JULY 2020

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
HARRISON COUNTY

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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102 W. HOUSTON MARSHALL, TX

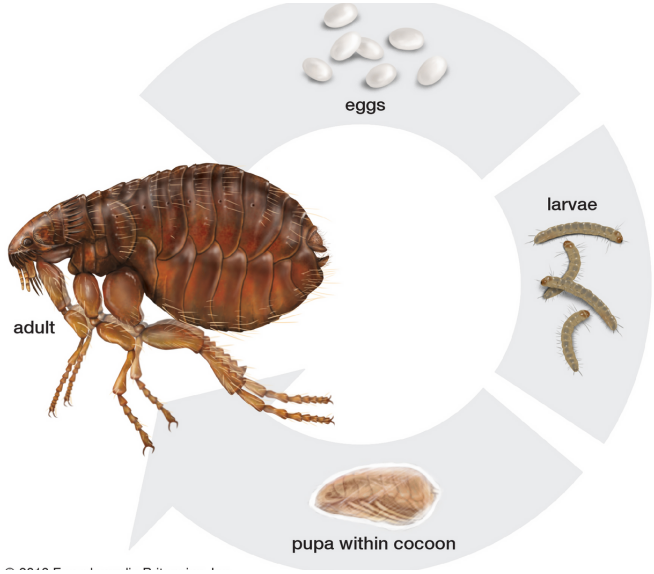
903-935-8413

FLEA SEASON

All information used is provided by Texas A&M University

Adult fleas are brown to black in color, with strong jumping legs. Adult cat fleas feed on dogs, cats, and a variety of furred animals. People may be bitten by fleas, especially when populations are high, but fleas will not live and reproduce on humans.

Keeping carpet, couches and your home clean, in general, can make it more difficult for fleas to spread.



Flea control is best achieved through a four step process. **Good sanitation, pet treatment, premise treatment and follow-up** are all critical to good flea control. Thorough **vacuuming** can remove **15-30%** of larvae and **30-60%** of flea eggs from carpeting. When vacuuming pay special attention to areas where the pet spends a lot of time. These are the sites most likely to harbor eggs, larvae, and the dried blood that larvae need. Don't forget to **clean out your vacuum** or throw away vacuum bags. Fleas can continue too reproduce in the vacuum itself. Pet Treatment. Your pet's first defense against fleas should include a **flea comb and a good bath**. Soap in a pet bath acts as a gentle insecticide and will help control lighter flea infestations. Use of a flea comb can also help reduce the need for insecticides. Insect growth regulators that can be used for premise treatment include methoprene and pyriproxifen. Because it breaks down quickly when exposed to direct sunlight, methoprene is primarily used as an indoor spray. Pyriproxyfen sprays are more stable outdoors and are available through pest control operators under the name **Archer®** or **Nylar®**. Pyriproxifen is different from most other **IGRs (Insect growth regulators)** in that it controls both immature and adult fleas. Follow-up is especially important for flea control. The flea pupa is the intermediate life form between larval and adult life stages. The **pupal stage normally lasts 7-14 days**, but can persist for much longer under certain conditions. The pupa is normally well-protected from the effects of pesticide sprays and is very difficult to kill with insecticides. Fleas that are in the pupal stage when insecticides are applied, **frequently survive treatment to emerge several days later. Hence follow-up** treatments are usually needed. Two or more follow-up treatments with pyrethrum or a **citrus oil-based spray** (or a standard insecticide, if you wish) should be applied **5-10 days** after the first application.

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GROWING OKRA IN EAST TEXAS

INFORMATION FROM TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Let's Grow!

Okra is a warm-season vegetable that grows well in most Texas soils. A fair source of vitamin A, it can be eaten in many ways, including boiled, fried, and cooked in soups, gumbos, and casseroles.

The best okra varieties to grow in Texas are Annie Oakley (Compact), Blondy (Compact), Burgundy, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Lee, Louisiana Green, Stewart's Zeebest (Heirloom), and Velvet. For good yields, okra must grow in full sunlight in fertile, well-drained soil.

Work the soil only when it is dry enough not to stick to garden tools. Spade or turn the soil as deeply as possible. Okra will grow best in soil that has been worked 8 to 10 inches deep. Remove all rocks and trash from the soil, and then rake it soil smooth.

