

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Pecan Field Day
- Central Texas Small Grain Field Day
- Private Applicator Training
- McGregor Research Center Field Day
- Fire Ant Management
- Vines and Wines
- Call the Master Gardener Hot Line
- Fleas
- Central Texas Sheep & Goat Conference
- Soil Sample
- West Side Turn Row Meeting
- Stocker Cattle Seminar
- Hay Show
- Weed Control in Lawns
- Lawns 101
- VirKim Pest Control Operator and Turfgrass Conference
- CenTex Beef Cattle Symposium
- Harvest Celebration
- Facebook and E-Mail Information
- From the Top Rail by Dr. Shane McLellan

Pecan Field Day, Thursday, April 11th

On April 11th, the Extension offices in Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hill and McLennan Counties will host a Pecan Field Day at **Russell's 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 speaker include *Pecan Grafting – Tools Methods and Demonstrations; Pecan Variety Selection; Irrigation and Other Factors That Limit Pecan Production* by Monte Nesbitt, Extension Pecan/Fruit/Citrus Specialist. 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 (254)757-5180 to register.

Central Texas Small Grain Field Day, Thursday, April 18th

Our Annual Small Grain Field Day will be held on Thursday April 18th near McGregor. There are 10 Hard Red Winter Wheat varieties planted in a side-by-side demonstration located off the North side of Hwy 84, about 1.9 miles East of McGregor in cooperator Kevin Huffmans field. We will have Extension signs out on Hwy. 84 for the field day. On April 18th we will start in the field with registration opening at 7:30 am. AgTrust Farm Credit will provide breakfast. Dr. Brandon Gerrish, Extension Small Grain Specialist, will lead a walking tour of the Hard Red Winter Wheat Varieties. He will be discussing the *“characteristics of each variety entered.”* Mark Nemecek of MJN Consulting will provide a *“Scouting Report on Insects and Disease.”* We will move to the McGregor Research Center, located South of McGregor for the remainder of the program. Mark Welch will present on a *“Commodity Market Update.”* Jnani Matson of Vortex Advantage Ag will lead a Drone Demonstration as he discusses *“Agriculture Applications with Drones.”* As always, we will have the famous *ZTD Tenderloin Steak Tips* for lunch. Following a brief introduction of our sponsors, we will offer an additional one (1) hour IPM credit to everyone who will accompany us to the McGregor Small Grain Research plots. Tyler Mays, Hill/McLennan County IPM Agent will lead a tour of the plots and research being conducted at the farm. The full program will offer 2 TDA IPM CEU's and 5.5 Crop Advisor Credits (2.5 IPM and 3 Crop Management.) Please RSVP before April 11th by calling the office at (254)757-5180.

“Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat.”
– Laura Ingalls Wilder

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

Private Applicator Training, Tuesday, April 23rd

A private pesticide applicator is someone who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use or state-limited-use pesticides or regulated herbicides to produce an agricultural commodity. Persons interested in obtaining a Private Pesticide Applicators License must attend a training program. We will offer this training on April 23rd. The program will go from 8:30 am to Noon. Cost is \$70. Call or come to our office to register and get your study material. (254)757-5180. TDA has contracted with PSI Services to administer the exam. Once you complete the training, you will send your training confirmation to TDA. TDA will then send you information on how to register for the exam. You will set up the exam with PSI.

McGregor Research Center Field Day, Wednesday, May 1st

Field Day is free and registration will be at 8:30 am. Program begins at 9 am and will conclude at 3 pm. Program will include Industry Experts and University Research findings. The topics will include the latest information on beef cattle research and will be targeting beef cattle producers. There will be a tour of our current research projects at the center.

Fire Ant Management

Fire ants like moisture. With the recent rains we have had, the ants are now busy building their new nest. I like to use the Two-Step Method. I will use one granular product, broadcast over my lawn. This broadcast bait contains a food source the ants like and they take it to their nest. I wait about two weeks then look for active nest. Then I will treat individual mounds with a granular product. The granular product I use on the individual treatment will be a different active ingredient than what I used for my broadcast treatment. There are also liquid mound treatments available.

