

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service,
Walker County

Agricultural Education Events & News Update

(May Edition 2014)



This newsletter is an effort to inform you of upcoming agricultural educational events and related activities in the Walker County area with upcoming preregistration requirements. There are also a couple of programs mentioned in this newsletter which while may be a little outside our immediate geographic area, include topics of interest to numerous landowners.

If you are in need of a Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), **Private Pesticide Applicator License**, I encourage you to contact the Extension office at (936) 435-2426. We are building the list for our next 2014 licensing class. When we have enough individuals on the roster, we will schedule this training and notify those who have indicated their need for the license. Cost of this training is \$60.00 per person & includes class fee, manual and workbooks. Following completion of the training class & successful test examination with TDA the license fee is an additional \$60.00. As of June 2014, you will have to travel to an offsite location determined by TDA to take your test.

2014 Walker County Farmers Market:

Fresh vegetables are available at the Walker County Farmers Market. This annual gathering of producers is located in the West Hill Mall Parking lot on Saturdays & Wednesdays from 8:00 AM until sell-out. Stop by and pick up your favorite locally grown produce!

The Walker County Farmers Market was first established in the mid 1960's and is still active during each produce season.



If you are interested in participating as a member of the Farmers Market, please contact the Extension office at (936)435-2426 for information.

<http://walker.agrilife.org/>

In This Issue:

Of Note in this edition:

- **WC Farmers Market is open** Saturdays & Wednesdays, 8:00 AM-sell out, at the West Hill Mall parking lot
- **Water Conservation for Home Landscapes**
- **Beef Referendum –Texas Beef Checkoff election upcoming June 2-6**
- **Online Web Tools & Education**
- **Other Extension Onsite Trainings**
- **Walker County Big Tree nominations are being sought**



Cooperative Extension was created by the signing of the Smith-Lever Act May 8th, 1914

Water Resources Information:

Water will be an issue for the residents of this state for years to come. It is never too early to begin thinking about methods and practices to increase our conservation of this resource.

Water Conservation – In the yard

- Water the lawn early in the morning or late in the evening. This diminishes water lost to evaporation.
- Water less frequently, but for a longer period. This allows the water to better penetrate the ground.
- Consider lawns "low priority" when it comes to watering. Keeping the grass green during hot weather wastes a lot of water. **Instead, use the water for trees and shrubs, which are more susceptible to drought damage.**
- If remodeling a lawn or garden, consider using native plants and grasses. Native plants need less water and fertilizer and often live longer than nonnative species.



Water Conscious Landscapes

Developing a comprehensive landscape plan for your property is a good place to start when wanting to redesign or create a new landscape. A thought-out plan will help you create and maintain a beautiful outdoor space that makes the most of existing landscape features while conserving water.

Some things to keep in mind when designing a water efficient landscape are:

- Group plants in the landscape according to their water needs: low water use (fed primarily by rainwater), moderate water use (occasional watering), and high water use (regular watering).
- Use native and low-water-use plants. Native plants require less maintenance because they are more acclimated to the area and climate. Low-water-use plants are a good idea for areas that receive little rainfall.
- Use efficient irrigation systems. Irrigation methods, such as drip or trickle irrigation, use

25 to 50 percent less water and may be more appropriate than a sprinkler system.

- Provide healthy soil. Prepare the ground with these goals in mind: good drainage, smooth contours for even growth, rainwater detention for thirsty plants and good top soil. You should slope the ground away from buildings and grade to one inch below driveway or sidewalk level.

Maintaining your lawn is a big part of conserving water within your landscape. Using proper soil preparation and lawn maintenance practices helps build healthy soil and vigorous, deep-rooted lawns. These lawns are more resistant to disease, can better tolerate insect and drought damage and will out-compete many weeds.

Consider the following tips for landscape maintenance and water conservation

- Keep lawn areas to a minimum
- Remove only one third of the grass length at each mowing. Mow weekly during the spring and leave clippings on the lawn to provide free fertilizer, helping lawns grow greener and denser without causing thatch buildup. Keep the mower blade sharp and mow when the grass is dry.
- Mulch plants to retain soil moisture longer and reduce evaporation.
- Irrigate with the proper amount and only when necessary. Less frequent, but heavier, lawn watering encourages a deeper root system to withstand dryer weather. Watering your lawn every day encourages shallow roots
- Do not let water run down the driveway or onto the street or sidewalk.
- Avoid watering on a windy day, as the water may be blown onto the sidewalk or areas other than your lawn.
- Collect rain water in a barrel and use it to water your garden.
- Provide regular maintenance. If you see a leak in your irrigation system, fix it right away.
- Schedule irrigation wisely. Water in the early morning before the hot sun comes out and evaporates the water.