For the best yields, plant okra in the spring 2 to 3 weeks after all danger of frost has passed. For a good fall crop, plant at least 3 months before the first fall frost. Plant the okra seeds about 1 inch deep and 2 inches apart in the row (Fig. 1). Space the rows at least 3 feet apart. When the okra is up and growing, thin out the plants to about 1 foot apart (Fig. 2). Okra will do fairly well under dry conditions. However, if you water the plants every 7 to 10 days, the yield will be higher. Sandy soils will need water more often than clay soils. After the first harvest, apply 1 cup of garden fertilizer for each 10 feet of row. Scatter the fertilizer evenly between the rows. Mix it lightly with the soil. Water the plants after fertilizing. Okra plants will produce large flowers about 2 months after planting. The okra pods will be ready to pick 3 to 4 days later. Pick the okra every 1 to 2 days or yields will decrease. Okra can be stored for 3 to 5 days in the refrigerator. Okra that is too mature can be dried, cured, and used in flower arrangements.

fig. 1

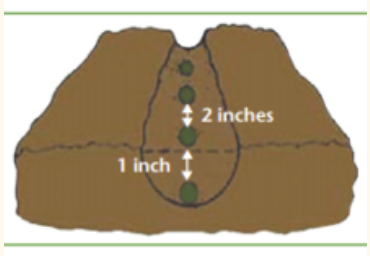

fig. 2

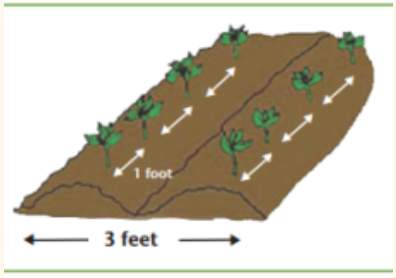

fig. 3

Weed of the Week: Carolina Horse Nettle

Information provided by Texas A&M University

CAROLINA HORSENETTLE

(SOLANUM CAROLINENSE)

A warm season perennial, Carolina horse nettle can grow to 2 feet tall. It has dark green leaves that are sharply lobed with a pointed tip. Carolina horse nettle has large spines on the stems and leaves. Each of its mostly oval leaves has several teeth or shallow lobes on both sides. Horse nettle has clusters of white to purple flowers and they bloom May to October. Horse nettle also produces a fruit that is about 1/2 inch in diameter; it is green with light green vertical bands until maturity, when it becomes yellow. Carolina horse nettle can be toxic to livestock. The toxicity may depend upon the maturity of the plants, because more toxins are present in the fruits than in the leaves. Hay and silage containing the mature plants can cause poisoning and death of livestock. Optimum time for control is during bloom.

Select Herbicide Options: Weedmaster, GrazonNext HL, Grazon P+D, Pasturall HL, Surmount, Chaparral (for bermudagrass pastures, will destroy bahiagrass), Cimarron Max (for bermudagrass pastures, will destroy bahiagrass), Pastora (for bermudagrass pastures, will destroy bahiagrass). REMEMBER: THE LABEL IS THE LAW! Always read the pesticide label before using.

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LAWN WATERING TIPS

FOR EAST TEXAS SUMMERS

When watering your lawn, be sure to water as efficiently as possible to conserve resources and to promote dense, healthy turfgrass growth. To improve water-use efficiency, see the AgriLife Extension Water-Wise checklist on the next page for specific watering tips.

If warm season turfgrass undergoes a prolonged period of drought, it can go into summer dormancy. This means that it will cease growth, turn a tan golden-brown color and then recover when water becomes available in the late summer or early fall. Allowing your grass to go dormant is an option when you don't want to water on a regular basis during the hottest and driest weeks of summer. Summer dormancy is contingent on your lawn's ability to develop deep, healthy roots during periods of active growth. The practices listed in the Water-Wise checklist help encourage deep rooting, deep water infiltration and healthy turfgrass growth. If you choose to do this, stop fertilizing because it's best to apply fertilizer products when turfgrass is actively growing, not dormant.

As fall approaches, remember that watering your lawn can have a significant impact on turfgrass diseases. As a rule of thumb, water early in the morning. Evening watering can prolong periods of leaf wetness and promote conditions for disease. Turfgrass growth starts to slow in the fall which means that less water and fertilizer are required.

AgriLife Extension Water-Wise Checklist

MOWING

TASK	EXPLANATION
☑ Mow at the upper end of the appropriate mowing height range for your species of turfgrass.	*Taller Grass = Deeper Roots.* Deeper roots can improve overall water infiltration and access to water deeper in the soil.
☑ Follow the 1/3 Rule. Mow frequently enough to avoid removing more than 1/3 of the total turfgrass mowing height at one time.	*Scalped grass is stressed grass.* Stressed grass will be less tolerant to heat and drought, and more vulnerable to other pests or fungal pathogens.

