

# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE

## Walker County Agriculture News Update

September 2015

Greetings from the  
Walker County, Texas  
A&M AgriLife Extension  
office!

Well it is finally late summer and fall may be just around the corner. This time of year, we start framing educational programs to finish up the year and prepare for next year's run. Sometimes this turns into a real challenge when you have a topic that you would like to cover but just cannot get the right pieces to fall into place. We have a project or two like that; hopefully you will hear more about them in a month or two. In the meantime, there are a number of events coming up which we need to let you know about.

Our friends over in Brazos County have a **Feral Hog Management Workshop** scheduled for September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Brazos County Expo Complex. If you have land in our part of the world, sooner or later you are going to need to know some of this information. Like them (there are some who do), or hate them, feral hogs are a fact of life in most of Texas. This workshop will run from 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM. The program is free, but \$15 for a catered lunch. RSVP for the meal by calling 979-823-0129. Five Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be offered: one integrated pest management, one laws and regulations and three general.

The program is sponsored by AgriLife Extension and a Clean Water Act Section 319(h) nonpoint source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information, call 979-823-0129.

### **New Landowners Information Program**

**September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**6:30 PM**

**Walker Co Extension Office**

**1 Hour CEU credit available**

It's always fun to try and come up with an acronym for an activity. If we put one on this event it would be *New L.I.P.* which other than being a little on the fun side, doesn't really do anything for the promotion of the event. But it may be something you would remember.. The Extension Livestock & Pasture Committee and Walker Co Farm Bureau hope you can attend this educational program.

We will be holding an informational meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM at the Walker County AgriLife Extension Office. New or recent landowners are encouraged to participate in this meeting. I am sure you will find the topics of discussion very interesting and useful. We are planning to have Floyd Nauls from the NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) and Brad Dyer from the Walker County Appraisal Office with us to discuss issues of great importance to our landowners.

NRCS offers a variety of assistance to landowners. This agency works to promote proper management of our natural resources through conservation related projects assisting landowners with stewardship of their land. NRCS can assist landowners with planning decisions and recommendations to solve conservation issues. Other benefits which NRCS offers are financial assistance programs to develop viable conservation practices and structures. Each county in the state is somewhat different based on the needs of the landowners, so I encourage you to come and learn what options and support is available in Walker County.



Land taxation is one of those topics that draw a lot of discussion. Agricultural valuation options for land are always part of a series of questions posed by new landowners. This item can be a challenge for many recent land purchases. What does it take to qualify? What are my options? How do I keep the Ag valuation? What is the process? If you have some of these questions, be sure to join us and learn what you need to know. I encourage you to call the Extension Office at (936) 435-2426 to reserve your seat in the classroom.

### **Winter Pasture Establishment**

**October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

**6:30 PM**

**Walker Co Extension Office**

**\$10.00 registration**

**2 Hours CEU credit available**

Okay if you read last month's newsletter you know it's really not Winter Pastures. We will be holding this educational class to discuss establishment of our Cool Season Forages. Dr. Larry Redmon, Extension Forage Specialist will help you compare your options for producing forages during the winter through mid/late spring seasons. Being able to match forages to your needs and your soils is important. Proper land preparation and planting is essential. Soil fertility management is critical – I will give you a hint if you haven't been to a forage presentation in a while: Get a soil test analyzed –check your pH. If you haven't adjusted your pH for fall planting, you are at least 4-6 months behind now.

Join us for this class to learn about the small grains (Oats, Wheat, Elbon Rye, and Triticale), ryegrass and legumes (clovers, vetch) that can be planted this time of year. If we don't start receiving a little more rain in most areas, the early October date for this class is not too late to learn about these items. You do need to start making plans to remove existing grass cover so you will be ready to go. Call the Extension Office at (936) 435-2426 to reserve your seat in the classroom.

