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TDA Feral Hog Program

Feral Hog Abatement Grant Program



Texas is home to nearly 2 million feral hogs, the largest feral hog population in the U.S. Their numbers are continuing to increase because of their high reproductive potential and the lack of natural predators. Feral hogs wreak havoc on property, livestock, crops and pastures across the state and frustrate landowners because of their destructive nature. Landowners have reported extensive damage to crops, fences, roads, ponds, fields and feed loss. Texas AgriLife Extension Service estimates that statewide annual economic damage caused by feral hogs is \$51.7 million. And, unless aggressive control measures are undertaken, the feral hog problem is expected to worsen in the years ahead. The 2010 Feral Hog Abatement Grant Program is now closed.

County Grants for Implementation of Feral Hog Abatement Technologies

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is seeking participation in the County Grants for Implementation of Feral Hog Abatement Technologies Program. The Program is designed to encourage counties across the state to make a concentrated and coordinated effort to reduce the feral hog population and damage caused by these animals during the month of October 2010. In order to participate, the county must complete the Notice of Intent to Participate and submit it to TDA by September 30, 2010. Any county that submits their Notice of Intent after the deadline will receive a 5 point reduction in their point total per business day after September 30. Notices may be submitted via mail, fax, or email to one of the addresses below. Filing a Notice of Intent to Participate does not legally bind your county to par-

ticipate in the Program.

In order to be eligible for a grant, counties will be required to submit a completed Grant Application by November 12, 2010. Participating counties will be required to document the following results for the period of October 1, 2010 through October 31, 2010:

* Number of feral hogs taken in the county, as certified by the county.

* Number of participants at a TDA-approved education program about feral hog abatement technologies.

* Number of acres in the county that landowners will commit, in writing, to allow access by county trappers or Wildlife Services (WS) Specialists for the purpose of removing feral hogs (subject to WS availability).

Based on the criteria above, awards will be made in the form of a grant that the county will be able to use on feral hog abatement related expenditures during the 2011 calendar year. Awards will be made as follows: The highest scoring county will be awarded \$25,000; the second highest will be awarded \$15,000; and the third highest will be awarded \$10,000.

Additionally, the county that has the largest contiguous tract of land that owners will permit approved trappers to access will be guaranteed to have WS Specialists conduct removal services.

News video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGaNubh6_BM

Jack County is participating! If you kill a feral hog this month, then take the tail to Kwik Stop in Jacksboro so it can be counted. Also, let me know if you are interested in signing up your land. Finally, there will be a Feral Hog Program on October 28 at the Jack County Fair Barn beginning at 6 pm.

Please call me if you have any questions.

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Nelson ryegrass out-yields Gulf by 2,000 pounds per acre

Source: *AgriLife News*

Pinching pennies when buying ryegrass seed for winter grazing is a bad business decision, said a [Texas AgriLife Research](#) scientist. "Nelson" is a newly released ryegrass developed by Dr. Lloyd Nelson, AgriLife Research small grains breeder. It has a higher yield potential than "primo" ryegrasses such as TAM90, Prine and Jumbo, he said. "And in South Texas, it's higher than Marshall. In more northern areas, it not significantly higher than Marshall, but it's competitive," said Nelson, who also developed TAM 90 and TAMTBO, other high-yielding ryegrasses.

However, despite the yield advantages, the most commonly planted ryegrass variety for winter pastures is probably Gulf. Why? Probably because its seed is cheaper, he said. "Gulf costs about 34 to 36 cents a pound, while newer varieties like Nelson, Prine and TAMTBO are about 45 to 48 cents per pound,"



he said. Nelson said at the recommended planting rates of 20 to 25 pounds per acre, farmers will save about \$3 per acre in seed costs. "But, for that \$3 savings, they will typically give up about 2,000 pounds of high-quality forage per acre," he said. That 2,000 pounds is the equivalent of at least two large round bales of hay per acre, which typically would be sell for \$40 or more each, according to Nelson. "So it's not a good business decision, in my opinion, to scrimp on seed costs."

Nelson ryegrass has been 10 years in development, Nelson said. Where it was tested in heavy gumbo soils near College Station and in the Beaumont area, it averaged about 7,000 pounds of forage per acre. In comparison, Prine ryegrass averaged about 6,000 pounds; TAM 90 about 5,900 pounds; and Gulf about 5,500 pounds. In 2009-2010 at the College Station site alone, Nelson ryegrass produced 12,500 pounds. Nelson noted the new variety still out-performed Gulf by nearly 2,500 pounds.

Nelson ryegrass' three-year average yields in East Texas at the [Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton](#) where the soils are sandy loams topped 9,500 pounds. Gulf produced 8,300 pounds at the Overton site, while Prine and Passerel Plus ryegrasses produced 9,270 pounds and 9,160 pounds, respectively, Nelson said.

