

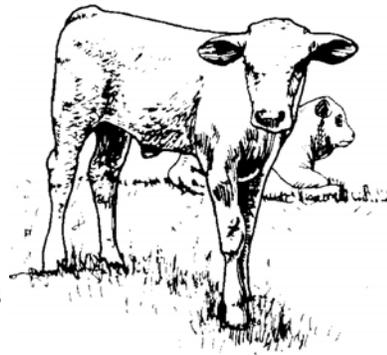
AGRICULTURAL Program Update

Premises Identification Program Ready; Field Trial for Animal Identification Also Launched

News Release

Texas Animal Health Commission

Ranchers and other livestock facility owners from every facet of the Texas livestock and poultry industry can now sign up for a unique "premises identification number," for their livestock facilities. The premises identification number will identify the location of livestock operations in the state. It is the first step in implementing a national system for quickly tracing livestock and poultry for disease investigations or during a disease outbreak or animal health emergency. The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) also is launching a year-long pilot project with a number of ranches, feedlots, livestock markets, slaughter plants and other facilities to test the durability and reliability of electronic ear tags, related equipment and databases for identifying and tracking individual animals.



"The national premises and animal identification system has been under development for several years, with input and ideas from nearly 70 federal and state animal health agencies and livestock industry associations," said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas' state veterinarian and heads of TAHC, the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency.

"The U.S. must have a reliable and efficient method for tracking and finding livestock and poultry during an animal disease investigation or when an animal health emergency occurs," Dr. Hillman said. He noted that producers and organizations have discussed at great length, the need for information to remain confidential. To protect data in regards to premises and animal identification, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state-level agencies, such as the TAHC, and livestock organizations and associations are seeking national and state legislation

(Continued on page 3)

- **Walker County 5¹/₂ Hour CEU Pesticide Applicator Program**
Friday -
January 14, 2005
(see page 2)
- **Beef 706 Class**
Scheduled for
January 12-14,
2005 & January
19-21, 2005 at
Texas A & M
University,
College Station,
Texas
To attend call Mike
De La Zerda at
512-335-2333



WALKER COUNTY SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT # 453
#2 Financial Plaza, Suite #735
HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS 77340

Pesticide Education:

Chemical Use & Application Symposium

Pesticide Applicators with Texas Department of Agriculture Licenses will receive 5 1/2 hours of TDA Continuing Education Credit by participating in this program sponsored by the Walker County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Texas Cooperative Extension, Walker County Livestock & Pasture Committee.

◆ Up-Date on Pesticide Record Keeping & Regulations

Mark Matocha, Extension Program Specialist, Agriculture & Environmental Safety. Topics: Pesticide license requirements, fees, record keeping, information regarding applicator license renewals.

◆ Weed Control Options for Forage Production

Dr. Larry Redmon, Extension Forage Specialist. Topics: Identification of common pasture and range weeds with specific control recommendations. Weed management during establishment to prevent problems. Integrated Pest Management utilizing grazing management, mechanical and other cultural controls. New product development, labeling and ongoing chemical research for forage production systems.

◆ When is a 1/10 of an Ounce as Good as a Pound: New Chemistry Formulations

Dr. Paul Baumann, Extension Weed Specialist. Topics: New chemical formulations and chemistry. Product utilization changes; application timing, applications rates, safety, and environmental concerns with chemical products. Research developments, regulations and regulatory process guiding product development.

◆ Tank Mixing Chemicals – Recipes for Success or....

Mark Matocha, Extension Program Specialist, Agriculture & Environmental Safety. Topics: Reading the label—information regarding tank mixing, safety of mixed products, avoiding application problems. Regulations affecting product utilization and application.

◆ Fire Ant Control Options in Agriculture

Dr. Bart Drees, Professor and Extension Entomologist. Topics: Prevention of insect damage, and Integrated methods of population control. Biological options, cultural control options and realistic expectations.

◆ Protecting Your Water Resources

Carter Miska, Regional Manager, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (&)

Lawrence Brown, Natural Resource Specialist, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board. Topics: Laws & Regulations designed to protect water resources. Practical application, utilization of facilities and equipment to prevent water contamination.

◆ Pond Management Issues: Weed ID, Biological and Chemical Options

Dr. Michael Masser, Extension Fisheries Specialist. Topics: Proper identification of aquatic weeds; specific plant characteristics, habitat requirements. Product selection concerns, requirements and regulations for aquatic use chemicals. Chemical control options & products including mechanical and biological methods. Prevention of aquatic weed infestations.

