Randall County Ag News

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

MONTHLY SNAPSHOT OF AGRICULTURE IN RANDALL COUNTY

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December 2021 Edition

News and Views Straight From the County Agent's Desk

***H**owdy!* Welcome to this months newsletter edition. This fall has been extremely busy here at the Randall County Extension Office. Lot's going on and so little time to share everything. I'll try and keep it short. Many of you may not know the former Randall County Extension Family & Consumer Health Agent Kellie Lehman left us in late October. She is now the Hardeman County FCH Agent in Quanah, Texas. Kellie is originally from Vernon and this provided her an opportunity to get closer to home. Therefore on November 23 we hired Chelsey Rash to take Kellie's place. Chelsey came to us from Oldham County as the FCH Agent where she has served for the past six years. She is originally form San Jon New Mexico. We are excited to have Chelsey join our staff as she begins her new position here on December 1.

Another exciting piece of recent news is the Randall County 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl Team won the National Contest in Louisville Kentucky on November 16. This team competed amongst 13 other teams across the nation and were undefeated! Team members included; Barrett Bradshaw, Sunny Cowley, Alex Wilson and Tanner Owen. This is only the second Randall County 4-H Team in history that has ever won a National Championship. Randall County 4-H Consumer Decision Making Team also won their National contest in 2019. We are extremely proud of this great group of kids and their accomplishments!

Current County Crop Conditions

Overview: The main topic of discussion among producers currently is *"When Is It Going to Rain? It's Awfully DRY Around Here!"* Here are some current Randall County rainfall facts.

Randall County Rainfall:

2016– 17.20" for the year

2017– 26.48"

2018– 13.60"

2019– 25.88"

2020– 12.58"

***5-year Average: 19.15"**

2021– 15.03" thur Oct. 31

Corn/Silage: Dry conditions set back what early on looked like excellent potential corn yields. When the dust settled our corn produced average yields of about 150-60 bushels.

Cotton: As a whole it has been an excellent year for cotton. Yields were up across Randall County averaging 1.5 bales for dryland and 2.5- 3 for irrigated. Turn out quality was been excellent as well. This is primarily due to the great harvest weather we've had throughout the fall.

Sorghum: Yields here have been somewhat disappointing. Dryland seemed to be steady around 2,000 lbs. per acre and for irrigated was 4,500 lbs. per acre. We feel that the lack of rainfall the later 1/3 of the growing season was a major contributing fact to lower yields.

Wheat: Is suffering severely at this time due to lack of much needed moisture. Most dryland has not even rooted down. Even irrigated fields are suffering as well and needs a good rain as well

Range/Pasture: Are currently depleted of any available moisture and will need significant help from mother nature to bring rainfall before next spring. Fall rains are imperative and greatly contribute to early spring grass production. Pastures generally response aggressively when moisture is readily available within the soil throughout the fall months.

Prussic Acid and Nitrate Poisoning

The following information is provided by Dr. Calvin Trostle, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agronomist – Lubbock, Texas

First let's discuss *Prussic Acid.* What is it? How does it occur?

Prussic acid becomes an issue at the first heavy frost/ light freeze on anything in the sorghum family. This includes grain sorghum, sorghum/sudan, forage sorghum, redtop cane, hegari, sudangrass, and yes, even Johnsongrass. This releases plant compounds due to cell rupture that frees prussic acid, or cyanide (HCN). Properly cured (dried) forages should not have an issue with prussic acid. Prussic acid is mostly in the leaves, but larger stalks that can't dissipate the prussic acid as quickly take more time to dry.

Prussic acid can also be an issue in the new fresh growth at the base of the plant from a grain sorghum field near and after harvest (Figs. 1A-B). This can also occur from the base of sorghum/sudans for forage or hay. Also, the least-known potential issue with grazed sorghum/ sudans, Johnsongrass, etc. is in the summer. Under drought conditions when the sorghum/sudan is struggling to grow, rains come, and the fresh growth can be hot.