Vines and Wines, Tuesday, May 7th

The 7th Annual Vines and Wines program will be at the 15:5 Vineyard. Robert and Donnan Alston will be our 2024 host at **3405 Southwinds Drive, Lorena Texas**. Registration will open at 8:30 am. Breakfast will be provided by Capital Farm Credit. Topics and speakers include: *Moisture Monitoring & Floor Management* by Michael Cook; *Water: Limitations and Opportunity* by Dr. Patrick O'Brien; Fran Pontasch will speak on *Pest and Disease Concerns During a Drought*; Kimberly Frost will present on *TABC License and Permit Process*; Robert and Donna will provide a Welcome and a Walking Tour of the Vineyard; Dr. Justin Scheiner will lead discussion on “*Grape Varieties for Texas*,” and Dr. Amit Dhingra will provide the latest research on BioChar and Soil Health. We will feature an awesome steak lunch, along with 3 TDA CEUs and have applied for CCA credits. Registration is \$40. All sponsors get a table, two chairs and two meal tickets. For more information and to RSVP call the office at (254)757-5180.

Call the Master Gardener Hot Line

I am fortunate to supervise 100+ certified and trained Master Gardeners. They have many projects and educational programs throughout McLennan County. One of their programs is our Ask a Master Gardener. You can call the county office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and speak to a Master Gardener about your horticulture issue.

Fleas

I am getting a few phone calls about fleas in lawns now. With recent rains the flea larvae that were dormant is hatching. Lawns should be treated with both granular insecticides and liquid insecticides that are labeled for fleas.

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

Central Texas Sheep & Goat Conference, Tuesday, May 28th

The 4th Annual Central Texas Sheep & Goat Conference will be held at the Exchange in McGregor, located at **300 S Jefferson Ave, McGregor TX 76657**. Registration opens at 8 am and costs \$30. Topics and Speakers include: *Managing Internal Parasites in Small Ruminant*, Dr. Andrew Roemisch - Cottonwood Creek Veterinary Hospital; *Texas Solar Sheep*, JR Howard - Owner/Operator; *Nutritional Needs of Sheep Through Out the Year*, Dr. Reid Redden – Center Director and Extension Sheep & Goat Specialist; *Types/Kinds of Goats*, Dr. Jake Thorne – Extension Sheep & Goat Specialist; *Goat and Lamb Market Update: Price Seasonality and Opportunities*, David Anderson – Extension Specialist, Livestock and Food Product Marketing; *Livestock Guardian Dog: Best Management Practices*, Bill Constanzo, Extension Program Specialist. I am working on a Sheep/Goat lunch. We are still accepting sponsors. All sponsors get a table, two chairs and two meal tickets. Call the office for more information and to RSVP at (254)757-5180.

Soil Sample

Measuring soil nutrients is super easy. You can obtain the paperwork and soil bags from our office. Then you take a 6-inch depth soil slice and place it in a plastic bucket. You can take several samples to obtain a composite sample. Place the samples in a soil bag, mark the bags for your records and identification. Place the soil bags in a box, mail to the address on our soil sample paperwork. Receive the results back in 10 to 14 days and see what the nutrient levels are in your soil. You can make soil amendments correctly based on what your soil actually needs.

West Side Turn Row Meeting, Thursday, June 13th

More information will be shared as we get closer to the date. We normally focus on commodity markets, corn-cotton-grain sorghum crop update, and insect/disease scouting reports. This program will be held off Farmview Parkway, near our supplied research plots.