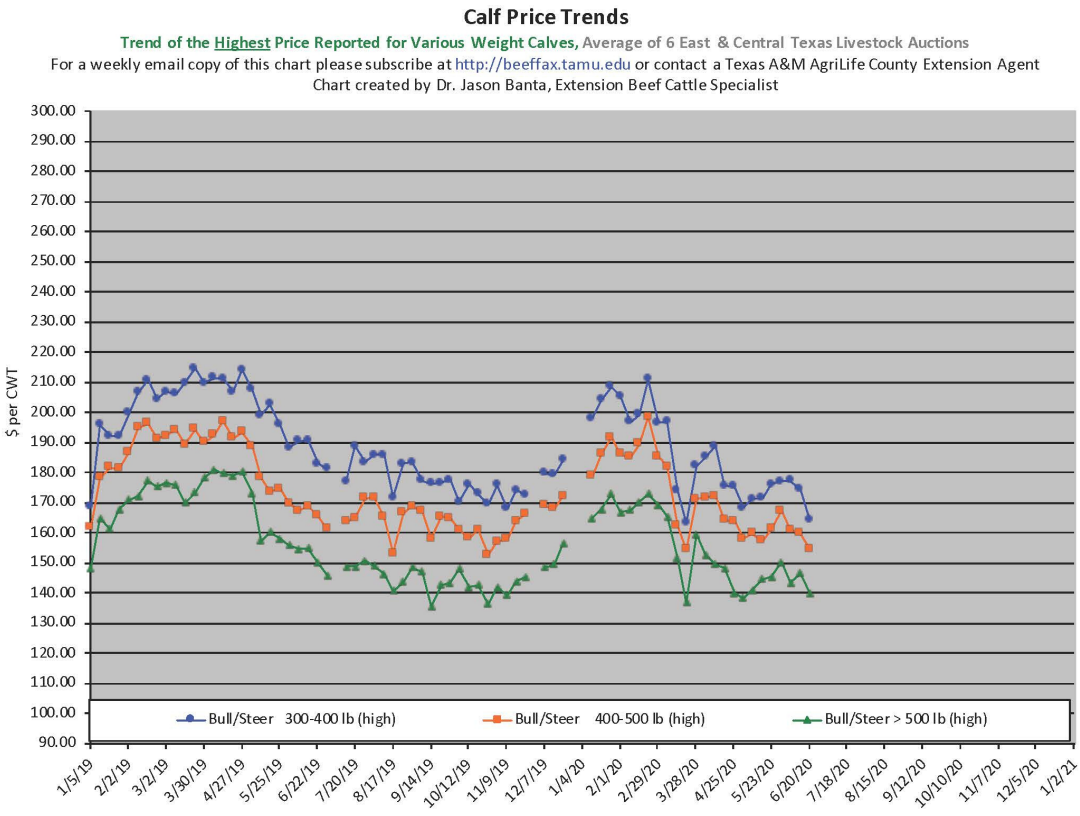
IRRIGATION

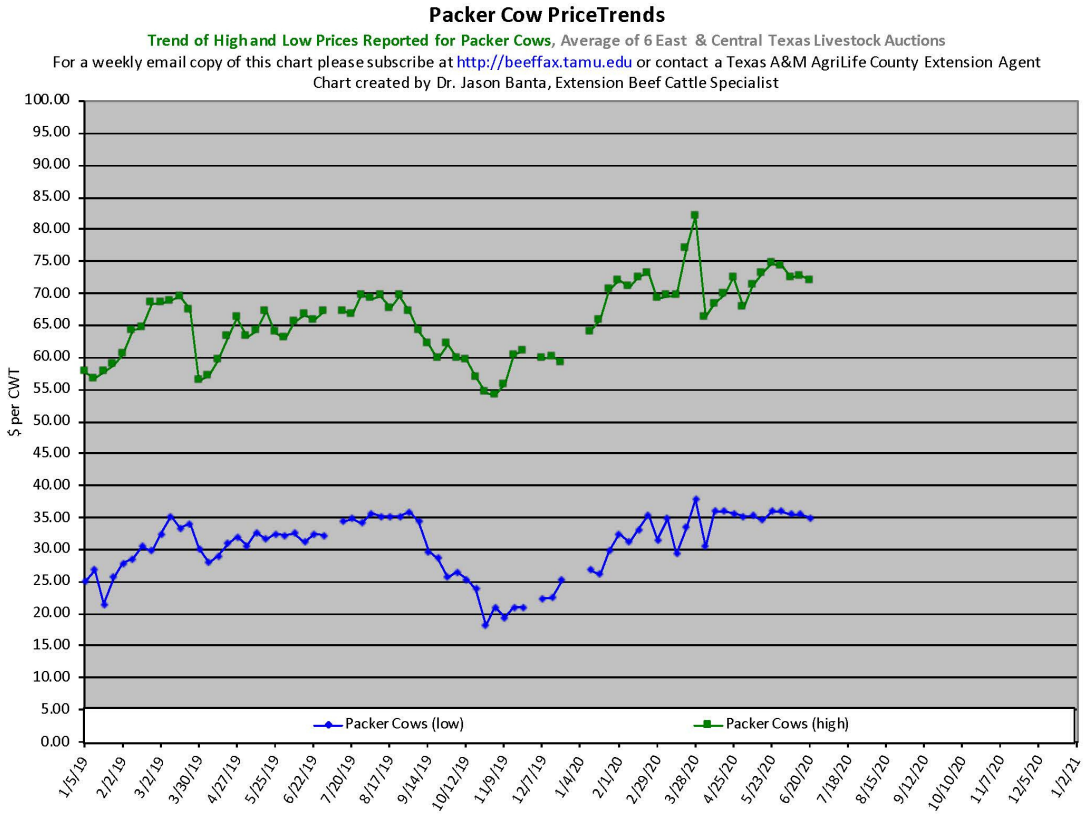
TASK	EXPLANATION
☑ Water ***deeply and infrequently.*** Try to water to a depth of approximately 6" each time you water.	Watering this way encourages deeper, denser root growth. Again, this can improve infiltration and access to water deeper in the soil.
☑ Wait to water when **visual wilt** is occurring, and do so late at night or early in the morning.	Watering late at night or early in the morning will reduce evaporative losses, improve water-use efficiency, and reduce length of overall leaf wetness, which reduces disease potential.
☑ Use the **Cycle Soak Method.**	Because sprinkler precipitation rates usually exceed soil infiltration rates, cycle soaking improves soil water infiltration and reduces runoff by "pulsing" water onto the lawn in small amounts over several hours.
☑ Monitor your irrigation equipment ***carefully.***	Broken or malfunctioning irrigation equipment can both waste water and create localized dry spots across the lawn. Replace broken heads, and consider a professional irrigation audit by a licensed irrigator.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

