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Pecan Field Day – April 4th

On April 4th, 2023, the Extension offices in Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hill and McLennan Counties will host a Pecan Field Day at **Russell Pecans, 12633 Gholson Road, Waco, Texas**. One (1) IPM CEU will be offered. \$10 to register. Registration will open at 8:30 a.m. Our topics and speakers include *Pecan Grafting – Tools Methods and Demonstrations*; *Pecan Tree 101 for Homeowners*; and *Effective Crow Control Techniques*. Monte Nesbitt, Extension Pecan/Fruit/Citrus Specialist and Robert Irving, Founder of Texas Crow Patrol will be our featured speakers. The McLennan County Master Gardeners will be providing breakfast. *Seating is up to you! Don't forget to bring your own lawn chair!* All persons must call the office to register (254)757-5180.

Central Texas Small Grain Field Day, Thursday, April 20th

Our Annual Small Grain Field Day will be held on Thursday April 20th near McGregor. There are 11 Hard Red Winter Wheat varieties planted in a side-by-side demonstration located off Smith Road, which is about halfway between Waco and McGregor, on the north side of the road. We will have Extension signs out on Hwy. 84 for the field day. Signs are up identifying the varieties. I encourage you to go look at them and how they are adapting to the environmental conditions of Central Texas. Be careful pulling off and on Hwy 84. On April 20th we will start in the field of Kevin Huffman with registration opening at 7:30 am. Breakfast will be provided by Lone Star Ag Credit. Dr. Reagan Noland will lead us on a walking tour of the Hard Red Winter Wheat Varieties. He will be discussing the “characteristics of each variety entered.” Mark Nemec of MJN Consulting will provide a “Small Grain Insect Scouting Report on Insects and Disease.” We will move to the McGregor Research Center, located South of McGregor for the remainder of the program. Dr. Jason Johnson will speak there on “Agriculture Commodities and Current Factors Affecting Markets.” Tyler Mays, Hill County IPM Agent will present his findings on local research work with “Hessian Fly and Their Impact on the 2023 Wheat Crop.” We are looking forward to the City of Waco Fire Department presenting on “Grain Rescue.” Dr. Noland will also be speaking on “planting rate, fertility and other pertinent topics relating to this years’ wheat crop.” We will have the famous *ZTD Tenderloin Steak Tips* for lunch. This program will offer 2 TDA CEU’s and 4.5 Certified Crop Advisor Credits. Please RSVP before April 10th by calling the office at (254)757-5180 or emailing Candace Chapman at candace.chapman@ag.tamu.edu

Central Texas Vines and Wines, May 23rd

We have partnered with the Bosque County Extension Office to have our 2023 vineyard program on the beautiful Valley Mills Vineyards with the Bagnasco Family. We will start with registration opening at 8:30 am. Joey Bagnasco will be leading a *Tour of the Vineyard* as he discusses *Vineyard Site Selection* and *Trellis Design*. Fran Pontasch will present on vineyard *Obligations: Money-Time-Labor*. Joey told me their vineyard has seen 114 degrees this past summer and O degrees in February 2021. That led us to ask Michael Cook to lead a discussion on *Challenges & Obstacles to Seasonal Vineyard Management*. For lunch we will have the famous *ZTD Tenderloin Steak Tips*, and you will be able to participate in a *Vertical Tasting of VMV Tempranillo*. Justin Scheiner will present *Petiole Sample Testing, Interpreting and Addressing Nutrient Deficiencies*. We will conclude with Charlie Walter discussing *What a Winemaker Looks for in a Vineyard*. Breakfast will be provided by Lone Star Ag Credit. Our program will offer 2 CEU's (1 IPM & 1 Gen). Registration is \$35 and payable at the door. All interested persons must RSVP by calling (254)757-5180. We will have 4 CCA Credits.

