



March 2020

Walker County Agriculture Update

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

"Since new developments are the products of a creative mind, we must therefore stimulate and encourage that type of mind in every way possible." -George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver is another of my favorite all-time people. I've previously written about him (Jan/Feb 2016, "The Guy Ahead of His Time") <http://counties.agrilife.org/walker/files/2011/05/01.25.16-WCAG-News.pdf> and I think this will fit together. His life work, conducted in a period of great social change and just before great technological changes, ultimately led to standardized agricultural practices which we sometimes take for granted today. Warning just a bit of educational social commentary to follow. Even if I explained this before, it's well worth a review for the new additions to our mailing list.

This is for those who may have wondered about the bold print tagline preceding our upcoming events list. Today's world encourages the uneducated to voice their opinion. Good or bad, it is easy to put something out there for all to see. When the information is bad, the uneducated will not know it is bad. Correcting bad information which has become personal philosophy is difficult at best, hence the challenge faced by agricultural educators.

My thoughts are those who work to gain true understanding via dedicated effort of thoroughly researching to the point where you know information is credible, relevant, and correct, should then be empowered to spread knowledge. All with practical agricultural production knowledge knows that things change; we must constantly seek and gather new knowledge, or we will fail. Gaining knowledge and updating practices is how U.S. agriculture continues to feed, clothe and build our country plus support those around the world who depend on us.

Agriculture needs educated people scouting our path and spreading our message. Those paying attention to "fertilizer" spread far and wide on various outlets, who truly understand that which agricultural producers deal with, manage, handle, or how we adapt; then qualify to help deliver their part of a proper message. I place you who read this newsletter into the class of people seeking accurate information by dedicated effort to research and then apply knowledge to practice.

Agriculture needs champions to spread the truth, accurately tell our story, and seek innovation. Professor Carver's life work and quote sums all that up nicely, I believe.

Glad to have you here! Read on.

- ***When you have the opportunity, let others hear your message.***

Upcoming Events:

Forest Management Plan Writing Workshop(s) Scheduled Seven dates/Sessions upcoming in Walker County

Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 Thursday, April 23rd, 2020
Tuesday, May 5th, 2020 Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020
Tuesday, August 4th, 2020 Tuesday, October 20th, 2020
Tuesday, December 8th, 2020

Texas Forest Service; Huntsville District Office (513 TX-75, Huntsville, TX 77320)

Cost: Participant/ (FREE!!!!)

3:00-6:00 PM

Preregistration or More Info (936) 295-5688 or <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/workshops> to RSVP for workshop.

Prospective or current timber growers have the option of writing their own management plan with assistance from Texas Forest Service. It is suggested/recommended that you schedule a site visit of your property prior to attending one of the available workshops.

This workshop will allow you:

- To write your own plan on your time schedule.
- Be engaged in setting your management goals with professional guidance.
- Learn and gain experience to manage your forest and associated natural resources.

Homemade Huntsville: Hands on Food Workshops (Walker County)

Six Dates/Sessions

Walker County Storm Shelter (455 SH 75N, Huntsville, TX 77320)

Cost: \$120.00 per person for ALL 6 Sessions (or) \$30.00 per person/session (covers lunch & all supplies)

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Contact the Walker County Extension Office to RSVP: (936)435-2426 or register online at online at <https://homemadehuntsville.eventbrite.com>

March 12: Jams & Jellies

April 2: Grilling & Outdoor Cooking

May 7: Salsas

June 4: Pickles & Fermentation

July 2: Kolaches & Bread

August 6: Stews & Pie Filling

These will be hands on educational sessions where you will be instructed and then assisted with your own preparation of each product. Food safety, tools, tips & tricks to make you the most outstanding cook of your household will be included for each cooking & food preparation method. Sign up Today!!