Nelson ryegrass is a tetraploid, which means it has double the number of chromosomes as many ryegrasses. TAM 90 and Marshall ryegrasses have 14 chromosomes. Nelson, TAMTBO and Prine, all tetraploids, have 28, Nelson said. Being a tetraploid means a plant's cells must be larger to accommodate the increased number of chromosomes. Tetraploids have bigger leaves and larger seeds, but not necessarily higher yields, according to Nelson. Larger seeds means a fewer number of seeds are planted per acre per pound of seed, but in the case of Nelson ryegrass, the increased plant and leaf size compensates, he said. "I ran seedling rate tests and found no advantage to planting Nelson at a higher rate," Nelson said.

He said there's still plenty of time to meet the ryegrass planting

window for Texas, which is from mid-October through the first week of December. However, as with all ryegrasses, Nelson ryegrass will need adequate soil moisture to emerge. Ryegrass is typically overseeded over existing, dormant warm-season grass pastures after a light disking.

All ryegrasses, whether a new variety like Nelson or an older variety such as Gulf, will need to be fertilized to soil tests. Usually this means 100 to 150 pounds of actual nitrogen during the season, Nelson said. Because of high nitrogen costs, farmers may try to grow ryegrass for winter pastures at a reduced nitrogen rate or not fertilize at all. This is another bad business decision, Nelson said. "If they're not going to fertilize, I wouldn't recommend them planting any ryegrass. Just buy the hay," he said.

Nelson ryegrass is marketed by BWI Companies. Sales representatives may be reached at 800-752-6632 or 800-442-8443, Nelson said.

2010 Jack County Range Tour

The Annual Jack County Range Tour, sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and NRCS, will be held on Thursday, October 21. This year's tour will feature the Bret Hull Ranch in northeastern Jack County. "Bret is an excellent steward of the land and has been utilizing NRCS programs for many years," said Matt Gregory, NRCS District Conservationist for Jack County. "This tour will give participants the chance to see what multiple years of good management can do to improve grass quality and overall range health."

Topics that will be discussed on the tour include native and improved grass management, brush management, utilizing NRCS programs, and plant identification. After a BBQ lunch, FSA County Director Mike McDonald will provide important FSA updates that producer's need to know and Matt will discuss NRCS updates and program changes.

The tour will begin with registration at the Jack County Fair Barn at 8:30 am. The fee is \$15 per person and includes lunch and 3 CEU's for pesticide license holders. At 9 am, the bus will depart for the ranch until noon. After lunch, Mike and Matt will give their presentations at the Fair Barn.

Participants are asked to call the Jack County Extension office at 567-2132 to sign up to attend.

Texas quail join 'social media'

Source: *AgriLife News*

Fast-flying Texas quail are joining the “social media” craze thanks to a Texas AgriLife Extension Service wildlife specialist. Over the past six months, Dr. Dale Rollins of San Angelo has worked with the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) to produce a series of YouTube videos highlighting ongoing quail research and management tips.



Eight of those “webisodes” are now available on the Texas Wildlife Association’s website at: <http://www.texas-wildlife.org/index.php?>

[op-tion=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=263](http://www.texas-wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=263)>[http://www.texas-wildlife.org/index.php?](http://www.texas-wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=263)

[option=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=263](http://www.texas-wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=263) Rollins said six more are in the works and more taping is planned for this fall and winter.

The videos are being funded by AgriLife Extension’s Quail Decline Initiative in collaboration with other partners including the Texas Wildlife Association, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and the William Stamps Farish Fund, according to Rollins.

“This new technology was a perfect fit for AgriLife Extension’s Quail Decline Initiative, because it allowed us to show research-driven results to land managers in real time and on site from our Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch at Roby,” Rollins said.

“Many landowners have a tough time attending traditional AgriLife Extension field days and programs these days. These webisodes are made especially for that audience,” he said. Rollins said the webisodes are ideal for absentee landowners, because they can be viewed by anyone, anytime as long as they have adequate Internet service. “It’s a great way of providing technology transfer and piquing someone’s interest in quail management,” Rollins said.

The video clips will also be used for the Texas Wildlife Association’s new Learning Across New Dimensions in Science (LANDS) classroom curriculum, which features lessons on quail biology and management. For more information, contact Rollins at 325-653-4576, r-rollins@tamu.edu.

October 2010 Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter

Please use the link below to access the October 2010 Beef Cattle Browsing.

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/beef/browsing/index.htm>

If this link is not active in your email just copy and paste it into your internet address bar and press enter.