Hair Sheep Conference, May 25th

On May 25th, we will host our 2nd Hair Sheep Conference. This program will be located at the BASE @ Extraco Events Center. Registration will begin at 7:30 am. We will start with Purina Nutritionist Clay Elliott speaking on *Visual Selection Fundamentals*; Jake Thorne, Extension Sheep and Goat Specialist will present on *Managing Internal Parasites in Sheep*; Reid Redden, Extension Sheep and Goat Specialist will discuss the *Benefits of Hair Sheep in Texas*. Reid will also introduce new research in the *21st Century Hair Sheep Genetic Selection Technologies*; Dr. Elliott will present on *Supplementing the Diet of Hair Sheep*; we will have Jake Thorne lead a discussion on *Management of*

Weaned Lambs. Derek Poe, the General Manager of the Hamilton Commission Company is going to speak on *Market Trends & Opportunities*. Finally, Bill Costanzo, Extension Research Associate will present on *Livestock Predation Management*. Interested participants should contact the McLennan County Extension Office at (254)757-5180. More information will be shared as this program develops.

February is Prune Month

By the book, the best time to prune trees and shrubs is January through early March when trees and shrubs are dormant. Another reason to prune when its cooler is the insects are not as active and insect populations are low. If we are on the honest bus and “sharing,” I prune trees when I have time. However, I always use a paint spray to cover prune wounds to 1) seal the wound and 2) keep insects out. I have always pruned my roses and fruit trees on Valentine's Day. If you have major pruning that needs to be done on large shrubs, trees, crape myrtles etc. please do that in the month of February. Please do not top trees, especially crape myrtles, as this removed branches and leaves only bare trunks. This will weaken your tree and their immune response ability, which makes it much more susceptible to disease and pest.

Soil Test

I like to use a spade shovel to take soil samples. Clear the litter from the soil surface and go to a depth of 6 inches. For small acreage it is best if you take multiple samples, mix them up and collect one composite sample. Completely fill the soil sample bag (it's about a pint). Do not use a metal can to collect samples as it will alter readings. Complete the information form on the front page with your id, acreage, what you are growing, select the analysis you need (typically routine), and how the sample will be used. Place payment, soil bag(s) and forms in a cardboard box and send to Soil, Water and Forage Testing Lab at College Station.

4224 Cobbs Drive – Waco, Texas 76710 – (254)757-5180

Hay Samples for Hay Show

We will be accepting forage samples for nutritive value testing at *McLennan County Extension Office-Waco, Watson Feed-Mart, Buzbee Feed-Waco, McGregor General Store-McGregor, Brazos Feed-Waco, Miller Hay and Feed-Elm Mott, West Feeds-West, China Spring Store-China Spring and Bar None Ag-Speegeville* from July 1 through July 31. Samples should not be taken from the outer 4 to 6 inches of round bales. Samples from square bales should come out of the middle of the bale. Most producers place a flake in a feed sack, we need about half a sack of hay. Write your name, ID, and type of grass sampled on the sack (Bahia, Coastal, Tifton, Jiggs, Ryegrass, etc). There will be a charge of \$5.00 for NIR samples (Bermudagrass, Bluestems, Bahia, Legumes) and \$15.00 for Protein and ADF (haygrazer, ryegrass, etc). Hay samples and checks made payable to Program Development Fund should be left with the sample and paperwork at the drop off location of your choosing. The hay show is open to McLennan and neighboring counties. We will have our 2023 Hay Show August 24th at the Timbercrest Baptist Church, 1625 Crow Dr, Waco Tx. and open registration at 5:30 pm and begin with a meal at 6 pm. Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson will be our guest speaker at the Hay Show Program. We will meet, listen to Dr. Corriher-Olson, have a meal and then present the result of the hay show entries. Extension office staff will deliver your samples to the testing lab. Sample results will be returned to the Extension office and then distributed. We will mail all individual results to the persons sending in samples as soon as we get the results from the LAB. A Best of Show will be selected for each category as follows: Bermudagrass, C-4 Perennial (Switchgrass, Big bluestem and Indiangrass, Bahiagrass and Dallisgrass) and C-3 Grass (wheat, oats, rye, barley, triticale, and annual ryegrass) and Legume. We will be offering 1 General CEU to be applied toward a pesticide applicator license. More information will be promoted on this as we get closer to the summer.