Coffee & Conservation (Walker County)

April 8th, 2020

Barney's Country Store -Crabb's Prairie (1746 TX-75, Huntsville, TX 77320)

7:00 AM until 10:00 AM

Featured discussions at this event will allow landowners to explore local agricultural and natural resource issues and management. Trees, Livestock, Wildlife, & Wildfire will be on the discussion table. Speakers and resource professionals from Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA), and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will be on hand to assist your questions and inquiries. For more information, call (936) 295-5688. Have a cup of coffee and meet us!

2020 Landowners Workshop Series (Walker County)

#1: Options for Property Management

Monday, April 27th, 2020

Texas A&M AgriLife Office, Walker Co (102 Tam Rd, Huntsville, TX 77320)

Cost: Free!

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

You have property - What are you interested in doing with it? Conservation, Timber, Wildlife, Livestock, Horticulture or combinations of each... Landowners can participate in this series of educational programs to learn about management options which are available to them. Representatives from each of the cooperating agencies who assist landowners will present information designed to answer some of your leading questions and give you thoughts to ponder which you may not be aware of. Speakers from USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas A&M Forest Service, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be there to help you with your search for information.

2020 Landowners Workshop Series (Walker County)

#2: Tax Valuation Information for Landowners

Tuesday, June 22nd, 2020

Texas Forest Service; Huntsville District Office (513 TX-75, Huntsville, TX 77320)

Cost: Free!

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Timber, wildlife, and other agriculture enterprises can impact your land taxation rate. Landowners may attend this workshop meeting to learn more about options and enterprises available in Walker County. Representatives from local government agencies will be there to help you gather information and navigate your land management options as approved by the tax appraisal office.

Out of County Events:

2020 Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course

March 2-5, 2020 (core curriculum)

March 2-6, 2020 (core curriculum & irrigation)

Scotts Miracle-Gro Center (3100 F&B Rd. College Station, TX 77843)

Cost: Participant/core curriculum, \$645.00 per person through 3/2.

Cost: Participant/core curriculum & irrigation, \$810.00 per person through 3/2.

Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3057>

The Texas A&M Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course is a four-day course designed for turf professionals and enthusiasts looking to expand their knowledge of turfgrass systems and best management practices. This course moves linearly from site preparation and appropriate species selection to establishment, cultural practices, and pest management. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from a wide range of experts with unique problem-solving perspectives. The objective of this course is to empower turfgrass managers to make confident, well-informed decisions through a combination of applied and theoretical knowledge. Participants will spend time both in the classroom and engaged in group and hands-on activities.

Irrigation Water Management of Commercial Landscapes Short Course (March 6)

Participants will also have the opportunity to register for an optional short course with the Texas A&M School of Irrigation. This course is approved by the TCEQ for 8 CEUs for Licensed Irrigators, Irrigation Technicians, and Irrigation Inspectors. This course is designed for landscape professionals including

contractors, licensed irrigators and managers of turf areas, but is useful for anyone interested in landscape water conservation or learning more about irrigation water management.

Owning Your Piece of Texas: Key Laws Landowners Need to Know

March 16, 2020

The Lone Star Convention Center & Expo (9055 Airport Road, Conroe, TX)

Cost: Participant/\$75.00 per person.

Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3060>

Program will address common issues facing landowners including:

- Water Law Fence Law
- Eminent Domain And much more
- Landowner Liability

Tiffany Dowell Lashmet is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Agricultural Law with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. She focuses her work on legal issues affecting Texas agricultural producers and landowners. Tiffany was named the State Specialist of the Year for Texas Agriculture by the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association. In 2019, Tiffany received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award from the American Agricultural Law Association. Each attendee will receive a copy of Lashmet's handbook for landowners, *Owning Your Piece of Texas: Top Laws Landowners Need to Know*

Ranch Management University

April 6, 2020

G. Rollie White Visitor's Center (7707 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy, College Station, TX 77845)

Cost: Participant/\$625.00 per person until 3/27.