END OF JUNE 2020

CATTLE PRICE TRENDS





Trend of the Highest Price Reported for Various Weight Calves, Average of 6 East & Central Texas Livestock Auctions

beeffax.tamu.edu

KEEP CATTLE HYDRATED AND HEALTHY

DURING TEXAS SUMMERS

When cattle become excessively dehydrated, sodium levels increase in all tissues, including the brain. If dehydrated cattle find water and drink too much too quickly, the liquid will rush to their brains. As pressure builds in the brains, cattle may develop instability or seizures, or may die from what is known as water/salt intoxication.

Hot summer days take their toll on ponds and tanks. As water sources dwindle during a your average Texas summer, water may become concentrated with salt and other inorganic materials.

Unpalatable water may cause cattle to avoid troughs or tanks, leading to deprivation and dehydration. Warm, stagnant water may also encourage the growth of blue-green algae, some of which are toxic. The algae often concentrate on the downwind side of a pond.

ALWAYS REMEMBER

- To avoid water deprivation, ensure water is readily available to your cattle daily. Make sure troughs and tanks contain water. Ensure nipple waterers in barns are working properly.
- Avoid holding cattle in pens that lack water sources for long periods, and do not work cattle in the heat of the day.
- Ensure cattle know where to find water. Cattle are creatures of habit. If their preferred tank or trough dries up, animals may ignore other distant watering points in their pasture.
- When introducing cattle to new pastures, drive the animals to the troughs or tanks. Make sure weaned calves know where to find water. Watch cattle to ensure they are drinking adequately.

ARMY WORMS

Information from Texas A&M University

The fall armyworm, Spodoptera frugiperda, is a common pest of bermudagrass, sorghum, corn, wheat and rye grass and many other crops in north and central Texas. Larvae of fall armyworms are green, brown or black with white to yellowish lines running from head to tail. A distinct white line between the eyes forms an inverted "Y" pattern on the face. Four black spots aligned in a square on the top of the segment near the back end of the caterpillar are also characteristic. Armyworms are very small (1/8 inch) at first, cause little plant damage and as a result often go unnoticed. Larvae feed for 2-3 weeks and full-grown larvae are about 1 to 1 1/2 inches long. Given their immense appetite, great numbers, and marching ability, fall armyworms can damage entire fields or pastures in a few days.

Army worm Eggs

Army Worm Larvae

Adult Army Worm Moth

The key to managing fall armyworms is frequent inspection of fields to detect infestations before they have caused economic damage. Once larvae are more than ¾ inch long, the quantity of foliage they eat increases dramatically. During their final 2-3 days of feeding, armyworms eat 80% of the total foliage consumed during their entire development. The density of armyworms sufficient to justify insecticide treatment depends on the stage of crop growth and value of the crop. Seedling plants can tolerate fewer armyworms than established plants.

Infestations of more than 2-3 armyworms (1/2 inch or longer) per square foot may justify an insecticide application. If practical, apply insecticides early in the morning or late in the evening when armyworm larvae are most active and therefor most likely to encounter the insecticide spray. If the field is near harvest, an early harvest, rather than an insecticide treatment, is an option.

Always remember when using pesticides to READ the label!!!
THE LABEL IS THE LAW.