FALL 2022

AgReview

Mason County Agriculture Newsletter

In This Issue

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Strategies for Drought Management on Pastures

During a drought, little can be done to increase forage pasture growth. Proper management, however, can minimize impacts when drought does occur, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service forage specialist and Texas A&M AgriLife Research agronomist.

Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Ph.D., Overton, and Jamie Foster, Ph.D., Beeville, said careful management early in a drought can minimize long-term stand damage and help maintain forage yields when rains do come.

If pastures are managed properly during times of low moisture, the effects of drought will be less severe and pastures will rebound faster when precipitation is sufficient, they said. Management practices that minimize damage to pastures during drought are also the same for maintaining healthy pastures in a normal year.

Corriher-Olson and Foster outlined some key areas where proper management can make a difference.

Managing livestock*:* Reduce stocking rates if forage supplies are limited. First, cull cows that are old, open, in poor condition or have poor disposition. A veterinarian can palpate cows for pregnancy and check for health problems that warrant elimination from the herd. Cows that are not pregnant are difficult to justify feeding expensive hay or grazing. Moving cattle to leased grazinglands where forage is available is an option to relieve stressed pastures without selling off a portion of the herd.
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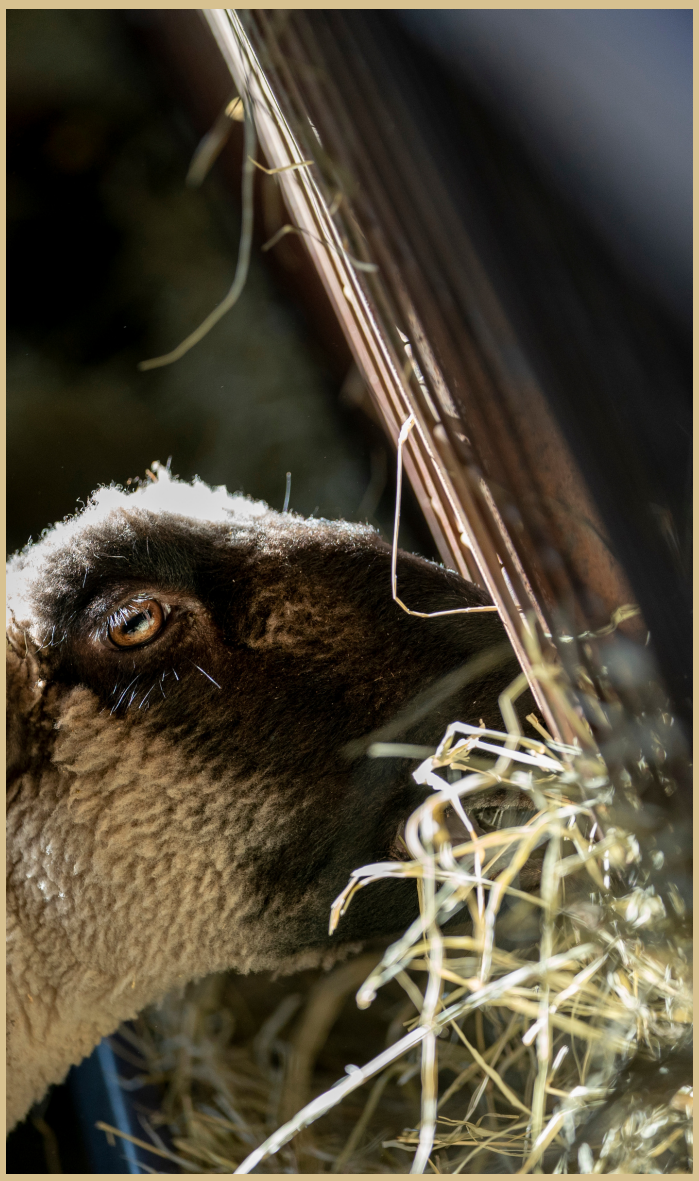

Raising Strong Sheep, Goat Offspring Begins During Pregnancy

Drought affects the growth and birth weight of lambs and kids — the hardships it causes for pregnant animals reduce placental function and the nutrients available to a developing fetus, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientist.

With growing concerns about climate change, Carey Satterfield, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Animal Science, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, said researchers must be forward-thinking to help protect the small ruminant livestock industry.