The October 2010 Browsing article features the following topics:

- * Red Meat and Colon Cancer
- * Factors Affecting Beef Cow Economic Returns
- * Welfare Standards for Beef Cattle Production
- * Dried Distillers Grains for Growing Calves

- * Fetal Loss from Pregnancy
- * Size, Behavior, and Reproduction of Different Genetic Types of Heifers
- * Projected Profit from Beef Cows

If you have any comments or concerns please email our office at extansc@ag.tamu.edu

Landowner groups launch groundwaterownership website *By tscra*

Landowner groups across the state have launched a new website, www.groundwaterownership.com, to help landowners and the public better understand current groundwater ownership issues. The site is part of a growing effort to ensure groundwater continues to be recognized as a vested, real private property right.

Groundwaterownership.com is a one-stop shop where landowners, elected officials and the public can locate information on groundwater ownership rights and regulations, legal reviews and facts, and important events and dates.

According to Texas landowner groups, groundwater is and always has been an integral part of the land and is owned by private landowners. The Texas Constitution and more than 100 years of case law support this position. The groups have joined forces to reaffirm this right in groundwater, while supporting reasonable, science-based regulation for the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources.

Estimates by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) predict that by 2060 Texas’ population will more than double, increasing its water demand by 27 percent. Because groundwater from Texas aquifers supply more than half the water for the state, it is critical that groundwater resources be managed appropriately to provide for current and future use.

The effort, currently supported by the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA); the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA); the Texas Farm Bureau (TFB); the Texas Poultry Federation (TPF); the Exotic Wildlife Association (EWA); the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association (TSGRA); the Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA); the Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD); the South Texans’ Property Rights Association (STPRA); the Riverside and Landowners Protection Coalition; the Texas Forestry Association; and the Texas Land and Mineral Owners Association (TLMA), brings together more than 400,000 Texans who own more than 50 million acres of private property.

The Best Thing On You Tube

By Marlys Miller, Editor, *Pork Magazine*

Remember the “ADM Supermarket to the World” television advertisements? They used to run on Sunday morning TV, during the likes of Meet the Press, This Week with David Brinkley and Face the Nation. Archer Daniels Midland used to run the ads, which essentially illustrated the far reaching effects of U.S. agriculture (and yes of course, ADM’s role).

There was always a certain amount of pride that stirred within me when those ads flashed on the screen. I thought the “Supermarket to the World” was a fantastic phrase. It has nagged at me that today, when agriculture needs it most, there isn’t an equivalent slogan or advertisement out there.

At least that was the case until recently when a co-worker brought a BASF You Tube video to my attention. I’m not going to try to outline the details for you. Rather, I want you to see it for yourself at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd-48Zw0Tr4>. Seriously, go see that video. It’s the best thing I’ve seen in a long time that promotes U.S. agriculture. BRAVO!

In a nutshell, the video outlines some of the demands placed on modern agriculture and its impressive ability to continuously deliver. It illustrates the tremendous productivity increases and how that benefits humankind. Not one word is spoken, which I find to be a strength, along with the overall simplicity of the graphics and the creativeness of the flow.

Now, it’s not perfect. It’s a bit long at 4+ minutes, although admittedly, the time speeds by. Actually the images move a bit too fast, which is probably my biggest complaint (and a comment from some friends that I had view it for feedback). The messages tick off a bit too quickly for them to sink in. But all in all, it scores a 10 (and I rarely give perfect scores). What’s more, while there are creative and production costs involved in the You Tube offering, but posting it to You Tube costs nothing—that can’t be said for Sunday morning or any other TV ads slots.

The information within the video primarily addresses plant-based agriculture, but all of agriculture can benefit from the positive messages presented. It is what today’s consumers need to “hear” and understand. Now I want to see a similar effort for animal agriculture—BASF? Commodity or general agriculture groups? Anybody?

I found myself strategizing how the You Tube video could be broken down into smaller segments and used elsewhere, including TV ads, to spread the word of the magnificence of U.S. agriculture—something that cannot be repeated too often or too loudly.

Now, I have long ago promoted the idea that agriculture had to speak up more on its behalf and that the fractured nature of its efforts (and the prioritization of protecting one’s turf) drove me crazy. While there is more good work being done today, I still think there needs to be a more coordinated and unified effort for all of agriculture. At least the BASF You Tube video offers a positive step in that direction.

Seriously, go check it out--

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd-48Zw0Tr4>.

RanchTV educational website reaches 250 online videos mark *Source: AgriLife News*

RanchTV.org, an online video library that offers instruction on beef production management and practices, has passed a milestone after one year of existence, according to a Texas AgriLife Extension Service expert.

"The Beef Cattle Extension faculty with AgriLife Extension, along with other faculty in the Department of Animal Science and College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University, have put online more than 250 videos on beef cattle management," said Dr. Dan Hale, AgriLife Extension meat specialist.

The RanchTV.org online video library was developed to extend education resource and information outreach to beef cattle producers via the Internet, Hale said.

"They have had almost 30,000 viewers over the last year," he said. "The goal of the online digital library is to provide cattle producers easy access to information that will help teach best management practices. This was accomplished through the sponsorship of the Texas Beef Council."

