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AgReview

Mason County Agriculture Newsletter

In This Issue

**Input Prices Dictate
Pasture Management
Decisions by
Livestock Operators**

**Recent Rains Make for
'Hit-and-Miss'
Agriculture Progress**

**The Science Behind
Texas Barbecue**

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Texas Wildfire Preliminary Agriculture Losses Total \$23.1 Million

Texas wildfires that ravaged the Eastland Complex, parts of the Panhandle and Coryell County regions encompassing 433,000 acres have resulted in \$23.1 million in preliminary agricultural loss estimates, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economists.

The losses include more than 400 livestock deaths, lost grazing values and fence repair costs. Dry, windy conditions throughout the winter season and into early spring heightened the fire danger threat.

“AgriLife Extension continues its commitment to providing the resources needed for landowners and livestock producers to help recover from this tragic event,” said Rick Avery, Ph.D., director of AgriLife Extension, Bryan-College Station. “We appreciate the ongoing efforts of our dedicated agent network and industry partners. Texas agriculture producers are resilient, although the damages to thousands of acres of grazing land, livestock and infrastructure will be long lasting.”

“The Texas Division of Emergency Management will continue to support local officials’ response and recovery efforts from the devastating wildfires that have impacted the state this year,” said Texas Division of Emergency Management Chief Nim Kidd. “I thank the hundreds of local and state first responders who worked around the clock to protect life and property from these wildfires. TDEM field staff will continue supporting local partners in affected areas as those communities recover.”

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Input Prices Dictate Pasture Management Decisions by Livestock Producers

Cow-calf and stocker operators find themselves in yet another period of high fertilizer and fuel prices and must make necessary management decisions concerning production targets, according to two longtime Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton.

Monte Rouquette, Ph.D., forage physiologist, and Gerald Smith, Ph.D., clover breeder, both in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, said the rules for managing pastures and livestock systems are changing with increasing fertilizer and fuel costs.

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Recent Rains Make for 'Hit-and-Miss' Agriculture Progress

While recent rains have provided a needed respite for agricultural producers in some parts of Texas, the majority of producers did not benefit and continue to hope for more, according to Texas A&M AgriLife experts and others.

“There has been a patchwork of rain throughout the state recently,” said John Nielsen-Gammon, Ph.D., state climatologist in the College of Geosciences Department of Atmospheric Sciences at Texas A&M University. “Some rains in North Central and South Texas have improved prospects for agricultural production, but it’s been very dry overall in most of the state.”

Nielsen-Gammon said thunderstorms in the High Plains area provided some relief for producers, while the area from San Angelo to Abilene in West Texas was mostly dry with below-normal rainfall. He also noted there had been little to no rain throughout most of the Panhandle.

“The system that came through recently may be the last big weather system we see for a while,” he said. “There may be some storms in West Texas in the near future, but then you can expect it to get hotter and drier.”



The Coastal Bend area, especially around Corpus Christi, has also continued to be unusually dry.

“Much of the Coastal Bend area missed the recent rains,” said Corpus Christi-based Joshua McGinty, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist in field crops and forages in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

“The Alice area received anywhere from 0.5 to over 3 inches of rain, but most of the area closer to the coast only got a few hundredths of an inch,” he said. “The persistent high wind the last few weeks is just further drying us out.”

McGinty said cotton crops around the Corpus Christi area are mostly dry-planted and waiting on rain.

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The Science Behind Texas Barbecue

As a proud third-generation pitmaster, Bryan Bracewell '98 has a passion for Texas barbecue that is steeped in family tradition. Bracewell is the current owner of his family's business, Southside Market and Barbecue, a barbecue restaurant and market that has served the residents of Elgin since 1882.

It was this passion for barbeque that led him to become a student in Texas A&M University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He knew as a freshman that his enrollment would teach him even more about meat and how to best prepare it.

"Like any smalltown family business, you do things as they've always been done and barbecue was no different for me," he said. "However, I knew there were things I did not know, and I knew my end goal was to improve our product, and ultimately the experience for our customers."



The knowledge he gained in the classrooms and labs combined with his experience as a member of the meat judging team and as a student worker in the Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center all translated into better products for his family's business. But he didn't stop at undergraduate classes, he credits much of his current success as a pitmaster to his attendance and participation in the meat science courses and programming that occurred after he received his Aggie ring.

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Mason County
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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<https://agriflifelife.tamu.edu/>

Upcoming Events

PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING
MASON | JULY 5, 2022

RANCHING PROFITABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY
SYMPOSIUM
SAN ANGELO | JUNE 16-17, 2022

TEXAS A&M BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE
COLLEGE STATION | AUGUST 1-3, 2022

OWNING YOUR PIECE OF TEXAS
FREDERICKSBURG | SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

RANCHERS LEASING WORKSHOP
KERRVILLE | SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

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