

AUGUST 2020

HARRISON COUNTY

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

CHINESE SEED THREAT

AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller is urging Texans to take extreme precaution when receiving unsolicited seed packets from China. These packets have been mailed to multiple states, including Texas, falsely labeled as jewelry. Residents are advised not to plant the seeds as they could contain harmful invasive species or be otherwise unsafe.

"I am urging folks to take this matter seriously," Commissioner Miller said. "An invasive plant species might not sound threatening, but these small invaders could **destroy Texas agriculture**. TDA has been working closely with USDA to analyze these unknown seeds so we can protect Texas residents." If you receive a foreign package containing seeds do not open it or plant the contents. Keep contents contained in their original sealed package.

If anyone in Harrison County, or any other county, receives any suspicious seeds/nuts from China please EMAIL

carol.m.motloch@usda.gov

Your email should include your name, phone #, description of the package and a picture of the label would be most helpful.

These seeds should NOT be planted for ANY reason.



Photo taken by Amanda Smith Marshall, TX

An invasive species is an organism that is not native to a particular region. The introduction of this "alien species" can cause economic or environmental harm. In agriculture, an invasive species can destroy native crops, introduce disease to native plants and may be dangerous for livestock.

AUGUST GARDENING TIPS

for East Texas

Many plants will signal their need for water: turfgrass lies flat after being walked on, and many plants lose their shine and droop a little. Unfortunately, most trees do not readily show drought stress, yet are negatively impacted by prolonged droughts, and the effects can carry over to the next few years. Weakened trees become more susceptible to other stresses and diseases, and may succumb after a series of droughts.



When watering lawns during hot weather, do it early in the morning. Otherwise, much of the water will evaporate from the grass before the plants get to use it. To further avoid excess evaporation, use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water instead of a fine mist.



Check the thickness of mulch around your shrubs, flowers and newly planted trees. Unmulched soils can reach more than 100 degrees, hot enough to kill roots. Mulched soils can be 3 to 10 degrees cooler even several inches deep. Besides reducing soil temperature, mulches also conserve water by reducing evaporation, often up to 65 percent. In one test, pine needles gave the greatest reduction in soil evaporation. Of course, mulch reduces weeds which also compete for water.



Winter Forages & Reducing Costs - Boost Cow/Calf Weight Gains

Annual rainfall and soil type in each specific Texas region will be a major factor in deciding which forage will successfully meet grazing needs.

For example, annual ryegrasses are historically more popular east of Interstate 35 due to rainfall and because varieties are well adapted to a variety of soil types.

Soil tests and preparing the soil for specific varieties are critical. Drainage, whether the site drains well or collects water, will also impact production success. Producers should plant seeds at recommended depths. Annual ryegrass should not be planted deeper than half an inch. Small grains should be planted at least an inch deep. Proper fertilization will greatly impact production. Nitrogen is important for small grain and ryegrass production. Potassium and phosphorous are important for all forages.

Winter forages are a cost-effective way to provide grazing and add pounds to fall-born calves. For example, if we figure ryegrass is \$15-\$18 an acre in seed cost and we budget \$90 per acre in fertilizer then our cost per ton of forage produced would be about \$25-\$55. Costs will vary depending on forage yield and fertilizer need, but that's considerably cheaper than hay and most other winter feeding programs. If done right, winter forages can eliminate the need for supplemental feeding and provide good protein and energy to cow/calf pairs during critical periods.

The decision of how many planted acres producers should provide per cow or cow/calf pair depends on timing. A good guideline to follow is to plant approximately 1 acre for every two to three spring calving cows and 1 acre for each cow/calf pair when calving in the fall.

Calving schedules are a critical consideration for utilizing planted forages effectively. Fall calving pairs can graze full-time if the forage allows. If cows are in the last trimester before calving, producers should limit cows' access to winter pasture. You'll want to limit grazing for those cows to two hours a day. The reason we want to limit grazing is because there is so much protein and energy in the forages that we could see increased birth weights and potential calving problems.

Writer: Adam Russell

Contact: Dr. Jason Banta & Vanessa Corriher-Olson
For more information check out <http://foragefax.tamu.edu>

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Texas 4-H is part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M System. Founded in 1908, 4-H is the largest youth development program in Texas, reaching more than 550,000 youth each year.

Getting involved in Harrison County 4-H

Texas 4-H is like a club for kids and teens ages 5-18, and it's BIG! It's the largest youth development program in Texas with more than 550,000 youth each year. No matter where you live or what you like to do, Texas 4-H has something that lets you be a better you! You may think 4-H is only for your friends with animals, but it's so much more! You can do activities like shooting sports, food science, healthy living, robotics, fashion, and photography.