Figure: A

Figure: B

Figures A-B. *Basal tiller regrowth in grain sorghum near harvest (A) and after harvest and mowing (B) of stalks. Young regrowth is susceptible to prussic acid development without a frost or freeze. Cattle released into a field with regrowth (A) are drawn to this fresh tender regrowth thus at higher risk.*

The bottom line with prussic acid remains: it is a threat to animal health. There is no clear-cut view on how much prussic acid is safe. In the past some labs and animal scientists suggested prussic acid <200 ppm is probably ok to feed. However due to the inaccurate nature of sampling, transporting, and testing prussic acid the results of a prussic acid test have a significant level of uncertainty. Most labs now report the *presence* of prussic acid, and let you decide how to manage your crop or hay.

Nitrate accumulates in the bottom of the plant when they are not growing. Plants are still accumulating—but not assimilating—the N into plant proteins or other components. This nitrate concentrates in the bottom (up to 12 inches or so) the stalk. When you mow hay, the nitrate level is fixed. It does not dissipate. When nitrate is high in a forage (near 1.0% and higher) for healthy animals, it can be blended with low nitrate forage. Or at hay harvest one can raise the cutter bar (if a swather) a few inches. This reduces yields but leaves a significant amount of nitrate in the field. Cattle can develop some tolerance to nitrate in forages over time.

Testing for Prussic Acid and Nitrate in Forages:

Prussic acid--they prefer to test leaves only (from 8 to 15 stalks); see specific instructions if sampling standing forage or baled hay. The container you ship in is important.

Nitrate—they prefer to test only the base of the stalk (from 8 to 15 stalks)

Test both prussic and nitrate from the same sample ? TVMDL will use the leaves for prussic acid, the rest of the plant for nitrate (this could give a lower value of nitrate.

Where to Send Test:

Among the four TVMDL locations only the College Station lab performs the prussic acid test. Do not send your samples to TVMDL in Canyon as they do not conduct these test at this location. Other option is Sevi-Tech Lab in Amarillo. Testing fees may range from $25-$50.

Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
483 Agronomy Rd.
College Station, Tx 77843-4471
Phone: 1-888 646 5623

Sevi-Tech Lab
6921 S. Bell
Amarillo, Texas 79109
Phone: (806) 677-0093

Upcoming Meetings:

⇒ **On-line Ag. Prod. Mtg. Series– December 9, 2021**

⇒ **Estate Planning Workshop– December 14, 2021**

⇒ **Pre-Plant Producer Conference– January 26, 2022**

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HAPPY STATE BANK

Estate Planning Workshop

December 14, 2021
9:00 a.m- 12:30 p.m
Randall County Extension Office

Register by calling the Extension Office at (806)-468-5543 or email randall-tx@tamu.edu by 12 noon Friday, December 10

9:00 a.m- Steps to a Successful Estate/Succession Plan
Tiffany Dowell Lashmet, J.D; Agriculture Law Specialist

10:15 a.m- Break

10:30 a.m- Using Entities (LLC's, partnerships, trusts, etc.) in Estate Planning
Leah Davis; Burdett Morgan Williamson & Boykin, LLP

11:30 a.m- Estate, Gift, and Capital Gains Taxes
Tiffany Dowell Lashmet and Leah Davis

12:30 p.m - Lunch Sponsored by HAPPY STATE BANK

Tiffany Dowell Lashmet has served as an Agricultural Law Specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service since 2013. Tiffany's work focuses on legal issues impacting Texas landowners and agricultural producers including leases, water law, oil and gas law, pipeline easement negotiation, estate planning, and landowner liability.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
On-line Programs

Monthly Virtual Education

Timely topics discussed with AgriLife Experts

10-11 a.m. via MicroSoft Teams and No Cost

Register once and attend all meetings

Register @ https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eFITmEFEvSIpfIY

Upcoming Discussions

December 9, 2021 – Availability of Herbicides for 2022

Dr. Peter Dotray, Texas A&M AgriLife and Texas Tech University

January 13, 2022 – Pre-plant decisions for managing resistant weeds

Dr. Peter Dotray, Texas A&M AgriLife and Texas Tech University

January 24, 2022 – Impact on input reduction. How far can you go?

Dr. Justin Benavidez, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

February 23, 2022 – Getting your cotton off to a great start. Seed quality, cover crops, and insecticidal seed treatments.

Dr. Murilo Maeda, Dr. Jourdan Bell, Dr. Suhas Vyavhare AgriLife

March 9, 2022 – Carbon Farming, what do we know?

Dr. Jourdan Bell and Dr. Joe Outlaw, Texas A&M AgriLife

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Return Service Requested

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