Top of the Windmill News

Summer 2018

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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Roy Walston

By: Roy Walston – CEA-Ag/NR

Calendar of Events

Aug 17-18	Texas Sheep & Goat Expo in San Angelo
Oct 1st	Kerr County Hay Show entries due
Oct 1-2nd	Women's Natural Resource Management Conference
Oct 6th	Kerr County 4-H Wild Game Dinner

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45th Annual Sheep and Goat Field Day, Texas Sheep and Goat Expo set for Aug. 17-18

SAN ANGELO – The Texas A&M AgriLife agencies are putting the finishing touches on two major sheep and goat programs in San Angelo, both tailored to all segments of the production side of the industry, organizers said.

The 45th annual Sheep and Goat Field Day will be from 8-11:30 a.m. Aug. 17 at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center on U.S. Highway 87 north of San Angelo.

The Texas Sheep and Goat Expo will headquarter in the 1st Community Federal Credit Union Spur Arena, 4722 Grape Creek Road, located on the San Angelo Fairgrounds. The expo starts immediately following the field day and will run from noon-8:30 p.m. Aug. 17 and from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Aug. 18.

The field day will showcase work being conducted at the center, said Dr. John Walker, Texas A&M AgriLife Research center director. Presentations will include animal evaluation using records, livestock guardian dog technologies, and measuring wool yield and fiber diameter with near-infrared spectroscopy.

"We will also offer a hands-on fleece judging contest for those who want to show their skill at selecting outstanding fleeces. It's meant to be a fun, though thought-provoking and informative, activity," Walker said.

Following the field day, activities will move to the 1st Community Federal Credit Union Spur Arena for a noon meal and the start of the Texas Sheep and Goat Expo.

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Live animal evaluations such as the one pictured here, are popular sessions at the Texas Sheep and Goat Expo. The event is Aug. 17-18 in San Angelo. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Steve Byrns)

Robert Pritz, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service regional program director at San Angelo, said the expo is his agency's premier sheep and goat educational event for the entire state, and credits the active planning committee comprised of agency personnel and producers for its continued success.

"A main goal for the expo is to always present new material, and even after four years of conducting this major event, the committee never fails to deliver on that premise," Pritz said.

"New this year, among other things, will be some twists on the topics of predator control and internal parasite management, two of the top limiting factors that have long faced the industry nationwide.

"We'll also introduce AgriLife's Path to the Plate initiative, which seeks to connect agriculture with good health," he said. "It's a research-based educational program meant to help consumers understand how their food choices impact their health. The program cuts through all the labeling malarkey we are faced with these days and instead strives to provide the best, most reliable science-based information available to help Texans make healthier choices."

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Steve Byrns

Pritz said there will also be equipment demonstrations, an extensive trade show, a youth program that targets sheep and goat skill-a-thons and concurrent sessions for all major segments of the industry. These include sessions on Angora goats, hair sheep production, wool sheep and meat goats.

https://youtu.be/BQmBDEXC0p8

Pritz emphasized the expo is tailored for all levels of knowledge, from neophytes just considering entering the industry to those with generations of production knowledge behind them.

"One session that's of major interest to all, no matter their knowledge level, is the mock auction," Pritz said. "It will be manned by professional order buyers and livestock auction operators who will share their thoughts on the market for a variety of animals we'll have on hand to pass before them in the ring. This has been a very well-received session in the past as it brings together a group responsible for the bulk of the bottom line within the whole industry."

Dr. Reid Redden, AgriLife Extension state sheep and goat specialist at San Angelo, said the final activity capping the two days of programming will be the sale at auction of performance-tested animals.

"This year for the first time, we will also be offering ewe lambs," Redden said.

"The sale is designed to showcase performance-based genetic selection techniques," he said. "The sale will give expo participants the opportunity to buy some of the top genetics available within the breeds represented."

Those animals will include fine-wool and Katahdin and Dorper hair sheep and kiko goats from breeders who have used intensive genetic selection technology to make positive genetic improvement within their flocks, Redden said.

Adult registration is $40 and youth registration is $15. The fees include all meals, snacks and educational materials associated with the expo. Online registration for the expo ends Aug. 14, though registration will still be available at the field day and again at the door at the expo. To register and view the entire agenda, go to https://agrilife.org/westresults/event/

The center field day is free and open to the public.

For more information contact Roy Walston, County Extension Agent – Agriculture, Kerr County at 830-257-6568 or rwalston@ag.tamu.edu.

