



# Randall County Ag News TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

## MONTHLY SNAPSHOT OF AGRICULTURE IN RANDALL COUNTY

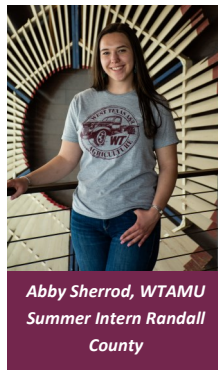
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*May 2024 Edition*

### News and Views Straight From the County Agent's Desk

**Howdy! Abby Sherrod**, will be serving as our WTAMU Summer Intern. She is a senior Agriculture major at West Texas A&M University, she received her Associate from Laramie County Community College in Agriculture Business. She grew up in a ranching family, from Wheat Ridge, Colorado she has discovered how agriculture makes the world work and she wants to make a positive impact in this industry.



Abby Sherrod, WTAMU Summer Intern Randall County

Abby believes that to educate the public about the benefits of agriculture they must have hands-on experiences or something that they can relate to. She has excelled in her school work receiving both President's List and Dean's List, while remaining active in extracurriculars. In her free time, she enjoys herself by going on hikes and spending time connecting with her friends and family.

### Current Crop Conditions

**Overview:** Honestly I feel like we have been extremely luck so far this crop season. Even though it's still dry, we have had some scattered moisture throughout Randall County and the temperatures have stayed very mild. In fact, as of this writing 5/17/24 we have accumulated a total of 4.21 inches of moisture thus far for 2024. If we compare that same time period for 2023 we had only received 1.88 inches. This equates to 2.33 inch difference. Currently, a good slow rain would be ideal without any harsh conditions.

**Wheat:** In my recent travels around Randall County I see a lot of wheat fields that appears to be targeted for harvest. Fields are changing color and drying down rapidly and I suspect harvest beginning around mid to later June. Wheat yields are always difficult to predict until you actually get a combine in the field. However, if we harvest any at all, it will be more than last year.

**Corn/Sorghum Silage:** All fields have been planted and have reached emergence. With soil temperatures increasing plant growth and development is in full swing. A good rain right now would be just what the doctor ordered.

**Cotton:** 90% of Randall Counties 2024 expected 10,000+ - cotton acres have been planted at this time. Most of which is up and with this past weeks warming up of soil temperatures set the stage for excellent plant growth.

**Range/Pastures:** Green up has occurred quickly and grass has started it's initial stage of maturity. But, we'll need a rain soon to continue good grass development.

**Cattle Prices:** On a positive note, cattle prices have continue to stay high thus far this year. Economist indicate that trend to continue through the remainder of 2024.

### 2024 Panhandle Wildfires Impact & Analysis

*The following information is provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Disaster Assessment Team*

Agricultural and ag-related losses (including wildfire hunting revenue losses) from the Texas Panhandle Wildfires in February –Mach 2024, including the Smokehouse Creek Fire, are estimated to total about **(\$123 million)**. Losses are concentrated in three major areas:

Ranch infrastructure, grazing losses, and livestock.

**Ranch Infrastructure: (\$68.7M)** Fences are the major category of ranch infrastructure. Other items include, barns, corrals, well pump motors and windmills, and hay or other stored feeds. Fence replacement costs range from \$16,000 to \$20,000 per mile depending on the ruggedness of the land. Infrastructure losses account for **\$68.7 million** of the total estimated losses.



**Grazing Losses (\$26.0M)** Grazing losses include “emergency” feed purchases following the fire for short term needs, long term grazing replacement until ranch pastures recover, and stored feed supplies lost. According to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension range and cattle specialists, it is assumed that 1.5 years of full grazeable pasture conditions are lost. These losses are estimated to be about **\$26 million**.

**Cattle Losses (\$27.0M)** Cattle losses are valued at another \$27 million. Cattle prices are on the rise as the nation’s cow herd is the smallest since 1961. Recent calf prices have hit all-time record highs. Livestock loss estimates include both cows and estimated losses to the season’s calf crop. Replacement cow costs reflect today’s market value of the profits of her calves over the remainder of her productive life. Other miscellaneous losses amount to about **\$1 million** and include things like disposal costs for deceased animals and forced marketing losses.



### **Cotton Planting Tips for Panhandle Region**

*The following information is provided by Dr. Ken Lege, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Cotton Specialist, Lubbock, Texas*

If you follow the Randall County AgriLife Extension Service Ag. Facebook page you should have noticed for the month of May during planting season I’ve been posting weekly High Plains-Cotton Planting Tips.

The following is planting tips for the week of (May 13-22). The attached chart highlights data at 3 Panhandle locations; (Spearman, Panhandle, and Dumas).

The data indicates High and low temperatures, percent precipitation forecast, current DD60s, and -5-d DD60 for the next five

upcoming days. To review the chart indicating all data, go to the following website: [randall.agrilife.org](http://randall.agrilife.org)

Dr. Ken shares his comments for this week specific to Spearman & Panhandle Locations: “Be aware of the nighttime lows in the 50s, as well as the chance of rain on Wed/Thurs”.

Dumas Location: “The low tonight is quite cool, so I would avoid planting today (Monday, 5-13), but the conditions remainder of the week look very good”.

