TAM Beef Cattle Short Course will be held Monday, August 5 - Wednesday, August 7, 2013 in College Station, Texas on the campus of Texas A&M University.

BCSC is the largest beef educational event in the country. It is a three day seminar that represents the culmination of knowledge from industry leaders and experts. Each year more than 1,300 beef producers and enthusiasts attend the TAM BCSC to expand their knowledge of the beef cattle industry and join in the discussion of the most current issues facing the producer. This industry gathering features the popular Cattleman's College, a general session with the nation's leading beef cattle experts, seminars, workshops and hands-on demonstrations.

Registration for the upcoming short course will be $160 per person. Your registration includes the following:

- Three daily breakfasts
- Two lunch tickets
- Famous Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner ticket
- 600+ page proceeding
- Trade show admittance
- Refreshments
- Access to campus shuttle service

Students ages 13 to 18 years old have the opportunity to participate in our BCSC Youth Program.

Early registration will end August 1, 2013. After August 1 at 5:00p.m. registration will increase to $200 per person.

Walnut Caterpillar Pictures

To view these pictures in color, you can visit http://pecan.ipmpipe.org/ and click on the Pest Alerts tab

Blossom End Rot on Tomatoes

If you're growing vegetables, you probably have tomatoes. One of the most common tomato disorders is blossom end rot (BER). This is not a disease but a rather physiological problem caused by a lack of calcium and fluctuating soil moisture. BER is most severe on large, flat fruit varieties. Don't let the soil fully dry between watering or rain, but keep the soil more evenly moist. Mulching helps conserve moisture to minimize this problem. Before planting the next crop of tomatoes, lime the soil to provide calcium.

Blossom End Rot usually only affects the first tomatoes to ripen.

Tomatoes, peppers and other garden plants benefit from a side dressing of fertilizer (mainly nitrogen) to keep them vigorous and productive throughout summer. The extra nitrogen stimulates leafy growth on peppers which will help prevent sun scald on the fruit.

Jo Smith

If you would rather receive an email version of our newsletter and other program information instead of a mailed copy—please call our office and request to be added to our email list.

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1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

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Improving *Texas*