



Walker County Agriculture News Update

December 2015

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

***We will be asking for YOUR HELP soon:** The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office (Ag & 4-H) is teaming up with New Waverly FFA to determine the best ways for presenting agricultural education in the electronic age. We will be emailing a survey invitation to all individuals reached by this newsletter and the mailing lists maintained by local 4-H & FFA organizations. We need your input, and look forward to your participation in this project.

New Walker Co Ag Video: Vinemesquite Native Grass Identification. Native grass (Vinemesquite) Identification and Information with Dr. Barron Rector, TX AgriLife Extension Range Specialist. Vinemesquite is a perennial, warm season native found in low lying moist areas. While considered common, it is not a species which is regularly identified by most people in Walker County, Texas - simply due to its specific and limited environmental adaptation. This grass provides good grazing for livestock and fair grazing utilization for wildlife. Additional information on Vinemesquite can be found in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension publication: Know Your Grasses B-182 (pg 88) available online from <http://www.agrilifebookstore.org>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK8219uoGOE>

New Walker Co Ag Video: Keyhole Garden Construction Keyhole gardens are easy to build and efficient methods of growing plants in small spaces. Due to their design, they are very easy to maintain while allowing access to plants. A wide variety of plant species may be grown in this type planter. This design lends itself particularly well to kitchen type plantings of vegetables or herbs. Depending on what you choose to construct them out of they can be built for very little cost. We invite you to join the TX A&M AgriLife Extension, Walker County Master Gardeners in this overview of their second keyhole garden during the construction phase, utilizing recycled and repurposed landscape construction material.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPgwKed5cyc>

Have You Done This...

Texas Agricultural and Timber Registration Number (Sales Tax #)

Producers are being contacted about renewing their Texas Agricultural and Timber Registration Number. This program is administered by the State Comptroller's Office and allows producers to purchase certain items for their operation without paying sales tax. As you may recall, several years ago producer's had to obtain a registration number to get the sales tax exemption. All of these initial registrations will expire on December 31, 2015 and must be renewed for continued use. Everyone who currently holds a registration number should receive information by mail for renewal. The renewal information can be accessed at the following link provided

<http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/agriculture/renewNumber.html>

Additional information on the Ag and Timber number and renewal can be found at the following link

<http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/agriculture/> And if you are in need of information on how to get a sales tax number or do not currently have one http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/taxpubs/ag_timber_exemption.html

January Pesticide CEU Recertification Conference (flyer attached)
January 8th, 2016 (Friday)
5 CEU's

At the Walker Co Storm Shelter

RSVP by 1/05/16 \$40.00 with lunch, or \$30.00 without lunch

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Walker County and the Walker County Soil & Water Conservation District will be hosting a continuing education class for Texas Department of Agriculture Pesticide Applicators. This C.E.U. recertification class will be held on Friday, January 08, 2016 at the Walker County Storm Shelter, next to the HEARTS Veterans Museum on Highway 75 North in Huntsville. Cost for the program is \$30.00 without lunch or \$40.00 with lunch. Preregistration is required for this event and can be called into (936) 291-1901 ext. 109 by January 5th. RSVP is required for seating and meal availability.



Registration will begin at 7:00 AM, January 8th and the program will conclude around 2:45 PM. A variety of agricultural topics and speakers are included in this annual educational program. Topics scheduled for the 2016 Pesticide Recertification event include items for all landowners in the Walker County area. Specific items to be discussed during the day include the following topics and speakers:

Feral Hog Research Update and Control in Texas will be discussed by Mark Tyson, Extension Associate. This presentation will include results of research into control efforts and recommendations for IPM measures to prevent, mitigate, or remove the pest. James Jackson, Extension Program Specialist, Ecosystem Science and Management will present information on research findings regarding brush control in Texas rangeland. A detailed accounting of procedures, equipment, products and recommendations will be the focus of this lecture. Dr. Barron Rector, Associate Professor and Extension Range Specialist will discuss Ecology & Impacts of Weed Management. Knowing the resulting impact of weed control efforts prior to an application provides land managers an ecologically valuable tool in determining which method of pest eradication, mitigation or control to pursue. This presentation will help you understand how to make decisions regarding pesticide applications to enhance land utilization. Dr. Ronnie Schnell, Assistant Professor & Extension Agronomist, will present information on tools that can optimize the pesticide applicators effectiveness and accuracy in delivering products for targeted species. New technology and equipment is constantly coming on the market which can benefit pesticide applicators. Participants will receive a Pesticide Laws & Regulations Update with additional information on Pesticide Safety Issues by Dr. Don Rennie, Extension Program Leader for Agricultural & Environmental Safety.