Registration/More Info: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3003>

The Ranch Management University is an intense 5-day event targeting new or experienced ranchers and landowners, covering the fundamentals of soils/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 cattle body condition scoring are also highlighted. Planning for profit, horse production, financial assistance programs, connections between agriculture and health, fundamentals of lawn management and ag laws Texas landowners need to know will also be discussed. Additionally, several wildlife management topics are covered for those interested in managing white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, feral hogs, and honeybees. Approximately one-half of the workshop involves lectures and discussions, with the remainder consisting of the field demonstrations of various how-to methods of soil sampling, calibrating sprayers, and inoculating legume seed. Various forage species, including bermudagrass, small grains, annual ryegrass, and clovers are studied by workshop attendees. A demonstration covering hog trap management will also be given. Plenty of time allowing for interaction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension faculty with experience in all management facets of the soil-plant-animal interface and wildlife management.

The course will begin at 12:30 pm on Monday, April 6 and conclude at 12 noon on Friday, April 10. Monday, April 6 will end with dinner (6 pm). Tuesday - Thursday, we will begin with breakfast (7:15 am) and end with dinner (6 pm). Friday will be breakfast only (7 am). NOTE: All Meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) along with an RMU workbook consisting of all PowerPoint presentations, contact information, glossary, etc., and a flash drive containing hundreds of relevant publications are provided.

Additional Items and Information of Note:

Garden Time! Walker County Vegetable Resources

I have a [Vegetable Planting Guide](http://counties.agrilife.org/walker/files/2011/05/WC-Vegetable-Planting-Chart1.pdf) publication posted on the Walker County AgriLife web page which shows the idea and marginal planting dates for most common garden vegetables grown in our county. <http://counties.agrilife.org/walker/files/2011/05/WC-Vegetable-Planting-Chart1.pdf> Take a look to review your best planting date ranges. As an additional benefit, each vegetable species is linked to the AgriLife web page with information further supporting your growing effort.

We also have a list of recommended vegetable varieties available. https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/search.php?county=Walker&co=Search+by+County You may select individual vegetables (or) select All for the entire list.

AgriLife Online Courses Becoming (Increasingly) Available

AgriLife Extension is moving further into the online age with an increasing selection of online course development. We have had a variety of online courses available over the past few years; however, our friends on campus and the research centers are developing new educational opportunities for you. If you are interested in an online educational option, take a look and see what is available. Check back periodically for new additions: <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/>

I am excited about this newly available online presentation:

Aquatic Vegetation Management Basics <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=WFSC-002>
Cost: \$15.00 per enrollment.

This course is designed for landowners and pesticide applicators who are looking for aquatic vegetation management techniques or Continuing Education Credits (CEUs). During this course, you will learn why aquatic vegetation is problematic, how to manage it, prevention methods, and effective forms of control and mode of action. This course is 1.5 hours long and offers 1 Integrated Pest Management CEU.

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how aquatic vegetation becomes so problematic
- Explain the need to manage aquatic vegetation
- Identify practices to prevent aquatic vegetation establishment
- Identify effective control options
- Describe modes of action and application techniques for aquatically labelled active ingredients
- Discover resources available for aquatic vegetation management needs

How Much Do You Really Know About Grasses?

Information source: <https://agrilife.org/howgrassesgrow/bud-bank-basics/>

A grass plant is a collection of plant parts, like a tree or shrub, made up of growth units called tillers. Each tiller produces roots and leaves. Vegetative tillers consist primarily of leaves, whereas reproductive tillers produce a stem, seedhead, roots, and leaves. The basal area of the stem, where roots often arise, is the crown. All native perennial grasses reproduce by vegetative means. New tillers are formed from pre-existing or newly formed buds. Seed production may be valuable but is not always necessary for population maintenance.

The crown usually has a number of buds (growing points) that produce new tillers and roots. New tillers are anatomically and physiologically connected to older tillers. Therefore, several connected tillers may all live and share resources like water, carbohydrates, and nutrients. If one tiller dies, an adjacent tiller

with established roots and leaves usually lives, sustaining the species' population. Some tillers stay vegetative their entire life span, while others become reproductive and produce seedheads. Whether a tiller becomes reproductive depends on the growing conditions, environment, and hormones produced in the grass.