Remember: What you do affects the quality and quantity of the water you drink and use. By keeping that in mind, you are helping protect water resources now and in the future.

Other Educational Tools & Opportunities:

Online Resources:

If you need help selecting landscape plants that are adapted to our area, you will want to spend a little time with the **Earth-Kind Plant Selector**. This online data base will help you identify plants based on your location, desire, & needs. A great resource! Give it a try at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/plantselector>



Aquatic Weeds in your pond?

There is a great resource for helping identify and providing recommended control options for weeds commonly seen in and around our ponds. **Aquaplant** is easily accessed online and allows you to identify plants by name, photo or "type" of plant.

Proper identification of aquatic weeds is essential to determine the most effective control option. Try it out online at <http://aquaplant.tamu.edu/plant-identification/>



eXtension Webinars & other ONLINE TRAININGS:

Computer savvy agricultural producers have an almost unlimited amount of educational resources available to them. The following information is provided to assist you with your search for trustworthy educational material and education. If you are interested in these online courses or webinars, please follow the links with each one well in advance of the posted date to insure that your computer is set up properly to work with the system requirements.

If you are among the online learners group, be sure to follow this link and book mark it for periodic review. New webinars are added regularly and a WIDE variety of Extension educational topics are available such as; horticulture, plant breeding, soil & water management, livestock, Family & Consumer Sciences.

<https://learn.extension.org/events/upcoming>

Onsite Trainings & Workshops:

Aquaponics Workshop

May 23, 2014 –College Station, TX

This day-long workshop on aquaponics principles and practices is planned at a newly-established aquaponics operation in Bryan, TX. The program will start at 8:30 am and ends with a tour of the farm at 3 pm.

Invited speakers include 3 producers from Cameron, Victoria, and Garland, TX. The producers will share their experiences with their systems, how they started, and tips on how to operate a productive system. Dr. Todd Sink from Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences department will talk about fish species and diseases and Dr. Daniel Leskovar from department of Horticultural Sciences will present a talk on leafy greens production, quality, and water use efficiency.

Fee (Conference Fee Through 5/15 \$65.00, 5/15-5/22 \$85.00) Registration & other program information:

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/productid/1506/>

2014 TAMU Grassfed Beef Conference

May 29-30, 2014 –College Station, TX

This conference is a fast-paced comprehensive look into the exciting and challenging arena of grassfed beef production.

Fee (Conference Fee Through 5/23 \$250.00, 5/25-5/26 \$300.00, Onsite \$300.00)

Registration & other program information:

<https://agriferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/publicHome/>

Be sure to follow the links into the Events postings by date.

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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 one week 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 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

Reggie Lepley

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

25th Anniversary

Big Tree Registry

Sponsored by the Walker County Historical Commission, the City of Huntsville, the Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Walker County.

**Nominate your tree
to be a part of local
history!**

**Submissions for any of the 93 known
tree species in Walker County will be
accepted through the end of 2014.**

**For more information, contact Jordan Herrin at (936)
295-5688 or visit the City of Huntsville Web site,
www.huntsvilletx.gov, for forms and size requirements.**

TEXAS BEEF CHECKOFF FACT SHEET

Texas Beef Checkoff

As allowed under the Texas Agriculture Code, cattle industry organizations have requested permission from the Texas Department of Agriculture to create a producer funded and managed, state-level beef checkoff program financed through a refundable assessment at each point of cattle ownership transfer in Texas.

Management

The Texas Beef Checkoff program will be managed by a council appointed by the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture from producer nominees submitted by the Texas Beef Council. The managing council will be the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas.

Assessment Use

The assessment will be used for promotion, marketing, research and educational efforts regarding beef and beef products in Texas, the U.S. and/or internationally. Decisions on how the funds will be used will be made by the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas.

Assessment Amount

A refundable maximum assessment of \$1 per head of cattle will be collected at each point of ownership transfer in Texas.

Assessment Exemption

Non-producers are exempt from paying the assessment. A person is a non-producer if: (A) the person's only share in the proceeds of a sale of cattle or beef is a sales commission, handling fee, or other service fee; or (B) the person: (i) acquired ownership of cattle to facilitate the transfer of ownership of such cattle from the seller to a third party; (ii) resold such cattle no later than ten days from the date on which the person acquired ownership; and (iii) certified, as required by procedures prescribed by the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas that the requirements of this provision have been satisfied.

Assessment Commencement

If producers pass this referendum, the collection of the assessment will begin October 1, 2014.

Checkoff Referendum

In accordance with provisions of Texas Agriculture Code and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) rules, TDA will conduct a referendum to allow cattle producers the opportunity to vote on establishing the Texas Beef Checkoff program.