Participants will be eligible to receive 1.0 hours Laws & Regulations credit, 2.0 hours Integrated Pest Management credit, and 2.0 hours General credit. Additional program information can be obtained from the Walker County Texas AgriLife Extension office at (936) 435-2426 or <http://walker.agrilife.org> under the events link or on Facebook at WalkerCo TxAgriLife.

2016 Texas Pecan Short Course

January 25th – 28th, 2016

TAMU Rudder Tower, Room 601

Joe Routh Boulevard, College Station, TX 77843

<https://events.tamu.edu/EMSRegics/TexasPecanShortCourse2016>

Registration check-in will begin at 7:30 am on the 1st floor lobby area of Rudder Tower. The Pecan Short Course will be held the first two days at Texas A&M University in Rudder Tower, and the last two days at the Horticulture Teaching, Research and Extension Center (HortTREC).

The workshop begins at 8am on Monday, January 25th in Rudder Tower and ends with a steak dinner on Thursday, January 28th at the Horticulture Teaching, Research & Extension Center (HortTREC).

The workshop fee of \$200 includes various speakers & topics regarding pecans and the industry. Spouses, & Students may register at \$50. The workshop will begin at 8:00 am & go to 5:00 pm with an hour for lunch each

day. A new updated pecan handbook will be provided with registration. The workshop will end with a steak dinner on Thursday, January 28.

If you are interested in lodging, please go to www.visitaggieland.com for hotel listings. Any hotel on University Drive is 1-2 miles from the campus. On request, some hotels will provide a shuttle service to the campus.

RV parking on campus is available and for information and maps go to <http://transport.tamu.edu/parking/visitor.aspx> - click into RV on left side.

Parking is on your own. There is a parking garage directly across the Rudder Tower that you may pay as you come & go. The maximum for all day is \$15 and is charged hourly. Please go to <http://transport.tamu.edu/parking/visitor.aspx> for directions to University Center Garage. This garage is directly across from Rudder Tower. You will need transportation to the new hort trac facility for the 27th & 28th. Parking is free at the facility.

Lunch is on your own and there are several eating establishments in the MSC which is located next to the Rudder Tower. *Please note that when completing the online registration (linked next to the event title above) you will be asked to enter an email address. In order to complete the registration you will be asked to enter a password of your choice and confirm. There are no special parameters for creating the password.

Creative Sausage Making

January 15th – 16th, 2016

TAMU –College Station, TX

Kleberg Animal Science & Rosenthal Meat Science Centers

Registration through 12/15 \$325.00, 12/16-1/07 \$350.00, 1/08-1/14 \$400.00

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/ProductID/1946/>

Creative Sausage Making was developed by the processed meats experts at Texas A&M AgriLife after numerous requests for a basic sausage course that would allow a “first timer” to be successful, a “seasoned” veteran to pick up some new tips, or a restaurateur that wanted to learn to make artisan sausages. The hands-on workshop will engage participants in important aspects of sausage making from meat selection, ingredients, casings, stuffing, equipment, processing and final finished product. Participants will manufacture their own sausages (smoked and fresh sausage) using readily available equipment (commercial equipment may be demonstrated but is not the focal point of this workshop) and have an opportunity to take some home for further evaluation.

This workshop is for those who wish to increase their knowledge and/or gain experience in sausage making. Whether you want to introduce a line of sausage products for your restaurant, or make your own sausage for tailgating parties, this course will help you understand the art and science of sausage making.