### **Fall Hay Evaluation- (hay samples due Sept 11)**

**October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**6:30 PM**

**Walker County Storm Shelter**

**\$5.00 registration includes a Steak Dinner!**

**1 Hour CEU credit available**

Abundant rain during the early part of 2015 means that there should be hay in the barns. Is it good hay, or is it not? The only way to know the quality and feeding value of your hay is to have it tested. The Extension Livestock & Pasture Committee wants you to know your hay quality so informed decisions can be made. We are teaming up with our program sponsors again this year to provide a valuable educational program and free hay testing to assist you. This

educational event is being supported by Walker County Farm Bureau, Silveus Insurance Group (Rangeland Division), and American Plant Food, Inc. We appreciate their continuing and long term support.

Hay samples are due in the AgriLife Extension Office NO LATER than September 11<sup>th</sup>. All samples must have been processed through a mechanical baler –no exceptions! Square bale samples need at least two flakes of hay and round bale samples need a full feed sack. Please don't short us on your sample; we need enough to test, judge and display! Entry forms are enclosed in this newsletter. Reservations will be required for meal planning, call the Extension Office at (936) 435-2426 to reserve your steak!



**Ribeye Steak at the 2014 Fall Hay Evaluation! We take beef seriously.**

### **22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southeast Texas Grounds Maintenance Conference**

**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**7:30 AM**

**Lone Star convention Center (FM 1484, Conroe, TX)**

**5 Hour CEU credit (TDA or Structural) available**

**Preregistration by 10/5 \$50.00 (after 10/5 \$70.00)**

The program will cover a variety of current subjects including: turfgrass management, chemical application techniques, insect pest management, laws and regulations and more. Program registration includes refreshments and a catered lunch. For more information or to register, contact (936) 539-7822.

### **Texas Pollinators Garden Symposium**

**October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**8:00 AM**

**Walker County Storm Shelter (455 Hwy 75 N, Huntsville, TX)**

**Preregistration by 9/16 \$75.00, after 9/16 & at door \$95.00**

This will be a special treat for the plant/butterfly/humming bird/honey bee enthusiast! The Walker County Master Gardeners have an outstanding line up of speakers for this day long program. Your registration fee will get you LUNCH & a TEE SHIRT! How cool is that? Plus, we have world famous gardening author Felder Rushing as the Butterfly Gardening Keynote Speaker!! You don't want to miss this one. Henry Flowers, Garden Director at Round Top Festival Institute will talk Herbs in the Pollinators Garden. Chris Moore, Vice President of Texas Beekeepers Association will explore Bees as Pollinators. To round out this outstanding line up, AgriLife Extensions own Dotty Woodson will talk about Water Collection for the Garden. Commercial vendors will be on site with a variety of interesting items to view. Preregister at [www.walkercountymastergardeners.org](http://www.walkercountymastergardeners.org)

**Don't Miss the WC Master Gardeners  
Fall Plant Sale & Butterfly Festival:  
October 17, 2015  
At the Walker Co AgriLife Extension Office  
8:00 AM until 2:00 PM  
Bring the Family!**

### **Cow Country Congress – a little history**

Walker County has been a long time participant as one of the founding sponsors in the **Cow Country Congress** event. A group of Extension Agents from our area joined together back in the early 1980's to develop Cow Country Congress. This exceptional event is a multi-county educational program for focused beef and forage related topics. If you are not familiar with Cow Country Congress, take a few minutes to look at my video from last year. I think you will find that we try to offer an interesting and unique educational opportunity each year for our participants.

**2014 Cow Country Congress Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBBw4L21ltQ>

### **Cow Country Congress set for Oct. 23 at Maysel Ranch in Fairfield**

By Blair Fannin

FAIRFIELD – Area beef producers will learn how to prepare cattle for feedlots and hear the latest in feral hog management at the Cow Country Congress 2015, scheduled **October 23** at Maysel Ranch near Fairfield.

The ranch is located east of Fairfield off of State Highway 84. Turn south on County Road 441 and continue for 3.3 miles. The ranch is on the right.

“The goal for this program is to provide cattle producers with the knowledge and skills to be profitable in their operation,” said Erin Davis, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent for Freestone County. “With Cow Country Congress, we want to keep the producers up to date with the latest tools available to them for use in their day-to-day operations.”