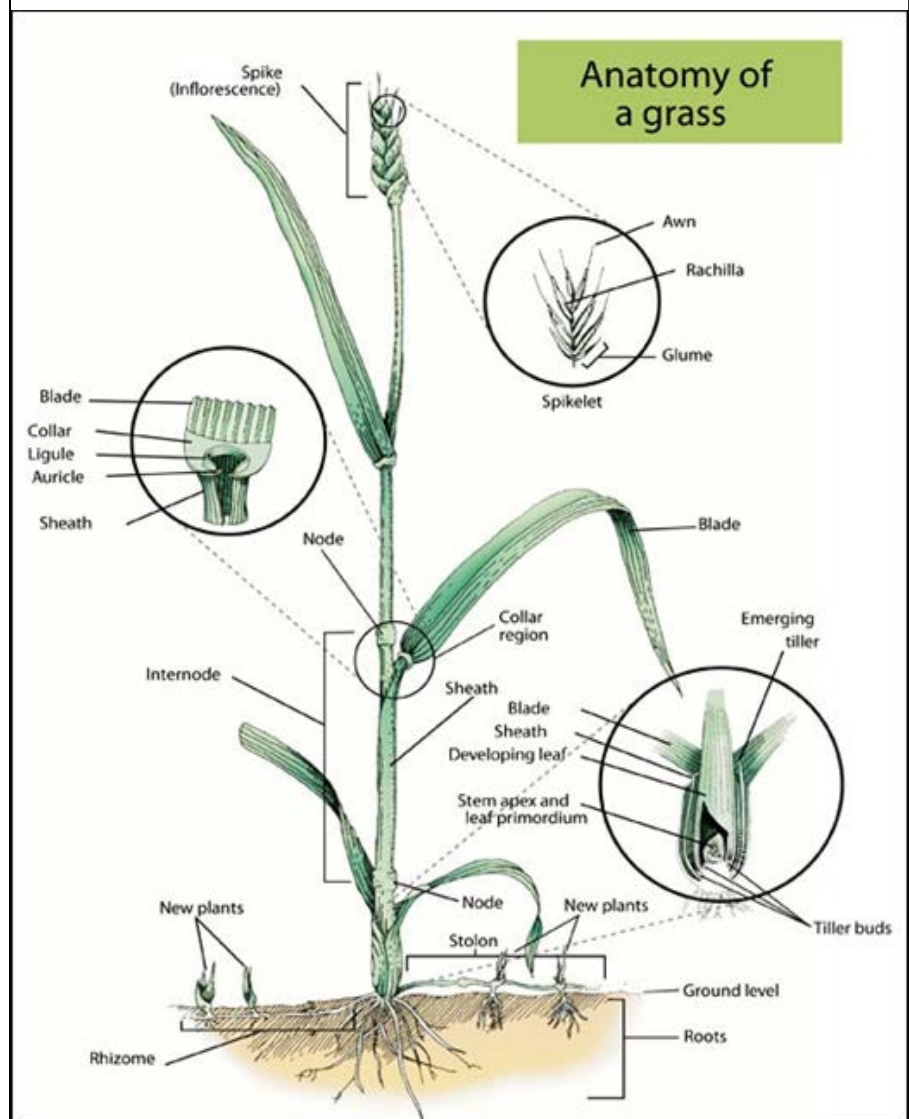
For example, a reproductive tiller may remain vegetative if the terminal meristem bud is removed by grazing or fire. Vegetative growth, therefore, is favored by some disturbance, which reduces the number of seedheads produced and may stimulate the formation of new buds and new tillers. Vegetative tillers usually are less stemmy and more nutritious than reproductive tillers. Once a tiller has produced a reproductive seedhead, that tiller's lifespan is over.

The amount of buds that exist on a single grass individual is referred to as the bud bank. The bud bank is made up of active and dormant buds. These buds are waiting for an environmental cue to become activated and to start developing into a tiller. The bud bank density is the driving force behind a species response to grazing, drought, or fire. These buds also serve as carbohydrate reserves that are in the roots and crown and serve as growth points for spring or in response to aboveground disturbances. These carbohydrate reserves also are necessary for plant respiration during winter dormancy as the belowground buds remain alive providing energy for the plant to maintain itself until photosynthesis in the late winter/early spring take over.

