

# Cass County Ag News

Summer, 2011

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## Announcements

### East Texas Horticulture Field Day June 23, 2011

The 2011 Horticulture Field Day will be at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton, Texas. 400 bedding-plant entries, everything from petunias to verbena to ornamental sweet potatoes, will be on display. The field day begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Center's North Farm site. A free lunch will be served and the indoor program will begin at 1:00 p.m. For more information, call 903-834-6191 or visit the website at <http://overton.tamu.edu/flowers/fieldday.htm>. ◻

### Beef Cattle Short Course August 1-3, 2011

The Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course will be held at College Station. All aspects of beef cattle production will be covered. The agenda and course registration can be accessed at <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/ansc/BCSC/index.html>. ◻

### Caddo Wildflower Chapter 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month

The Caddo Wildflower Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Horne Enterprise Building located at the intersection of Highways 77 and 43 in Atlanta, Texas. Visitors are welcome. ◻

### Congratulations

The Hope 4-H Forestry Team, composed of members Caleb Whatley, Sam Whatley, Seth Whatley and Trevor Whatley with coach Brian Whatley, recently placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Southern Regional Woodlands Contest. This win makes them eligible to compete in the National Invitational Forestry Contest which will be held in Weston, West Virginia in July. Donations are being accepted at the Extension Office to assist with their travel expenses. If you would like to make a donation, or for more information, please call 903-756-5391. ◻

## Cull Poorer-Producing Cows

Many producers are faced with limited forage availability due to drought. One of the first management tools that should be evaluated for cow/calf producers is culling poorer-producing cows. This will allow for a capture of their value at a time in the cattle cycle when prices for cows and culled replacement heifers are fair. It will also allow for some capital investment to be used when cattle prices are considerably lower and forage supplies are more plentiful.

Listed below is a suggested order of culling in the face of diminishing forage supplies.

### Culling Order

1. Open (non-pregnant) old cows
2. Open replacement heifers
3. Old cows with unsound mouths, eyes, feet or legs
4. Open cows of any age
5. Thin cows over 7 years of age (Body Condition Score < 4)
6. Very late-bred 2-year-olds

The first two items on the list are automatic culls in any forage year. The more difficult decisions on culling come when the producer is short in forage and feed supplies that he/she feels the need to cull cows that have been palpated and found pregnant. Culling stops with number five on the culling order unless grass and feed supplies are **very** short.



## Working Cattle in Summertime Heat

Understanding and avoiding heat stress in cattle can be a valuable management tool for summertime in East Texas. Cattle have an upper critical temperature approximately 20 degrees cooler than humans. When humans are uncomfortable at 80 degrees and feel hot at 90 degrees, cattle may well be in the danger zone for extreme heat stress. Humidity is an additional stressor that intensifies the heat by making body heat dissipation more difficult.

The signs of overheating may develop suddenly and depend upon the environmental conditions and the health of the cattle exposed to the heat. Panting often occurs at rectal temperatures at or above 104 degrees but may begin even at lower body temperatures. Some animals manifest restlessness, excitement and spasms of certain muscles. However, other animals may be covered with saliva and frothy mucus discharge at the nostrils.

If weaning calls for cattle to be gathered and put through a working chute for immunizations, implanting, or other operations, then a few common-sense rules should be followed.

1. During hot weather, cattle should be worked before 8:00 a.m., if possible. Certainly all cattle working must be completed by about 10:00 a.m. Recent research at Oklahoma State University with rumen temperature boluses has shown that the core body temperature of beef cows peaks at 2 to 5 hours after the highest daytime temperature. On a hot summer day the highest daytime temperature is often late

afternoon. Therefore the peak body temperature may occur at 6:00 to 11:00 p.m.

2. Cattle that must be handled during hot weather should spend less than 30 minutes in the working facility. Dry lot pens and corrals loaded with cattle will have very little, if any, air movement.
3. Make every effort to see that cool, fresh water is available to cattle in close confined areas for any length of time. During hot weather conditions cattle will drink more than 1% of their body weight per hour.