Soil Campaign Drive(s)

I am going to partner with a neighboring county to offer a new program for agriculture producers to submit soil samples into a Soil Test Campaign. The goal would be to promote good soil testing practices to measure available nutrients in your soil profile and you make correct soil nutrient amendments based off of soil test, and at a lower test price. “McLennan and Falls County producers only” will be able to participate in this 2023 McLennan/Falls County Extension Soil Test Campaign. The Fall Forage and Row Crop Soil Sample Campaign will run from September 1 – September 15th, 2023. This campaign is made possible with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Soil, Water, and Forage Testing Lab in College Station. Soil samples submitted in the McLennan/Falls Fall Forage Soil Campaign will be \$8.00 for a routine analysis and \$15.00 for a “routine analysis including micro-nutrients.” You may pick up information, collection bags, and forms at the McLennan County Extension Office and/or from the McLennan County USDA NRCS office. Soil samples, forms, and payment should also be returned to one of these locations during the soil campaign two weeks (9/1-9/15). Extension office staff will deliver your samples to the testing lab. Sample results will be returned to the Extension office and then distributed.

TDA Recertification Requirements

Licensed private applicators are required to recertify every five years by obtaining 15 continuing education credits, including two (2) credits in laws and regulations and two (2) credits in integrated pest management (IPM), prior to expiration of the license. Licensed commercial, noncommercial and noncommercial political subdivision applicators are required to recertify every year by obtaining five continuing education credits; with one credit each from two of the following categories: laws and regulations, integrated pest management or drift minimization. In McLennan County I offer 50 to 60 CEU credits every year.

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Pre-Emerge in Lawns

Another Valentine's Day reminder for me is to put out a pre-emerge product on my lawn to prevent spring and summer weeds from growing. Don't apply a pre-emerge in gardens or in an area you plan to seed as you will destroy all seed that is planted. The over-application of pre-emerge does more damage to lawns than people realize. Year after year application of heavy doses of pre-emerge will weaken grass roots. There are several products with various active ingredients like prodiamine, dithiopyr, benefin, indaziflam, pendimethalin that offer good control of grass and some broadleaf weeds. Each active ingredient works different. Research each one before you apply to make sure the need you have can be targeted by the product you use. For best results, I recommend that you make a minimum of two pre-emergence herbicide applications each year: one on February 15th target summer annual weeds and one on September 1 to target winter annual weeds. Pre-emergence herbicides will often be the most effective when applied based on soil temperature, because soil temperatures play a critical role in weed seed germination. Per the recommendations above, apply your spring preemergence herbicide when soil temperatures reach approximately 55°F for several days. Fall applications can be made several months later when soil temperatures decrease to approximately 70°F for several days.

Economic Impact of Agriculture in McLennan County

In the Fall of 2022 Dr. Jason Johnson used information from our McLennan County Extension Ag Increment Report and developed a publication that illustrated the economic impact of agriculture in our county and area. McLennan County produces a number of field, nursery, and vegetable crops, with annual crop receipts (including crop insurance payments) from production agriculture totaling \$61.7 million. Cash receipts for livestock sales, which are predominantly from cow/calf and stocker

production, totaled \$47.3 million annually. Hunting and other agricultural-related activities contributed an additional \$7.7 million. Total cash receipts from agricultural production and related activities totaled \$122.5 million.

The original \$122.5 million economic contribution from farm and ranch production leads to total regional economic output of \$186.9 million, which supports approximately 4,800 full-and part-time jobs annually in McLennan County. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Texas County Business Patterns (CBP), excluding government employees, there are approximately 15,370 salaried employees in agribusiness in McLennan County. The CBP shows that the area's agribusiness complex accounted for a payroll of \$497.4 million.

This report summarizes the analysis conducting for quantifying the economic impact of production agriculture in a 7-county region in Central Texas consisting of Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties. Total cash receipts from agricultural production and related activities totaled \$685.7 million. The original \$685.7 million economic contribution from farm and ranch production leads to total regional economic output of \$1.1 billion, which supports approximately 23,600 full-and part-time jobs annually.