Kerr County Hay Show

The 2018 hay season has been a tough year for agriculture producers throughout the Hill Country. Based on rainfall data collected from the USDA-ARS-Knipling-Bushland US Livestock Insects Laboratory, Kerr County has received, 7.72" inches of annual rainfall as of June 30th, less than 50% of the average annual rainfall of 15.62" inches.

Nonetheless, plans are still underway for our Kerr County Hay Show and Ag Day to be scheduled this fall. Producers interested in participating in the Hay Show may bring their hay samples by the Kerr County Extension office by Monday, October 1st. Entries will include one small square bale and a producer may enter as many bales as they wish. In cases of round bales producers may contact the Extension office to obtain a core sampler or contact Roy and he will be glad to help core the bales. Entry fee is $10.00 per bale. Classes include; Sorghum Sudan, Winter Annuals, Legumes, Perennial Grasses, Coastal Bermuda, and other bermudagrasses. Plaques will be awarded to the Champion and Reserve Champion bales. This is a good opportunity for producers to get their hay tested and determine how your fertility and management program is working. For more information contact the Kerr County Extension office at 830-257-6568.

Empowering Women- New Stewardship Traditions – October 1-2, Fredericksburg

A conference devoted to helping women manage natural resources in the Edwards Plateau will take place in Fredericksburg Oct. 1-2 at the Inn on Barons Creek. The Women's Natural Resource Management Conference is funded by the Ruth and Eskel Bennett Endowment, said Dr. Larry Redmon, co-chair and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Bennett Trust specialist.

The women's conference is an extension of the Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Conference, which has been held in Kerrville, Redmon said. "More and more women are becoming landowners through inheritance and other means, and we want to help these women be a success in the management of their natural resources," he said. "By offering a ladies conference, we hope women will feel more comfortable with attending and participating. We also want to encourage mothers to bring their daughters; it is a generational thing."

Cost of the two-day conference is $75 and includes all meals, break refreshments and tour transportation costs.

"Everyone involved in the planning process is excited about our new Edwards Plateau Land Stewardship conferences," he said. "And thanks to the Bennett's generosity, this will be a unique learning opportunity for all of us for years to come." Dr. Rick Machen, said the conference will include "the best and wisest, accomplished stewards, visionaries and legacy-leavers as educators for this conference. Those with a passion for natural resource stewardship and a love for the Texas Hill Country will want to be there."

Among the speakers will be wildlife biologists, animal scientists, range scientists, and financial planners.

The conference's preliminary agenda for the first day includes presentations and discussions of land stewardship on your property and how to apply it.

Day two includes a Hill Country Tour where participants will learn about plant identification, wildlife sign identification, trap and archery shooting & lunch at Bridget's Basket in Hunt, TX and stops by more agricultural operations. Registration for the Bennett Trust Women's Conference set for October 1-2, 2018 is now available at the following: https://agriliferegister.tamu.eduBennettTrust. Information is also available at agrilife.org/bennetttrust/.

Nitrate Poisoning for Hay Producers & Livestock Owners

Nitrate poisoning in cattle has been recognized for many years. Some cultivated forages in addition to several common broadleaved a grassy "weeds" can accumulate nitrates. The toxic compound is actually nitrite which occurs during the metabolism of nitrate. Livestock are always consuming some level of nitrate from drinking water and forages. Nitrate consumption becomes a problem when the quantity consumed overrides the capacity of the ruminal microbes to completely convert the nitrates into ammonia and microbial protein. Forage sorghum, grain sorghum, sudangrass, pearl millet and small grains forages are common forage crops that can accumulate nitrates at high levels. Johnsongrass, pigweed, Russian thistle, sunflowers and kochia are some common weedy species that accumulate nitrates and may be present in and around pastures and fields.

Nitrates are usually higher in young growth. But, stress can lead to nitrate accumulation at any stage of growth. The highest concentrations of nitrates occur in the bottom one-third of the stalk of the plant. Concentrations of nitrates are low in the leaves of the plants while the seeds of the plant contain very little, if any, nitrate.

Live plants will continually absorb nitrate from the soil except under extreme drought conditions. Nitrates accumulate in the plant during periods of stress or slowed growth because conversion of nitrate to other N-containing compounds, such as amino acids, is slowed. Dry soil conditions, cloudy overcast days, cool ambient temperatures, disease or insect damage, frost or physical damage, individually or in combination with one another, can lead to nitrate accumulation. Dry, hot weather will increase plant nitrate levels by levels will increase further when the extended dry period is followed by rain and/or wet overcast weather. Following a period of nitrate accumulation, several days of good growing conditions are necessary before plant nitrates are metabolized to lower levels.