“Extreme weather conditions, whether hotter or drier, will impact our animal agriculture, so we need to have strategies available to allow producers to deal with these changes,” Satterfield said.
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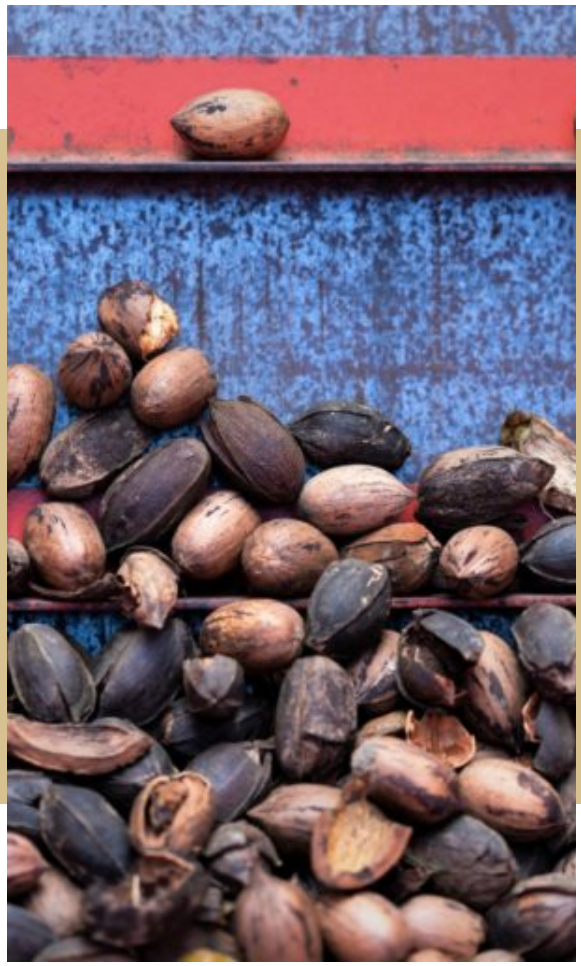
Texas Pecan Production Below Average, Demand Remains Strong

Texas pecan orchards were expected to produce a mixed bag of results amid good prices and strong demand, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.



Larry Stein, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension horticulturist, Uvalde, said the drought and heat likely impacted some orchards, and 2022 was expected to be a below-average year also because last year's crop was heavy.

Pecan trees typically go through cyclical performance year to year. Heavy crops are typically followed by lighter yields and vice versa.

Stein said harvest for early varieties like Pawnee will begin this week, but most of the other later varieties will be harvested in October. Pecan orchards in the Far West were showing good crop loads while trees in Central Texas were expected to provide below-average yields.

"The crop looks good, but it is hit and miss this year," Stein said. "If you want pecans, I would suggest finding them early to make sure you get some."

Drought will likely mean smaller pecan size, but Stein said that is not necessarily a bad thing because kernels fill out easier. He said the widespread rainfall should help most pecans, but moisture in the form of rainfall or irrigation will be needed to help kernels fill over the next few weeks.

Most commercial producers have irrigation, which is an important factor for producing retail-quality pecans. The moisture will help trees finish the crop, but it will also keep the tree healthy and help it store food for next year's pecan crop. Stein recommends 2 inches of water at and beyond the drip line per week through harvest.

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Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management Looks Ahead

The Texas A&M Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management has come a long way over last year.

Roel Lopez, Ph.D., head of the department in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, took the helm nearly a year ago. Since being appointed, he and other faculty have been planning the roadmap and laying foundational elements that will be critical for the department's future.

An implementation strategy is now in the works, he said, to help navigate challenges and maximize opportunities for the department.

"It is an exciting time for the newly formed department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management," Lopez said. "Faculty and staff have been working hard to grow the department, and enthusiasm and thoughtful actions have been key ingredients to develop something special. We expect this momentum to carry us into the future."

Over the last year, the department has developed and added curricula and professional certificates in three discipline areas for students, said Gerard Kyle, Ph.D., associate department head of academics. The department's course offerings will continue to provide degrees and certifications in rangeland, wildlife, and fisheries sciences and management professions.

The department is actively recruiting faculty who can bring problem-solving experience to students, Kyle said.

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Mason County
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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Upcoming Events

HILL COUNTRY BEEF CONFERENCE
MASON | NOVEMBER 16, 2022

MASON COUNTY RANGELAND FIELD DAY
MASON | DECEMBER 6, 2022

MENARD COUNTY RANGE MGMT. WORKSHOP
MENARD | OCTOBER 5, 2022

CENTRAL TEXAS SHEEP & GOAT SEMINAR
GOLDTHWAITE | OCTOBER 12, 2022

LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOG FIELD DAY
HAMILTON | OCTOBER 21, 2022

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