Stocker Cattle Seminar, Wednesday, June 26th

Our annual Stocker Cattle program at West Livestock Auction in West TX brings some different but timely topics this year. We have Justin Richards and Shawna Ranley of Capital Farm Credit to talk about “*Agriculture Financing in a Changing World*,” Brian Uptmore of West Auction will speak in a live demonstration on “*Defining the Dollar Value of Cattle*,” we will have a FBI agent speak on the “*Importance of Securing a Safe Food Supply*,” and we were are working on a Veterinarian to speak on “*Proper Vaccination of Cattle to Protect our Food Supply*,” Dr. Jason Cleere will join us and discuss “*Nutrition....Forage First*,” our last speaker will be Dr Davis Anderson providing a “*Cattle Market Update*.”

Hay Show, Thursday, August 22nd

I will be accepting Hay Show Samples that are left at our partner county feed stores the week of July 22nd to July 25th. We will have a short educational program on August 22nd at Timber Crest Baptist Church and share the results of our finding on the hay show with all entries. More information will come out on the hay show samples as we get into the summer. Our guest speaker will be presenting on “*Hard to Control Weeds*.”

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

Weed Control in Lawns

April is the month of warm season grasses (and weeds) emergence. Our soil temperatures have warmed up and the warm season plants are coming out of dormancy. Consistent mowing is a good way to keep lawn weeds at bay. Many of our cool season plants are now growing with warm season plants. The cool seasons will burn up as it gets hotter. Late March and Early April I mow my lawn very short; scalping is the term often used. I put my lawnmower deck as low as it will go. I do this a couple times to open the canopy, allow sunlight to warm the soil even more, then raise my lawnmower back up. If I am not going to plant any seeded grasses, I will consider using an herbicide in early April. I identify the weed species and then use an herbicide that is labeled to control that weed. Pay special attention to the label, as some broadleaf herbicides can damage some lawn grasses and not other grasses. Follow the label. Allow time for the herbicide to work before you mow again.

Lawns 101

As lawns break dormancy watch for uniform growth. Some lawns may have patchy, dead areas that have fallen victim to a fungal disease. As April can be wet, humid with heavy dew, it is a good time to apply the first application of fungicide. I like to use products that have either of these active ingredients: propiconazole or azoxystrobin. I will read the label and put one of these active ingredient products out. The label will say when you should make a second application. Always make two applications. They usually are either 7 or 14 days for re-application. The second application does vary from product to product. Over fertilizing with the Nitrogen fertilizer will feed fungus. The simple process of taking a soil sample and sending that in, getting results and finding out what nutrients you need, can help you not over apply Nitrogen.

VirKim Pest Control Operator and Turfgrass Conference, Tuesday, September 10th

Be on the lookout for more information as we get closer to this date, but we will offer 5 CEU's for Structural License Holders as well as 5 hours for our Agriculture License Holders. This annual program is held with our partner VirKim located off Sun Valley Boulevard in Hewitt.

Centex Beef Cattle Symposium, Thursday, September 19th

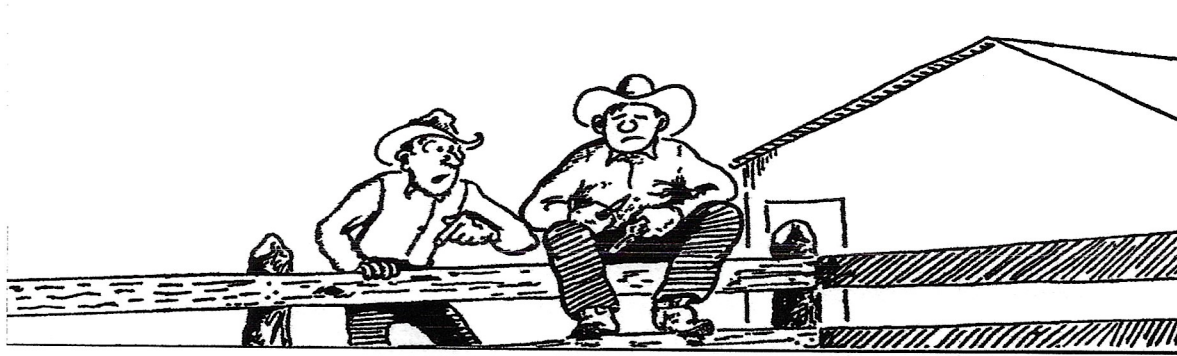
We will have the Centex Symposium earlier this year due to the dates of the State Fair of Texas. We have county extension agents that need to be at both events, so Centex will be early this year. We will be in Robertson County this year.