Ranch Management University

April 4th - 8th, 2016

8:00 AM

G. Rollie White visitor’s Center

7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkw., College Station, TX

Preregistration through 3/29/16 \$500.00

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/ProductID/1931/>

The Ranch Management University is an intensive 5-day event targeting new or inexperienced ranchers and landowners and covers the fundamentals of soils and soil fertility, forage establishment, pasture management, and utilization by livestock. Basic livestock management practices such as castrating and vaccinating calves are demonstrated. Grazing management, stocking rate, and body condition scoring are also highlighted. Additionally, several wildlife management topics are covered for those interested in managing white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, feral hogs, and farm ponds. Approximately one-half the workshop involves lectures and discussion, with the remainder consisting of the field demonstrations of various how to methods of soil sampling, planting, calibrating sprayers, and inoculating legume seed. Various forage species, including bermudagrass, small grains, annual ryegrass, and clovers are studied by workshop attendees. Additional demonstrations covers deer necropsy, hog trap management, and pond fisheries management. In addition, all meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) and an RMU workbook are provided.

In This Issue:

AGRICULTURE; GLOBAL POLITICS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

What is a bowl of beans really worth?

Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful and appreciative. From the early days of my Extension employment and continuing until the present, there hasn't been a lot of free time in the fall, or spring of the year for that matter. For this reason, I tend to appreciate, and be thankful of spending some down time at the deer camp during Thanksgiving.

Since the rest of the family tends to want to hang out with the rest of the family; screaming at the top of their lungs both at and for the Aggies or the Cowboys..

I will go somewhere else, enjoy the sounds of nature and be perfectly happy.

This year I managed to remember to take a crock pot with me to cook some pinto beans for the evening Thanksgiving meal. As you would imagine, the opportunity to have little to NO cell service for a few days of listening to the rain on a tin roof of a deer stand, will give you some time to think. I spent some time pondering the value of a bowl of beans.

When the world is quiet, a lot can happen just because of a simple bowl of beans.



Agriculture; Global Politics and National Security

By Reggie Lepley, CEA-AG

We are fortunate to live in a country which provides us with a secure food production and distribution system.

Recent world and national events are troubling to say the least. If you have been watching the news in the past several weeks, you know what I am talking about. I may be getting a bit ahead of myself here on my direction of progress, so some background information may be required.

This past summer my youngster, whom I often refer to as "The Kid", began working on her next speech topic. This is an important decision for her public speaking contests because the same topic will be carried from the 2015 State Fair of Texas contest to the 2016 spring contests (San Antonio, Houston), as well as, other FFA and 4-H public speaking contests. Following the previous contest season we decided that there had to be a really interesting "grab the audience and don't let go" topic/method combination of education that was needed.

In light of reported events from around the world, we decided that one of the issues which could serve the purpose while being extremely educational would be an offshoot of bioterrorism affecting agriculture. It happens to be a subject which few Americans ever think about. Needless to say, after consideration we picked the topic up and ran with it.

After a couple of weeks of assisting with the research for this speech, probably enough to get me on a NSA watch list somewhere, we started fleshing out the text of the message. I remember walking into the front of the office and commenting that we had managed to create havoc with the economy. Fairly accurate considering that the particular issue is estimated to cost somewhere around \$15 to \$100 billion in agricultural losses nationwide.

This could be a really big, really scary deal, to say the least.

Agriculture in the U.S. impacts our economy with a value of a trillion dollars with exports reaching an additional \$68 billion. Let's take that export number with a grain of salt, although I have seen it quoted in multiple sources. I am currently looking at some [USDA numbers](#) that are reporting \$150 billion in total agricultural exports for 2014.

To quote "The Kid", "There are 322.5 million very lucky people in the world. You and I can count ourselves among the fortunate.. to be residents of the United States.."

If you are reading this newsletter, you are part of all this. Agriculture in the U.S. employs one of every six individuals. The kid sacking groceries down at your local store and the fellow driving the truck to the store probably don't even realize how closely their pay is tied to agriculture and they see the end products. For that matter, a lot of people don't make the connection, just because they aren't driving a tractor. Moreover, they probably haven't thought about how dependent their salary is to the agricultural economy and its welfare.