Upcoming Programs/Dates

**** Not mentioned in Ag Newsletter**

June 9th - East Side Row Crop Turn Row Meeting, Asa

June 15th - West Side Turn Row, Crawford

June 21st - Stocker Cattle Program, West Auction

August 24th - Hay Show

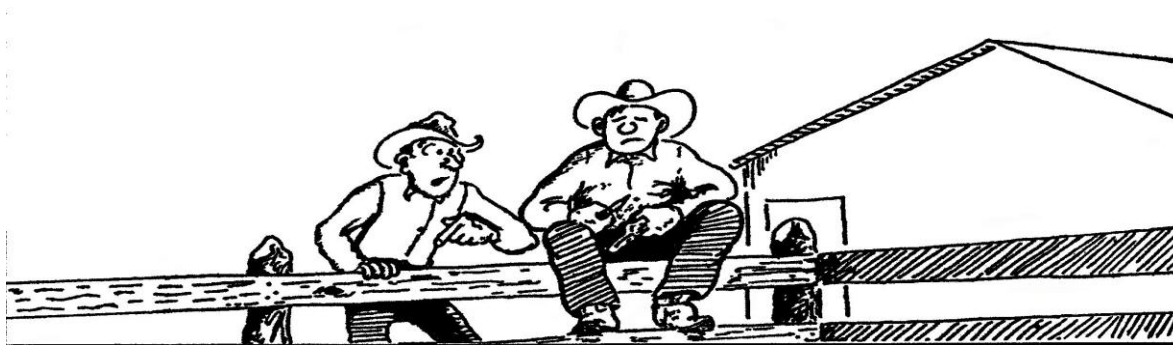
September 22nd - CenTex Beef Cattle Symposium

September 28th - Harvest Celebration, Crawford

October 31st - Robertson CEU Program

December 7th – 8 hour CEU Program

December 14th - Ag Increment



Broken Bolts, Missing Shanks/Sweeps

My first plowing experiences were with a 4020 tractor and a Krause tandem. It is not that hard to go around in a circle or big square in a big wheat field. Once you make that first death defying pass around the field, real slow, so you don't hit the fence, you had it made. You still had to make sure you overlapped enough and try to make good, consistent turns on the corners. You had to listen and check your bearings on the tandem but all-in-all, plowing with the tandem wasn't too bad. After I had that down I was upgraded to plowing wheat stubble with what we called the three-bar plow, it hooked up to the 3 point, and it had shanks and chisel sweeps. The frame of the three-bar plow had three 5" in diameter bars and each bar had shanks. The shanks were held on with a U-bolt clamp. Each shank had a sweep on it. The sweeps go into the soil for tillage. Each sweep was attached to the shank with two bolts. Each shank had one bolt holding it onto the U-bolt clamp. These clamps/shanks/sweeps were aligned in a pattern that allowed for each sweep to plow the ground and not leave any skips. You had to pay more attention when using the three-bar plow. You turned at the end of every trip, you had to make sure you overlapped enough, and you had to watch the plow and look for missing shanks. After you become accustomed to the plow you can glance back and know immediately if everything is "good." As a 13 year old kid you glance back and you are dreaming about whatever kids dream about after hours driving a tractor plowing until your heart stops. There is a missing shank. You stop immediately and look back and don't see it. In my mind Dad is probably somewhere close, I can't see him and he's watching me. My stomach would be upset and I knew that I was wasting time that I could be plowing and covering more ground. The horrible thing is I would have to replot everything I had just plowed since that bolt broke on the shank. Whatever length of time since that bolt broke and that shank fell I have been leaving a 14" skip and weeds are going to grow there. You can't hide that kind of mistake. The shank was put under a lot of pressure, or hit a hard spot, because the bolt holding it on broke and the shank fell off somewhere in the field. So I start driving or walking, depending on how scared I am, until I find it. Typically I would walk because I sure did not want to run over the sweep and shank with a tractor tire. I would end up carrying the sweep and shank across a field. I hated losing shanks. So much so that after a few of these mishaps I started checking bolts before I started, when fueling, etc. A loose bolt will break. I would grab my wrench and a cheater pipe and go to each bolt holding that shank on and tighten it. Most of the bolts we used for the shanks were "hard" bolts. They had 3 radial lines on the head of the bolt. I think that is a Grade 5 bolt. If a shank had a soft bolt on it I would watch it extra close while plowing because they broke much more easily than a hard bolt. A soft bolt had no radial lines on the bolt head. We didn't use any bolts harder than a 5. You need some "give," the shank needed to have a pressure release somewhere so you didn't bend or break a shank. Replacing bolts is much cheaper than replacing shanks. I honestly miss those days of climbing on a tractor and just plowing. No people to ask you questions, it was before cell phones, you were all alone. A water jug and a radio (maybe) and dust. Out there was not much traffic, open roads, open skies and maybe a dirt devil dancing in the wind. They were much simpler times for me, and THOSE were the good old days. sMc

Stan McEllan