Unlike prussic acid, another potentially toxic compound in some forages, nitrate concentrations will not decrease when forages are harvested for hay. However, ensiling fresh, green forages will decrease the nitrate concentrations in the ensiled feed.

Even though standing forage may contain high nitrate levels, the nitrate concentration in the harvested forage can be reduced by raising the cutting height during harvest. So, a great deal of nitrate can be left in the field if the plant is cut 10-12" inches above the ground.

Any standing or harvested forages with questionable nitrate concentration should be analyzed by a testing laboratory. Field kits using diphenylamine are indicators of nitrate presence or absence but are not quantitative tests and are not always accurate. Hot spots are present in all fields. Some may be in shallow soils while others may be in areas that catch runoff and collect more N fertilizer. Samples of standing forage should be collected by cutting the whole plant at the same height the plant would be cut at harvest. Again, it is important to get random samples from the entire field that are representative of the leaf and stem mixture in the forage.

Alternatives pre-harvest and at harvest if nitrate concentrations are high.

- If concentrations are high in standing forage, one alternative is to delay harvest of the forage if conditions allow the plants to grow, the potential toxicity in the forage may decline as the plants metabolize existing nitrate. A more mature harvested forage of lower nutritional value may be worth more than a forage harvested with high nitrate concentrations.
- Raising the cutting height at harvest can reduce nitrates in the harvested forage.
- Ensiling rather than haying can reduce nitrate concentrations 40-60% if ensiled properly.

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Nitrate Poisoning for Hay Producers & Livestock Owners (continued)

Management to reduce toxicity at grazing

- In some cases, the nitrate concentration may be too high to manage. In this case the forage will have to be plowed down, spread across the field for fertilizer or destroyed.
- Diluting high nitrate forages with low nitrate feed and forages is probably the most effective method for utilizing forages with very high nitrate concentrations. This is best through use of a tub-grinder mixing wagon or other means to physically mix the forage with other feed sources. Limit feeding of the forage mix to the cattle minimizes the consumption of the nitrate-containing forage.
- Be certain cattle are full prior to allowing access to nitrate-containing forages. Filling the cattle prevents high levels of nitrate intake and also dilutes the nitrates in the rumen.
- Adapt cattle to nitrates. Ruminal microbes will adapt to higher nitrate concentrations in feeds. Feeding small quantities of nitrate-containing forages over several days promotes adaptation. Limit grazing time for the first 6-8 days.

Saturday, October 6, 2018

Hill Country Youth Exhibit Center (Ag Barn)

3785 Hwy. 27, Kerrville

Tickets are:$20.00, 6 & Under are free & can be purchased at: **Gibson's, Kerr County Extension Office, Kerrville Ranch & Pet, Double L Feed in Ingram & Kerrville, & McCoy's Building Supply**

Tickets also available online: kerr.agrilife.org

Doors open @ 5:00 p.m., Dinner served @ 6:00 p.m.
For more information, call the Extension Office @ 830-257-6568.

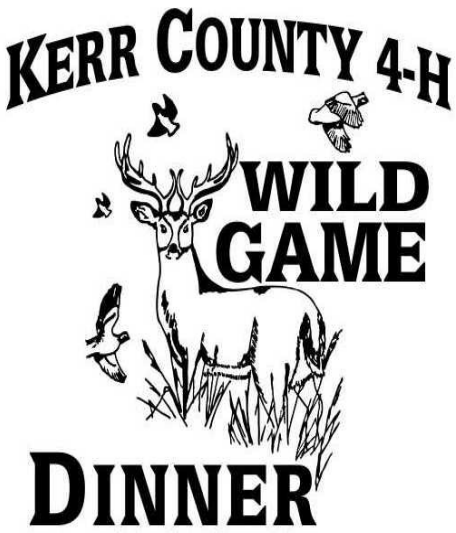

photo by Steve Byrns

Livestock Predators

Livestock predators are on the rise presenting big problems for producers . As predator pressures are increasing in many areas of the state, the reasons for this increased predation varies from region to region.

In an effort to combat predators , Dr. Reid Redden, AgriLife Extension State Sheep and Goat Specialist and William (Bill) Thompson, AgriLife Extension Service Assistant Professor and Extension Economist, have released an on-line predator survey directed toward livestock producers. This is part of Dr. Redden's Livestock Guardian Dog project. This survey is an attempt to gather information on the scale of the losses, which species are suffering those losses and the predator control costs producers are incurring.

The link for this survey is : https://tinyurl.com/predatorsurvey . If you are a livestock producer and have any kind of predator problem, please take a minute and fill out this online survey. Help find a way to get this problem under control.

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