Voting Period

The referendum voting will begin on Monday, June 2, 2014, and continue through Friday, June 6, 2014.

Voting Locations

Eligible producers may vote at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during each office's normal business hours. If an eligible producer is unable to access a county office during the voting period, a mail-in ballot may be requested from the Texas Department of Agriculture between May 19 and June 2, 2014, by calling 512-463-3285.

Voter Eligibility

Any producer, regardless of age, who has owned cattle in Texas any time between June 6, 2013, and June 6, 2014, is eligible to vote in the referendum. For purposes of this referendum, a producer may be either an individual or a legal business entity. Youth younger than 16 years of age must have a parent or guardian co-sign the ballot. A non-producer (i.e. dealer, order buyer, etc.) is not eligible to vote in the referendum.

Voting Deadline

Votes must be cast or completed mail-in ballots postmarked by no later than end of business Friday, June 6, 2014.

More Information

For more information about the Texas Beef Checkoff and the referendum contact Lance Williams, Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas, 78711 or call 512-463-3285 or visit TexasAgriculture.gov.

TEXAS BEEF CHECKOFF

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Texas Beef Checkoff?

A: The Texas Beef Checkoff is a producer funded and managed, state-level promotion, marketing, research and education program for beef and beef products.

Q: How will the Texas Beef Checkoff program be funded?

A: The Texas Beef Checkoff program will be funded through a refundable assessment on cattle at each point of ownership transfer in Texas. If approved, the maximum assessment will not exceed \$1 per head of cattle.

Q: Is the Texas Beef Checkoff program different than the current U.S. Beef Checkoff program?

A: Yes, the Texas Beef Checkoff program is different and separate from the current U.S. Beef Checkoff. The Texas Beef Checkoff program may complement and extend the U.S. Beef Checkoff efforts.

Unlike the U.S. program, which requires that fifty cents of every dollar collected be sent to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board for programs, the entire Texas Beef Checkoff assessment would be managed by Texas cattlemen and women. Another difference is the Texas Beef Checkoff assessment is refundable.

Q: Who will manage the money collected through the Texas Beef Checkoff program?

A: The Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas serves as the management entity of the state-level checkoff program. This council is appointed by the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture from producers nominated by the Texas Beef Council with input from the Texas cattle organizations. It is intended that the same people who serve on the Texas Beef Council will be nominated and appointed to serve on the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas.

Q: What will the money be used for?

A: The use of funds is limited by the parameters established in state law, which are beef promotion, marketing, research and consumer education for beef and beef products. The money can be used in Texas, the U.S. and/or internationally. The law does not allow checkoff funds to be used for lobbying activities to influence public policy or government affairs.

Q: What is meant by the assessment being “a maximum of \$1”?

A: According to the state law governing commodity checkoff programs, producers set the maximum allowable rate for the assessment through the referendum vote. The actual assessment rate is set, not to exceed the maximum, by the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas. If circumstances ever warranted an assessment less than the maximum, the Council has the authority to set that rate without another referendum. It is anticipated that the initial assessment will be \$1.

Q: Who will decide if the Texas Beef Checkoff program is started?

A: Eligible producers who owned cattle in Texas any time between June 6, 2013, and June 6, 2014, will vote in a referendum to determine if a state-level checkoff program is started.

Q: When and where will the referendum occur?

A: Eligible producers may vote in a referendum by ballot at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office beginning June 2 through June 6, 2014, during regular business hours at that office. Visit TexasAgriculture.gov for a listing of county office locations and business hours.

Q: Who is eligible to vote?

A: Any producer, regardless of age, who has owned cattle in Texas any time between June 6, 2013, and June 6, 2014, is eligible to vote in the referendum. For purposes of this referendum, a producer may be either an individual or a legal business entity. Youth younger than 16 years of age must have a parent or guardian co-sign the ballot. A non-producer (i.e. dealer, order buyer, etc.) is not eligible to vote in the referendum.

Q: If I can't travel to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office, can I still vote?

A: Yes. Eligible producers unable to access a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during the voting period may request a ballot by mail from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Mail-in ballots must be requested between May 19 and June 2, 2014 by calling 512-463-3285. Completed mail-in ballots must be returned directly to the Texas Department of Agriculture, postmarked no later than June 6, 2014, to be valid.

Q: If I vote in person, should I go to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office where my cattle are located or where I live?

A: Eligible producers may vote at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office, regardless of where your cattle are located or where you live.

Q: I don't live in Texas, but own cattle in Texas, can I vote?