**Source:** Dr. Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University, Beef Cattle Specialist. ◉

## Equine Herpesvirus Awareness

An outbreak of Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) has been traced to a horse that attended the National Cutting Horse Association Western National Championships in Odgen, UT on April 30-May 8, 2011.

EHV-1 is a common virus in equine populations worldwide. EHV-1 can cause respiratory disease, abortion, and neurologic disease. **Although EHV-1 is highly contagious among horses, it does not pose a threat to human health.**

EHV-1 is transmitted primarily by aerosol and through direct and indirect contact. Aerosol transmission occurs when

infectious droplets are inhaled. Direct horse-to-horse is a common route of transmission of the virus, but indirect transmission is also important. This occurs when infectious materials (nasal secretions, fluids from abortions, etc) are carried between infected and non-infected horses by people or fomites (inanimate objects such as buckets, etc.)

Fever is one of the most common clinical signs and often precedes the development of other signs. Respiratory signs include coughing and nasal discharge. Horses with EHV-1 may appear weak and uncoordinated. Urine dribbling and loss of tail tone may also be seen.

If you suspect your horse has been exposed to EHV-1, contact your veterinarian. In general, exposed horses should be isolated and have their temperature monitored twice daily for 10 days.

For more information, contact the Texas Animal Health Commission at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>. ◉

## Horticulture Corner

### Great Sources of Information

Here we are in mid-June with 100 degree days and little or no rainfall – and summer does not officially begin until June 21.

If you need help coping with these conditions or need other information, it can be accessed by going to the aggie horticulture website at

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>. There you can find information on landscape gardening; fruit and nut production; vegetable production; pest management and control and too much more to list.

Some of the publications and fact sheets are:

#### Horticulture Landscape Design

- Planning the Home Landscape
- Building a Raised Bed Garden
- Planting a Tree
- Proper Pruning Techniques
- Old Roses
- Seasonal Color, Care and Management

#### Home Vegetable Gardening

- All Major Vegetables
- Disease Management
- Fertilization
- Insect Control
- Harvesting and Handling
- Home Vegetable Gardening Guide
- Vegetable Gardening in Raised Beds
- Vegetable Problem Solvers

#### East Texas Home Gardening

- Monthly Gardening Calendar
- Water Conservation
- Turfgrass Information
- Composting
- Commercial Horticulture
- Plants for East Texas

#### New Texas Superstars

- ☆ Baby's Breath euphorbia - flowers all season long, likes heat
- ☆ Turk's Cap - Talk about tough: It's drought, sun and shade tolerant - even Roundup® tolerant

- ☆ Faux Snapdragon, Angelonia Serena has showy flowers that can thrive in Texas

## Helpful Websites

TOPIC	WEB ADDRESS
General Information	<a href="http://texasextension.tamu.edu">http://texasextension.tamu.edu</a>
Forages and Grasses Horticulture	<a href="http://forages.tamu.edu">http://forages.tamu.edu</a> <a href="http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu">http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu</a>
Turfgrass and Lawns Bookstore	<a href="http://aggieturf.tamu.edu">http://aggieturf.tamu.edu</a> <a href="http://tcebookstore.org">http://tcebookstore.org</a>
Soils and Crops	<a href="http://soilcrop.tamu.edu">http://soilcrop.tamu.edu</a>
Forest Science TDA	<a href="http://forestry.tamu.edu">http://forestry.tamu.edu</a> <a href="http://www.agr.state.tx.us">http://www.agr.state.tx.us</a>
Cass County Animal Science	<a href="http://cass-tx.tamu.edu">http://cass-tx.tamu.edu</a> <a href="http://animalscience.tamu.edu">http://animalscience.tamu.edu</a>
Texas Animal Health Commission	<a href="http://www.tahc.state.tx.us">http://www.tahc.state.tx.us</a>
Plant Pathology	<a href="http://plantpathology.tamu.edu/Textlab/index.htm">http://plantpathology.tamu.edu/Textlab/index.htm</a>
Feral Hogs	<a href="http://feralhogs.tamu.edu">http://feralhogs.tamu.edu</a>
Pond Management	<a href="http://aquaplant.tamu.edu">http://aquaplant.tamu.edu</a>

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