Finally, If you want your specific location (down to the field level), you can access your own tailored planting conditions forecast on demand with a calculator from North Carolina State University.

Go to: <https://products.climate.ncsu.edu/ag/cotton-planting/>  
The map will default to a location in North Carolina, but you can scroll the map to your specific location and click on a field. Click ‘submit’ and the tool will provide a 2-day planting conditions forecast with commentary. Hope you find this weeks addition of the “High Plains-Cotton Planting Tips Report” beneficial as you make plans for this weeks planting schedule

### **Texas A&M AgriLife North Region Ranch to Retail Podcast**

The North Region Texas A&M AgriLife Extension continues to bring you the North Region Ranch to Retail Podcast episodes. There are currently over 40 outstanding podcast episodes highlighting various experts in the field of timely agricultural information pertaining to crop and beef cattle production. The podcasts are easy to access, simply go to the following link.

<https://agrilifenorthregionag.libsyn.com/>

The latest (2) episodes for the month of May are now available. Each episode is designed with a *play/stop/pause* format and are about 45 minutes in length.

**Recorded May 1, 2024; “Minerals and Vitamins in Beef Herds”**  
*Dr. Smith goes into great detail regarding the use of minerals and vitamins in beef herds and at all stages of development. He indicates the requirements for all stages and how to make sure we are providing enough to our herds. This is a bit longer than an hour but well worth it because of the detail and discussion surrounding this important topic.*

**Recorded May 13, 2024; “Early Season Pest”**

*Kerry Siders and Ken Lege discuss potential issues for early cotton with nematodes, insects, and disease issues to be looking for in cotton fields. Great information as we join North Region Extension agents who are learning from these int the field experts.*



## Hay Bales Exposed to Weather-Results in Quality Loss

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

Efforts to produce high quality forage can quickly be undone by field storage. A dilemma many Texas forage growers face is protecting hay from the weather. Rainy conditions over much of Texas are unavoidable as there is little to no way to protect hundreds of bales from rain and the elements.



But loss of hay value in the field before feeding or sale seems to be a common occurrence. A forage grower can put his or her best effort into producing tons and tons of forage with high nutritive value and higher economic value *only to give it up on the back side*. But there are means to minimize damage, biomass loss, and decreased value in hay. These include:

⇒ Stacking of bales to minimize surface exposure to rain. This includes pushing round bales end-to-end. I am doubtful that stacking round bales on top of each other is a good idea as rain shed from upper bales simply runs onto lower bales and may be absorbed.

⇒ Wrapped round bales shed water better. If prolonged outdoor storage is necessary, this may justify the added cost.



⇒ Avoid storing bales directly on soil if possible. In time as soil becomes wet (and won't dry under a bale) there are rotting losses on bale bottoms. Storage on a slightly elevated location helps drain water away from the hay. Studies in areas of Kansas with ~32" of annual rainfall demonstrate bale weight losses stored on bare soil can exceed 10% in one year. (This compounds losses and decrease in value from being rained on.)

⇒ Get the hay sold more quickly. There is a downside to sitting and waiting and hoping for a better price. The hay loses value and then can't be sold for its original market value.

⇒ Higher value forage like alfalfa should move under a roof or other protection when possible.

## Randall County- Texas Community Futures Forum (TCFF) Top 5 Issues

The Randall County Extension Service recently conducted the Texas Community Futures Forum (TCFF) on Tuesday evening April 23, 2024. It began at 6:00pm with an evening meal. County Extension Agent, Dr. J. D. Ragland, provided the welcome and introduced special guest. Then provided an overview of the evening's task. Participants were divided into four groups: Youth, Community Development, Family & Community Health, and Agriculture. Total invitees (60) were all sent a personal invitation via e-mail along with a QR Code registration. An additionally, follow up reminder notice was sent one week prior to the meeting via e-mail. Of the 60 invited, a total of **20 attended** the forum.

The top five issues determined at the Randall County Futures Forum from each group are as follows:

### Top 5 Agriculture Issues Identified for Randall County:

1. Water
2. Business Management
3. Land Management
4. Urban/Rural Interchange
5. Recruitment of next agricultural generation

### Top 5 Overall Issues Identified for Randall County:

1. Water
2. Social Media /Cyber Bullying
3. Food Pantry (Shut ins, Elderly)
4. Mental Health
5. Parent Education / Community Involvement

## MARK YOU CALENDERS!

### 47th Annual Randall County Crop Tour

8:30a.m. Tuesday, August 27th, Kuhlman Extension Center

⇒ Please mark your calendars now and make plans to attend the Randall County Crops Tour

⇒ Please are currently being finalized and complete program and agenda will be included in the upcoming **July Ag. Newsletter!**

⇒ Key Topics will include: *Weather Pattern Expectations for the Remainder of 2024, Crop Insurance Updates, Farm Bill Progress, Expectations of Future Cattle Prices.*

⇒ Tours: Spraying Application Utilizing Drones Demonstration and Robotic Ranch Feeders.





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- Texas Community Futures Forum (TCFF)- Top 5 Issues*
- 2024 47th Annual Randall County Crops Tour: Tuesday, August 27*



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Return Service Requested

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