A: Yes. Producers who owned cattle in Texas any time between June 6, 2013, and June 6, 2014, are eligible to vote. Out-of-state voters can vote at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office or by requesting a ballot by mail from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Mail-in ballots must be requested between May 19 and June 2, 2014 by calling 512-463-3285. Completed mail-in ballots must be returned directly to the Texas Department of Agriculture, postmarked no later than June 6, 2014.

Q: Can I request a refund?

A: Yes. A producer who has paid an assessment to the Texas Beef Checkoff may obtain a refund of the amount paid by filing an application for refund with the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas within 60 days after the date of payment. The application must be in writing, on a form prescribed by the Council for that purpose, and accompanied by proof of payment of the assessment.

Q: Who is exempt from paying the assessment?

A person who owns cattle for less than 10 days or who serves as a dealer or order buyer in the sales transaction may qualify as a "non-producer" and would not be subject to this assessment.

Q: Is this a government program?

A: No. Texas law governs the creation of state-level commodity checkoff programs. However, once the program is approved through passage of a producer referendum, then the program is funded and managed by cattlemen and women. The Texas Department of Agriculture maintains oversight responsibility to ensure the integrity of the program.

Q: Will the state government have control over the money collected?

A: No. According to Texas law, these funds are held outside of the state treasury. This means the Texas Legislature, the Texas Department of Agriculture and any other state governing entity has no jurisdiction over the funds collected through a state-level commodity checkoff program.

Q: If the Texas Beef Checkoff program is approved, when will collections begin?

A: If approved, collection of the assessment will begin October 1, 2014, and continue until the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas notifies cattle collection points to cease collection.

Q: Who will collect and remit the assessment?

A: Each collection point is responsible to collect and remit the assessment. A collection point is any entity that makes payment to a producer for cattle purchased or facilitates transfer of ownership. The assessment is remitted to the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas or its designated agent. This collection process is identical to the existing U.S. Beef Checkoff program.

Q: Where can I get more information about the Texas Beef Checkoff?

A: For more information about the Texas Beef Checkoff and the referendum contact Lance Williams, Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas, 78711 or call 512-463-3285 or visit TexasAgriculture.gov.

TEXAS BEEF CHECKOFF VOTER ELIGIBILITY

Texas law specifies that producers may vote in a referendum to establish a state-level beef checkoff program. To be eligible to vote, producers must have owned cattle in Texas any time between June 6, 2013, and June, 6, 2014.

For purposes of this referendum, a producer may be either: 1) an individual; or 2) a legal business entity. Each individual or legal business entity gets one vote. There is no age requirement to vote; however, eligible producers younger than 16 years of age will be required to have a parent or guardian co-sign their ballot. Proof of cattle ownership, i.e. bill of sale, business records, etc., may be required by the Texas Department of Agriculture when validating the voting results.

A legal business entity is any form of business structure under the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code that is registered with the Texas Secretary of State's office. The most common legal business structures include: Incorporated (Inc.), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) and Limited Partnership (LP). A single representative from a legal business entity may cast only one vote regardless of how many owners and/or partners are included in the business.

Someone who owns cattle and is not involved in any legal business entities is considered an individual for purposes

of this referendum. Each individual may cast one vote.

For example, a husband and a wife, joint-owners in a non-incorporated ranching enterprise, are entitled to cast one vote each. An assumed name certificate, commonly known as "Doing Business As" or DBA, filed with a county clerk's office is not considered to be a legal business entity, unless the DBA is attached to a legal business structure. Eligible youth (4-H, FFA, etc.) may each cast one vote.

In some circumstances a voter may be eligible to cast multiple votes. Producers who own their own cattle as an individual and also own cattle as an owner or partner in one, or more, legal business entities will be able to cast multiple votes. They can vote once as an individual and they may vote for each of the legal business entities they represent. For this person to cast the legal business entity vote(s), he/she will need to be the designated representative from the legal business entity. Again, a legal business entity may only vote once. When a person qualifies to cast more than one vote, each vote must be cast on a separate ballot. Casting multiple votes on a single ballot will invalidate that ballot. Use the following worksheet to help to determine multiple votes.

VOTE DETERMINATION WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to determine how many votes your ranch and/or business has for the Texas Beef Checkoff referendum. Youth younger than 16 years of age must have a parent or guardian co-sign the ballot. Multiple votes must be cast using separate ballots.

PRODUCER TYPE	No. of Votes	Total Votes
1). Individual You _____ Spouse _____ Children _____	_____ _____ _____	
2). Legal Business Entity Business Name _____ <i>(Only one representative may be designated per business entity to vote.)</i> _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL AND BUSINESS ENTITY VOTES: <i>(Each vote must be cast on a separate ballot.)</i>		_____