Stay with me, because national security is where I am going, and I want us to think about it from a global viewpoint. Politics gets to be a divided issue in very short order. I understand that and don't plan on getting any deeper than I have to while making my point. Breathe easier..

Much of the world's critical flashpoint issues occur in places where the people are lacking in basic human necessities. Food and the availability of said food being a major player of human related issues and tension. A number of people are surprised to learn that the U.S. Farm Bill houses the national SNAP funding among other items. SNAP is the acronym for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Keep in mind that it is designed to provide access to food.

U.S. foreign policy regarding agriculture is an ongoing item which is addressed across the globe. The Farm Bill funds a lot of policy, both domestic and foreign.

Allow me one quick example to illustrate my point.

In a news release dated the same as my initial efforts writing on this topic (11/30/15), the USDA is reporting the [Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\), Benefits to U.S. Agriculture of Rice and Rice Products](#) with a \$798 million export value of rice to the TPP region (Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Brunei) and \$2 billion to the world in 2014. The document goes on to say that, "without this agreement, U.S. rice and rice product exports to the TPP region face a competitive disadvantage. ..If the United States does not ratify the TPP agreement, other TPP members may ratify a similar agreement without us." Meaning the group will adopt something not in our countries best interests.

Our rice producers want to sell their product, and this commodity has been struggling. Regardless of whether you are a rice producer or not, it is in the best interest of our nation to keep producers working if possible. Here is the point. When we really need them, fallow fields and unused equipment will not feed anybody. Not even us.

Remember we are looking at this from a national security viewpoint.

So.. Here is where we were going with the public speaking topic. A nation's security depends on food and its availability to the population. A well fed population is a somewhat happier population even during trying times. Remove the availability of food and people will become anxious, tensions rise, and bad things can occur. Bad things can really happen quickly. Add to that, the impact of impending financial insecurity and I hope you are starting to see my point. Those thoughts could apply to our very nation just as they could apply in other parts of the world.

Have you been watching the news? If people are truly happy in their home country wouldn't they be more inclined to not bring their unhappiness in the form of terrorism to our shores?

On the [USDA 2013 Food Assistance Programs](#) web page, the following quotation is found. "The United States is committed to achieving global food security and supporting sustainable agricultural production said Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture. "In addition to providing much-needed nutritious food, USDA's food assistance programs also foster economic growth in the recipient countries."

In a report on [U.S. International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues](#) by Schnepf, (April 1, 2015), for the Congressional Research Service, the statement is made, “the United States has played a leading role in global efforts to alleviate hunger and malnutrition and to enhance world food security through international food aid assistance—primarily through either the donation or sale on concessional terms of U.S. agricultural commodities. Schnepf goes on to state, “programs are re-authorized in periodic farm bills; most recently (through FY2018) by the 2014 farm bill.”

In researching this article, I am finding Schnepf’s report very interesting. If you have time, I recommend reviewing it for more detail.

He continues, “Current U.S. food aid programs had their origins in 1954...since been amended multiple times. One of the original purposes of.. in-kind food donations was to reduce large government stocks of program crops that had accumulated under U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity price support programs while responding to humanitarian, economic development, and geopolitical goals in foreign countries.”

Are any of you out there in newsletter land, old enough to remember the government butter, cheese, and peanut butter?

If you are in need a historical reference, that time frame occurred during the Cold War era. Did you question the national security direction? Furthermore, he goes on to say, “Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. food assistance goals have shifted more toward emergency response and support for long-term agricultural development. However, the United States continues to rely on domestic purchases of U.S. commodities as the basis for its food aid programs.”

Agricultural policy in the U.S. is important to keep our producers in the field. Thankfully those agricultural producers, all across this great nation are good at what they do and they have the technology to produce quality products. I have already said unused equipment and empty fields won’t feed anybody. Not even us.

How current has the speech topic proven? “The Kid” even wrote in something about “Black Friday” craziness as an example of how otherwise normal people can quickly go off the track.

If you read this article, I hope you now have a better understanding; of how agriculture is a basis for part of our national security. This reminds me, I still have leftovers. We all know they just get better with time.

So, just what is the value of that simple bowl of beans?



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

Reggie Lepley

Reggie Lepley,
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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