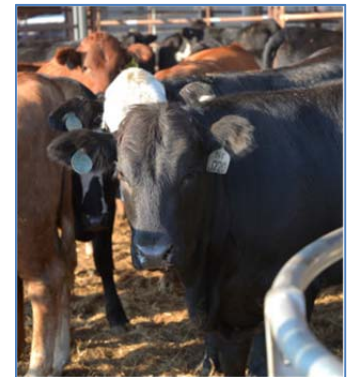
Davis said the program will include an overview of the Maysel Ranch by owner Burt Richards. His son, Joe Richards, who is a feedlot owner/operator in Hereford, will discuss cattle management and preparing cattle for the feedlot.

Cooper Terrill, AgriLife Extension agent for Falls County, will give a presentation on feral hogs and demonstrate the “BoarBuster,” an automatic trap developed by the Noble Foundation.

“We'll also have Dr. Larry Redmon, AgriLife Extension state forage specialist from College Station, who will discuss proper hay storage,” Davis said.

Dr. Ron Gill, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, College Station, will give a talk on Advocating for Agriculture.

Larry Hand, special ranger with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Region 6, Tyler, will conclude the program with a discussion on cattle theft.



**Cattle management and preparing cattle for the feedlot will be discussed at the 2015 Cow Country Congress scheduled Oct. 23 at the Maysel Ranch near Fairfield. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Blair Fannin**

Davis said a legislative update is set for noon.

Cost is \$20 and includes a steak lunch. Door prizes will be awarded as well as a number of vendor booths for attendees to visit. Two Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be offered.

Attendees are encouraged to RSVP for an accurate meal count by calling the AgriLife Extension office in Houston County at 936-544-7502 by Oct. 16.

## ***In This Issue:***

### ● **SIMPLE IS BEST?**

**Really..**

I was watching one of those TV shows where the guy goes around the world and eats just about anything he can. A statement was made by a farmer he was talking to and the host took the comment and ran with it. I heard the statement and started thinking about the situation surrounding the farmer. I have always thought that as Americans, we are a good bit spoiled as to our eating habits. As our agricultural production/processing systems are efficient and highly integrated, we can afford to be picky when selecting our regular diets. Sometimes this is not such a good thing. Eating too much of one particular kind of food when a variety would serve us much better is a known issue. I tend to rant on chicken nuggets; maybe I will mention that in the article. I see nugget-izing meat as a result of successful and abundant production.

### **Simple is Best?**

**By Reggie Lepley, CEA-AG**

One of the interesting things about TV is being able to somewhat experience the situations of others around the world. True you really don't fully experience the effect of standing in a particular location but it is much better than never having seen the situation at all.

During a recent surfing expedition of some 400+ TV channels, I stopped for a bit on one of those culinary travel shows to see what kinds of "stuff" the host would attempt to eat. He was somewhere in Asia so I knew the entertainment value of the experience would be potentially good.

As someone interested in how agricultural products are produced I always enjoy the scenes that include farming practices and fields where the food comes from. I think that it is important to notice what is around the featured characters rather than just watching and listening to what they want you to hear. During this latest viewing, the farmer was providing an item for the host to taste and when the host seemed to enjoy it, he said "Simple is best".

As I mentioned, I tend to look at the situation of the surrounding conditions.

"Simple is best". The statement got me thinking. These guys were farming with water buffalos and seemed to be doing a good job. They were providing food for their family, and probably selling some to other locals so you could call them successful. By this time I was thinking, but they aren't making much of a dent in the overall world food supply. For all the success this family was having in suppling their needs and providing a little extra income; could the entire world operate that way today?

I don't think so.