Harvest Celebration, Thursday, September 26th

We will be at the Tonkawa Falls Community Center to recognize outstanding Extension Volunteers, Businesses that Support Ag Education, a keynote speaker, David Meyers steak supper, refreshments, charcuterie boards, and a night of celebrating agriculture. More information will be released as we get closer.

Facebook and E-Mail Information

Keep up to date with program announcements and follow McLennan County Extension - Agriculture on Facebook **@McLennanAgExtension**. If you are not receiving our updates via e-mail, e-mail Nicole Kosier at nicole.kosier@ag.tamu.edu or call the office at (254)757-5180.



May will be here soon....

As a kid I looked forward to May, especially the end of May. The end of May meant I was getting out of school for the summer. When I was about 13 or 14 or so that changed. No, I still got out of school towards the end of May but I started planting cotton. When I got out of school and got home, I got in the work truck and drove to wherever the tractor and planter were. Dad and I had filled the water trailer the night before, he made sure I had plenty of chemicals. We probably loaded enough seed into the pickup to cover whatever I would plant that day. We had filled the tractor with diesel the night before. So, when I got to the field, I topped off the planters with seed. Then I would raise the planters and grease tractor and planters, clean off disc openers and mix Dual and Caparol herbicide into the tanks on the tractor. Then it was "away I would go!" Each day I would plant about 30 yards and stop and get out of the tractor and check seed depth. If everything was good then it was "go time." I would plant till dark or until my dad got there. To this day, I appreciate straight rows. We did not use gps then. You had row markers on each side of the tool bar and we planted on 42-inch rows and raised beds so you had to pay attention to the rows and row markers and keep that steering wheel straight and smooth. No jerking the wheel or looking off at a dust devil or jack rabbit. You had your head down and probably squinting to keep the dust out of your eyes. Back then we used an open cab 4020 tractor to plant all our cotton and you were "in the elements." I might have gotten a sprinkling of herbicide on me if the wind was right. The toolbar was heavy, it had the old model 71 round-box flex planters on it. They were an upgrade from the steel planters we used when I was little. You had to kind of baby that tool bar each time you stopped at the end of a row and lift it with hydraulics and ease around and get straight, let everything down flat and level, then take off as you let it down. Heavy bar, with planters, full of seed and two big water tanks on the tractor.....a lot of weight. It was an art to run a cotton planter rig and keep straight rows with cotton planted at the right depth etc. I was super proud to come back ten days later and see cotton rowing and the prettiest straight rows you ever saw. Everyone and their dog that drove down that road would look at that emerging cotton and say Mike's boy planted that. I was one proud kid, but I worked at it, as did the other farm kids around me. I think of what I was doing at my son's age now and I cannot imagine him doing what I was doing at 13. My dad probably says the same about when I grew up compared to his raising. As we get closer to the month of May, I can still smell the dust in my nostrils, I can still feel the dirt under my collar. I can feel the heat of the sun on my arms. I can smell the Caparol as I remember pouring it in a tank. I can still feel the swaying motion of that tool bar as I pushed on a brake and slowly, carefully swung the rig around. I can feel the smooth black knob of the hydraulics in the palm of my hand and hear the flex planters squeaking and squawking as I let the planter down. I can feel the throttle knob in my right palm as I bumped it down to get the tractor up in rpms. No matter how you were raised, and what memories you have I hope you too look forward to the end of May. That means we have survived another year and hey, school will be out soon.

sMc

Stan McEllen