Instructional topics on the website include effective stockmanship, Beef Quality Assurance practices, grid marketing and chute-side processing, Hale said.

"RanchTV.org includes information about almost every aspect of beef cattle production," he said. "It even contains an online Beef 706 program where cattle producers can learn about the value of cattle from feeder calf to boxed beef."

"RanchTV.org will be an evolving online learning center for cattle producers, with many more videos scheduled to be added over the second year."

According to Hale, one of the most popular videos is where Dr. John Davidson, a Texas A&M College of Veterinary Science veterinarian, shows an intramuscular vaccination of a live calf using magnetic resonance imaging. It can currently be seen in the featured-video section on the home page.

"It is our goal to continually add new videos on the latest issues facing the beef cattle industry," Hale said.

The RanchTV.org online learning center was developed in part through the checkoff funds provided by the Texas Beef Council. For more information

Revisions to Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Regulations Adopted; Effective November 2010

Source: ICA News Release



Changes to Texas' cattle trichomoniasis (or "trich") regulations were adopted Tuesday, October 5, by the 13 governor-appointed leaders of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and will become effective in November 2010. Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC assistant state veterinarian

and epidemiologist, discussed the program and outlined rule changes in a recent board meeting for Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas (ICA).

Cattle trichomoniasis, a venereal disease of cattle, can cause cows to abort very early in their pregnancy and be slow to re-breed. Cows, given sexual rest, may clear the disease, but infected bulls become lifetime carriers and transmitters of the "trich" organism. To protect against the spread of the disease, testing regulations went into effect in January 2010 for Texas breeding bulls undergoing a change of possession, about nine months after rules were imposed for breeding bulls entering the state.

Dr. Schwartz reported that several rule changes were in the works, in response to recommendations from the yearly industry-led review of Texas trichomoniasis program. One adopted rule change will extend the validity of the negative cattle trichomoniasis test from the current 30 days to a more lenient 60 days, provided the bulls are not commingled with heifers or cows during the 60 days.

"The industry committee members wanted this change to provide ranchers additional time to sell or move tested bulls," said Bill Hyman, ICA executive director and a member of the review team. "Also, under the revised regulations, the current 30-day 'virgin certificate' is extended to 60 days for young bulls that are exempt from testing prior to change of possession. Furthermore, the virgin certificate will convey to the new owner, who may re-sell the young bull as a virgin within the 60-day time frame, provided the animal has not been commingled with female cattle."

Dr. Schwartz said that, under the revised Texas regulations, a negative trichomoniasis test still will be required within the previous 30 days when non-virgin bulls, or bulls older than 24 months of age, are imported into Texas from other states. However, once the animals arrive in Texas, the negative test would be valid for the remainder of the 60-day test window, provided the bulls are maintained away from female cattle during that time.

The revised regulations also exempt out-of-state breeding bulls from an entry trichomoniasis test, if they come from Certified Semen Service (CSS) artificial insemination facilities, where they are isolated from female cattle. The bulls must be accompanied by documentation, with an original signature by the veterinarian or manager of the facility.

Another of the revised regulations will allow untested, non-virgin Texas bulls to be sold and moved to a feedlot prior to slaughter. Under previous rules, untested, non-virgin bulls were allowed to be sold only for direct movement to slaughter, or for movement under a TAHC-issued hold order to a site away from female cattle,

where the bull was to be tested for the disease. Bulls that test negative for cattle trichomoniasis are released from the hold order and allowed to move freely and be commingled with female cattle.

Testing for the disease peaked in March and April 2010, when samples from 5,000 bulls in Texas were shipped or delivered to the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (IVMDL), the state's official trichomoniasis testing laboratory. About 3 ½ percent of these bulls were infected with the disease.

Dr. Schwartz said that the TAHC has begun notifying fence-line neighbors when an infected bull is detected. The neighbors are encouraged, but not required, to have their bulls tested. Bulls that are confirmed to have cattle trichomoniasis must be sent to slaughter, to prevent the spread of infection.

NRCS extends sign-up period for conservation stewardship program

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Dave White announced the ranking period cut-off date for producer applications in NRCS' Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has been extended to January 7, 2011.

"We're extending the deadline for applications to CSP to provide agricultural producers more time to complete their applications," said White. "This will help farmers, ranchers and forestry producers by giving them more time and hopefully allow even more producers to participate in this program."

CSP is offered in all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups with announced cut-off dates for ranking periods. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

All producers are encouraged to apply for CSP. The program, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial forestland.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help producers determine if CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available online at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html or by calling the Jack County NRCS office at 940-567-5641.

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Heath Lusty, BS, MS County
Agent Agriculture & Natural
Resources.

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100 N Main Street, Courthouse

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940-567-2132 Fax: 940-567-2014

<http://jack-tx.tamu.edu>