Quantifying and describing the bud bank densities for our dominant Texas grasses is key to pairing the appropriate range management strategy. For example, season of burn, timing of grazing,

grazing rotations, grazing intensity, fire return interval, etc.... can all affect the bud bank of perennial grasses differently. Employing strategies that maximize the bud bank densities of native, perennial grasses is key to maintaining healthy native grass populations, plant diversity, and plant community resiliency.

A grass plant is a collection of plant parts, like a tree or shrub, made up of growth units called tillers. Figure 1 shows a reproductive grass tiller.



Your help is needed with important survey data collection:

2020 Southeast U.S. Hay Harvest Survey

Extension forage specialists with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and in the Southeast U.S. would like your help in gathering information on hay harvest methods and time required for harvesting hay to help develop more effective forage educational programs.

We would appreciate you taking the time to complete a survey regarding your hay harvest methods. If you do choose to participate, we appreciate your feedback and all information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. By completing the survey, you are agreeing to allow the use of your responses for educational purposes. If you do not wish to complete the survey, your refusal to do so will have not any effect on your relationship with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. To opt out of taking the survey, simply do not complete the survey.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Vanessa Corriher-Olson at (903) 987-5343 or by email at vacorriher@ag.tamu.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University's IRB Coordinator, at (979) 458-4067 or by e-mail at irb@tamu.edu.

Information gathered from the survey will provide direct insights into current hay harvest practices, and allow us to better develop forage educational programs. Additionally, the information provided will be used to prioritize research and Extension outreach efforts moving forward to more effectively address your needs.

Please click on the link below to access the survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
2019 Southeast U.S. Hay Harvest Survey https://uaex.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cLVmS7buxux288R

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey, and we look forward to your insightful responses. If you have any questions while taking the survey, please feel free to contact us at the email listed below.

Vanessa Corriher-Olson vacorriher@ag.tamu.edu

IRB number: IRB2019-1178

IRB Approval date: December 19, 2019

Walker County Broadband Initiative

The Walker County Broadband Committee is comprised of local community leaders from various sectors with a common mission of enhancing and expanding broadband access, adoption and use throughout the county for the benefit of local residents and businesses. To that end, the Committee has partnered with Connected Nation Texas and their "Connected Community" program to assess the present state of broadband in Walker County.

To perform an assessment of Walker County's current broadband environment, the Committee will be conducting surveys of local residents, businesses and other organizations across the county. Responses to these surveys will help better understand the existing resources and capabilities we now have to support our access, adoption and use of broadband technology in our homes and businesses.

HOW can you help? Your participation in the appropriate broadband survey and overall support of our efforts are very important in developing an accurate assessment of broadband availability and related needs in Walker County. To take the survey as a resident, a business owner or designated representatives of another organization, please go to:

<https://www.myconnectedcommunity.org/walker-county/> and select the appropriate option.

Please share this information with your peers and encourage others to take the survey!

2020 Texas Custom Rates Survey

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Department of Agricultural Economics is conducting the 2020 Texas Custom Rates Survey. Each year our offices receive many requests for current custom rate information and the latest Custom Rates Publication. The survey and publication are the only source to find the going rates paid for these types of services. Questions in the survey include rates paid/charged for specific tillage, planting, application, harvesting, and other services or operations performed on a custom basis. If you have knowledge of rates in your area, and appreciate the value of publishing this type of market information, please consider participating in the survey which can be found online at:

<http://agecoext.tamu.edu/crs2020>

The survey will ask that you only complete the questions that pertain to your operation; therefore, most people should be able to complete the survey in 10-15 minutes or less. The survey will be open from February through the end of April. Your participation will help make sure the published information is the most accurate and reliable possible. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Dr. Steven Klose (sklose@tamu.edu).

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



Reggie Lepley

Reggie Lepley,
County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources
Walker County
(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