In 4-H, the activities are organized by topics and called 'projects.' All 4-H members must be enrolled in at least one project. When you choose a project, you will learn everything there is to know about that topic. You will participate in various hands-on activities, learn new skills, do community service, or even make speeches about your project.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR 4-H PROJECT:

- SELECT A PROJECT YOU LIKE.
- SELECT A PROJECT THAT CAN BE COMPLETED.
- CONSIDER THE MONEY AND TIME IT WILL TAKE. CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS HELP?
- CONSIDER THE SPACE AND EQUIPMENT THAT YOU HAVE AT HOME.

A 4-H PROJECT SHOULD BE FUN, SERVE A PURPOSE, AND BE WORTH THE EFFORT. SELECT ONLY THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS YOU CAN COMPLETE.

Call the Harrison County Extension Office if you would like more information about joining 4-H!
903-935-8413 102 W. Houston Marshall, TX



END OF JULY 2020

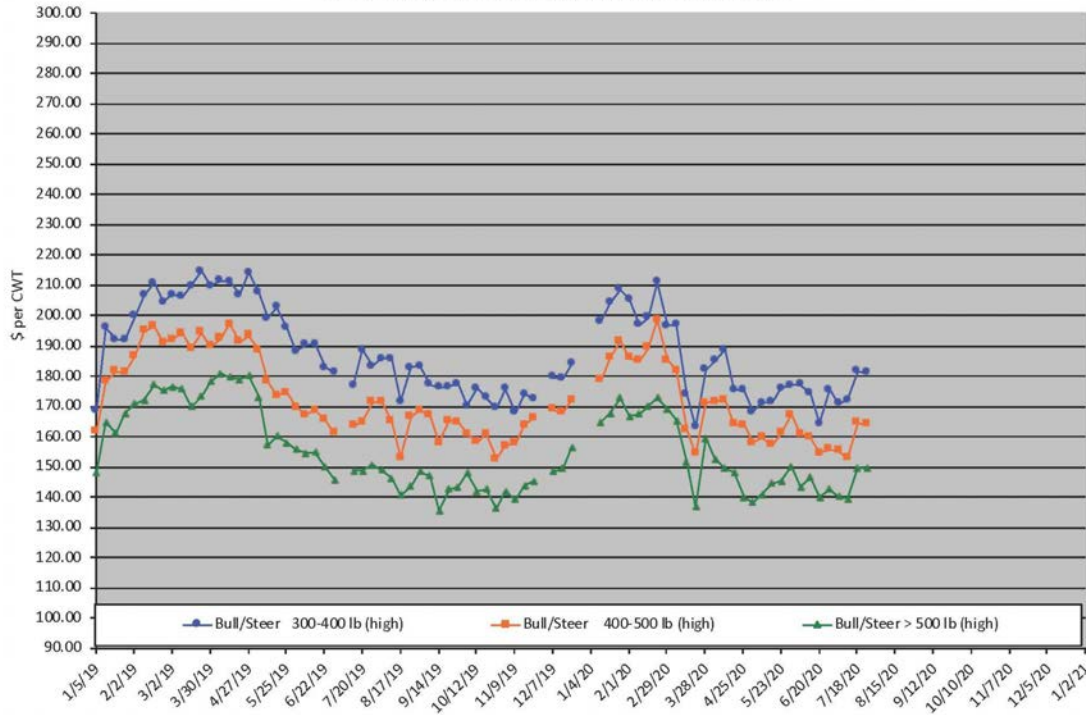
CATTLE PRICE TRENDS

Calf Price Trends

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

For a weekly email copy of this chart please subscribe at <http://beefax.tamu.edu> or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent

Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

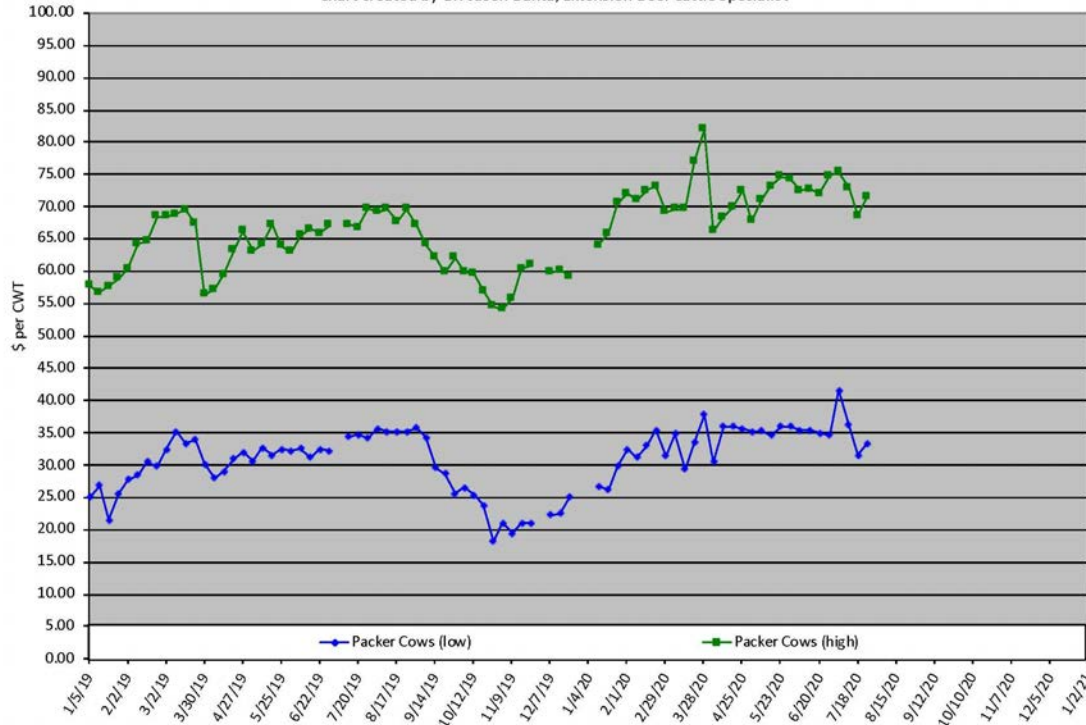


Packer Cow Price Trends

Trend of High and Low Prices Reported for Packer Cows, Average of 6 East & Central Texas Livestock Auctions

For a weekly email copy of this chart please subscribe at <http://beefax.tamu.edu> or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent

Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist



The graphs
show the
average of the
highest prices
reported for
6 livestock
auction
markets
located in
East and
Central
Texas.

BEEFAX.TAMU.EDU

CRABGRASS

WEED OF THE WEEK

Crabgrass is a warm-season annual grass that is commonly found in pastures and hay meadows in parts of Texas. Relative to other warm-season annual grasses, crabgrass has a low- to medium-yield potential but is high in forage quality. As such, it is often a desirable component in pastures and is sometimes planted for forage in pastures. As is the case with many annual grass species, crabgrass is a prolific seed producer which enables new stands to establish in subsequent growing seasons for summer grazing.



Due to its high-volume seed production, crabgrass also has the potential to become a problematic and persistent weed in hay meadows. Its competitive growth among perennial grass hay meadows contributes to stand thinning from spring to late summer; thus, growers are concerned about its economic impact. Crabgrass has a slower drying rate than most hay species, which causes rotting and mold development after baling. Once it is dry, crabgrass often turns a dark brown or black color, which stands in stark contrast to the bright green color of other grass hay crops. This can substantially lower the value of the hay crop, so controlling the growth of crabgrass may be critical for long-term successful production.

Use of herbicides to control crabgrass is probably the most common method practiced. Prowl H2O (pendimethalin) is a preemergence herbicide labeled for dormant bermudagrass and bahiagrass pastures and hay meadows. Treatments should be applied in late winter/early spring before crabgrass emerges. This herbicide should also be applied prior to rainfall for the herbicide to receive adequate incorporation into the soil.

FOR MORE INFO GO TO FORAGEFAX.TAMU.EDU

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KISSING BUG DANGERS

AND CHAGAS DISEASE



"Kissing bug" is a common name for a group of bugs called triatomines. These blood-sucking insects persist across the southern U.S., Mexico, Central America and South America, especially during the hottest months of summer, experts said.

Kissing bugs usually feed on blood at night when animals or people are sleeping. Bites are often painless, and many people do not realize they have been bitten. The nocturnal insect is attracted to lights and lives in a range of outdoor environments. Kissing bugs can feed on dogs, wild mammals, birds, humans and even other insects, like crickets.

Chagas disease

The main risk of disease comes from a parasite in the kissing bug's intestines and feces — *Trypanosoma cruzi*. Research shows about 50-60% of kissing bugs in Texas might be infected, Gabriel Hamer said. About 25% of the people they infect with Chagas develop serious chronic disease. Most infected people remain unaware of their infection and might stay symptom-free for life.

Chagas disease manifests in an initial "acute" phase with symptoms that can include fever, fatigue, body aches, headache, rash, loss of appetite, diarrhea and vomiting, or there may be no symptoms at all. Some infected persons, roughly 30%, later develop a "chronic" phase. It includes a range of cardiac and intestinal complications that might only appear decades after initial infection. The disease also affects a wide range of domestic and wild animals.

Kissing bugs suspected of having bitten a human and found inside a Texas home should be sent to Texas Department of State Health

Services for testing in conjunction with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Anyone bitten by a kissing bug should speak with a doctor about further testing. Animal owners who suspect animal contact with kissing bugs should consult a veterinarian. Kissing bugs found outside, and not suspected of biting any humans, may be sent to Texas A&M University Kissing Bug Citizen Science Program for free identification and testing. The program's website includes information resources for all Texas residents and specific information for pet owners and veterinarians.

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**Harrison County - Texas A&M
AgriLife Extension Service**



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