January 14, 2005

West Hill Mall, Community Meeting Room
Hwy 30 West, Huntsville, Texas

Registration begins at **8:00 AM**
Program 8:30 AM until 3:00 PM

**(RSVP for Seating Availability &
Meal by 1/9/05 to 936-435-2426)**

****Catered Lunch additional \$10.00
per person**

**\$ 20.00 class fee
per Participant**

**1.5 hrs GEN
2.0 hrs IPM
2.0 hrs LAW & REGS
(TDA Course Number 0402438)**

**5 + Hours of TDA Pesticide
Applicator CEUs!**

(Continued from page 1)

to protect the data from public release or access.

“Regulatory agencies do not need or want access to production data, but specific information, such as the age and class of animal, as well as movement information is critical for finding potentially infected or exposed animals during a disease situation,” he said.

Today, it can take days to track the movement of livestock, to ensure that all exposed or diseased animals have been detected, Dr. Hillman pointed out. He predicted that, by 2008, when the national system is fully implemented and mandatory, tracking livestock movements could be streamlined, greatly enhancing disease eradication efforts. He stressed that the ability to rapidly identify animals and trace livestock or poultry movements is crucial to an effective animal disease response.

Dr. Hillman explained that the national animal identification system, also called “NAIS,” has two major components. The first, he said, is the unique premises - or facility - identification, which identifies the location of livestock operations. This seven-character alphabetic and numerical ‘address’ is to be assigned to ranches and other sites where livestock or poultry are maintained or moved. Premises information will reside on a database, managed by each state and accessible only by animal health officials. Dr. Hillman said facility owners can obtain a

premises identification number now by calling the TAHC’s headquarters in Austin at 1-800-550-8242. By late January, ranchers and facility owners in Texas also may register online through the TAHC’s web page at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>

“The second component of the national system - animal identification--is ready for ‘field-testing.’ This involves the unique identification of each head of livestock moved from its original herd. For cattle, sheep, goats, cervidae (deer) and some other species of livestock, the identification device will be an electronic ear tag, also called a radio frequency (RFID) identification device. For other species, such as swine and poultry, the number can be applied to groups of animals, if they spend their entire production life together as a group or unit,” he said.

Dr. Hillman explained that the TAHC, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry; and the Osage Nation in Oklahoma are working cooperatively on a year-long pilot project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to test various aspects of the premises and animal identification. Field tests also are being conducted in at least 20 other states, to ensure the system will function well when it is fully implemented, said Dr. Hillman.

“In Texas, we will work with specified ranches and livestock facilities, equipment suppliers and computer data service providers

to test the effectiveness, durability and compatibility of equipment and databases for identifying and tracking individual animals,” said Dr. Hillman.

“As many as 80,000 individually numbered electronic tags will be used by the pilot project participants, so cattle, sheep, goats or domestic deer can be identified prior to change of ownership or commingling with animals owned by other ranchers or farmers. The tags may be applied to animals before they leave the farm and ranch, or upon arrival at feedlots or order buyers’ facilities, at livestock markets or other livestock sites. This will give facility owners and managers an opportunity to evaluate the system and calculate the costs and time involved with tagging animals, and collecting and reporting animal movement data. Implantable electronic devices will be used for identifying and tracking horses.

Unless a tag is broken or lost, an animal is to receive only one during its lifetime. The unique 15-digit number on each electronic ear tag or implantable device can be ‘read and recorded’ with a hand-held or stationary tag reader. Ear tags also are imprinted with the number, so the information can be accessed, even if readers are unavailable or out of service.

When identified animals are sold, moved or harvested, project participants will report the event to third-party data service providers by computer, fax or mail, Dr. Hillman explained. Animal tag numbers will be correlated in the database to premises identification ‘addresses.’

A major aspect of the project will

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involve determining problems that occur when integrating information from several data collection systems into a central or common database. Ultimately, when an animal's number is queried, a report should list all the premise numbers where the animal had been maintained. Likewise, when a premise number is queried, the list of related animal identification numbers should appear. When an animal is harvested, its number will be retired.

“With the ‘roll-out’ for the premises identification system, and field trials underway for animal identification, we are much closer to the goal of fighting disease more efficiently and effectively,” said Dr. Hillman. “Once the field trials are completed across the U.S., improvements can be made before the animal identification system is launched nationally. By that time, we hope to have confidentiality issues, and any equipment and database compatibility problems evaluated, addressed and resolved.”

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 two weeks in advance is needed, so that we may have ample time to acquire resources needed to meet your needs. Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service is implied.

If you have questions or would like more information call us at (936) 435-2426.

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<http://walker-tx.tamu.edu>**



Sincerely,

**Reggie Lepley
County Extension Agent – Agriculture**

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