We have a growing world population. Agricultural land is becoming less available. Water is becoming more of an issue. The days of being able to take the water buffalo out to the back 40 or the mule to the back ten and produce a crop are getting short. True, if you have a few acres or a little more, you can still produce vegetables to get your family by. You may possibly sell a bit to make some extra money and buy a few things you can't produce, but not everybody has that option. The question becomes, if you are a farmer should you feed yourself or provide for others as well? The U.S. has a great history of helping the rest of the world meet their needs. Should we stop? Here is where it gets really interesting. What about the people who don't have land to farm. Do they really think "Simple is best"?

In the U.S., I perceive a lot of people are beginning to think this. Unfortunately, it is because they haven't really thought it out completely. The social movement toward small scale agriculture tends to be an elitist viewpoint of those who don't want for much. If you can go to three or four businesses in a quarter mile area and buy your

chicken nuggets (*Oh here it is*) for a couple of dollars, what more could you possibly want? Being able to purchase cheap and abundant food has allowed many of us to lose sight of what much of the world experiences as a reality. Did I say cheap food?

I know we are spending more than ever at the grocery store, however. During research for another project I ran across items that quoted Americans as spending 9-13% of their income for food (three sources, 9.8/11/&13) while the rest of the world averages 20-30%. Some related numbers to ponder, according to the USDA; Americans spent 9.8% of their disposable income on food in 2013 while back in 1929 they spent 23.4% of their income on food.

**Question:** *What changed?* **Answer:** *Technology & equipment.*

So, simple is best?

In the U.S., we don't have to eat every part of the cow, pig, or chicken. Let's rephrase that, at least we don't have to know what part of them we are eating. Hey, if it is an odd part, we can grind it up and make something totally different out of it—people will buy it- and like it. Chicken nuggets are proof of that. I think we have a generation or so of people who have never had to eat odd parts. But they love unidentifiable chunks of stuff. I know my daughter has never had a plate of beef tongue served to her. She and I talked about that the other day. Agricultural families have interesting conversations.

I remember growing up and having beef processed for the freezer would mean that there would be a grouping of odd things that would get wrapped up for later consumption. Some of it was okay to really good depending on what you did with it; some of it didn't hit my really like button. The last time I had a beef processed, they asked me if I wanted the sweetbreads and the tongue. I told them no. I guess my family isn't really hungry and I hope that doesn't change.

So is simple, best?

If you have questions or would like more information regarding Extension Educational Programs, call us at (936) 435-2426.



Provisions from the American Disability Act will be considered when planning educational programs and activities. Please notify the Walker County Extension Office if you plan on attending an Extension Educational program and need specialized services. Notification of at least three to five days in advance is needed, so that we may have ample time to acquire resources needed to meet your needs.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

*Reggie  
Lepley*

Reggie Lepley,  
County Extension Agent  
– Agriculture & Natural  
Resources  
Walker County  
(936) 435-2426

HAY TESTING  
Application Form

**– COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION & SECURELY  
ATTACH TO YOUR HAY SAMPLE:**

**(Sample entry DEADLINE : September 11, 2015)**

Please attach the following information securely to your hay sample. Limit of TWO samples per person. Samples may be turned in at the Walker County Extension Office on TAM Road. Hay sample may be producer grown or purchased. All samples must be processed through a mechanical hay baler. Hay testing is sponsored by Walker County Farm Bureau. Recognition awards for this program are sponsored by American Plant Food and Silveus Rangeland Ins. Questions about your entry? Call: (936) 435-2426

**CLASS OF HAY ENTERED:**

WC PRODUCER GROWN \_\_\_\_\_

PURCHASED \_\_\_\_\_

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IMPROVED BERMUDA \_\_\_\_\_

COMMON BERMUDA \_\_\_\_\_

BAHIA \_\_\_\_\_

SORGHUM \_\_\_\_\_

LEGUME \_\_\_\_\_

LEGUME GRASS MIX \_\_\_\_\_

RYEGRASS \_\_\_\_\_

MIXED GRASSES \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

ONLY ONE SAMPLE PER FORM

**Samples Must Consist Of:**

**TWO BLOCKS From Square Bales OR**

**ONE FULL CLEAN FEED SACK from**

**Round Bales. NO PLASTIC BAGS!**