

April 2021

# AG/NR NEWSLETTER

HARRISON COUNTY AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Please help assist our county by taking a few minutes out of your day to complete this short survey. Every response is critical.



**TEXAS SPEAKS**

**PARTICIPATE TODAY!**

The online survey is anonymous, open to the public and takes 10 minutes to complete at:

<http://tx.ag/texasspeaks>



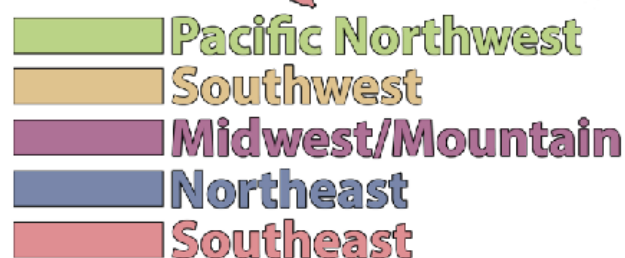
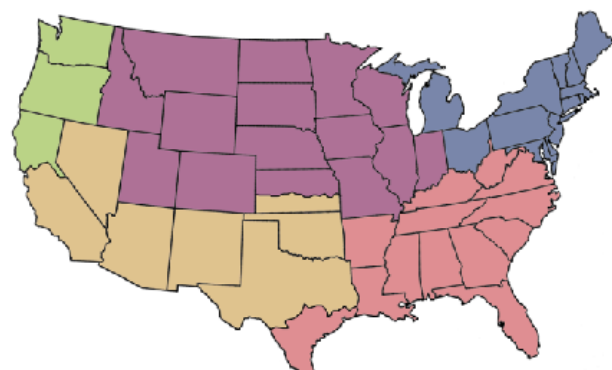
TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

- Online
- Anonymous
- Takes approximately 10 minutes or less
- This survey is part of several efforts to identify and understand the issues facing Texas communities
- Identifying relevant issues is fundamental to the program development model of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- Includes an open feedback section for areas not listed within the survey
- Includes an opportunity to elect to receive contact by the agency

## GARDENING TIPS FOR APRIL

### MARSHALL, TEXAS

- Remove any winter-damaged branches or plants that have not begun to grow yet. You can prune spring-flowering plants when they finish blooming.
- Transplant citrus trees, ideally 2 to 5-year-old trees.
- Thin fruit to 6-inch spacing for better fruit size. Also, remember to provide adequate soil moisture for your fruit trees during April and May for good fruit size.
- Continue fertilizing established roses.
- Warm-season lawns can be established in late April from sprigs, plugs, or sod. Start mowing established lawns.
- Begin fertilizing Bermuda and warm-season grasses this month.
- Annual flowers can be seeded now. You can sow the seeds directly in the flower beds, but remember to keep the soil moist until the seeds germinate.
- Thin out flower seedlings so that the plants have enough space to grow. You can transplant the extra seedlings to another area.
- Prune winter damage on your herb plants. Look for new growth developing on the lower part of the herbs, and cut the plant back by 1/3 to 1/2 to the healthy new shoots.
- Remember to water your plants more frequently as the weather warms up and the days lengthen.
- Continue planting vegetables, such as beans, carrots, cucumbers, melons, peppers, squashes, and sunflowers.
- Plant okra toward the end of the month, as it does better with warmer soil.
- Plant vegetables in successive plantings so that you can have a continuous harvest throughout the growing season.
- Remember to thin out your vegetable plants so that they have enough room to grow. If they are too crowded, the plants will become weak.
- Beware of insects and other pests in your garden. Keep an eye on your garden for aphids, spider mites, etc., and take action when necessary to eliminate the pests.



# Spring Lawn To-Do List Page 1

**BECKY BOWLING, PH.D.**

## **Avoid overwatering lawns**

One of the first spring preparations for homeowners should be conducting an irrigation audit to ensure the system is working correctly and efficiently, Bowling said. Checking for leaks, broken lines and other problems should be an emphasis every spring, but the recent weeklong arctic blast and subfreezing temperatures make a system checkup a top priority.

Bowling said homeowners can perform the system audit, but some problems, especially freeze damage might not be obvious. She recommended that residents reach out to their water district, city or county to inquire about possible irrigation system audits they provide that are free or discounted.

Professionals hired should be licensed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, she said. "You really want to take a look at your system ahead of time because you don't want to be in a situation where you really need it to run, and it's not able to deliver water to your turfgrass," Bowling said. "It's good to explore your options now to see what resources are available in your area and have it in tip-top shape by the time summer sets in."

## **Sprinkler head watering**

Sprinkler maintenance is key to applying the right amount of water at the right time.

Bowling said measuring the precipitation rate output should be part of the overall system audit.

Established lawns typically need half an inch to 1 inch of water per week in the absence of rainfall and measuring the system's watering rate with a catch-can will determine any needed adjustments.

"Hotter, drier, windier conditions may mean that more water is needed, but half an inch to 1 inch per week is a pretty good standard," she said. "The key is to not overwater. Overwatering is the No. 1 underlying problem I see in lawns. Systems are programmed to water too shallowly and/or too frequently, leading to underdeveloped roots, which can lead to a wide range of problems. Deep and infrequent waterings help create deeper, more resilient root systems, and that reduces many lawn issues across the board."

Bowling said a good resource for homeowners is the TexasET Network by AgriLife Extension, which provides good weather information, including rainfall forecasts, that can help irrigation planning. AgriLife Extension's WaterMyYard application for computer and mobile devices is available in many urban and suburban areas around the state. The app can provide site-specific watering recommendations for homeowners.

## **Prepare soil for growth**

Soil that is prepared to support robust turfgrass health and growth is another priority homeowners should put at the top of their spring to-do list, Bowling said.

## **Spreading fertilizer.**

Follow soil test recommendations for fertilizers to meet nutrient needs and feed your lawn.

Soil preparation begins with a soil test. Bowling recommends soil testing at least every three years but said testing every season will help homeowners stay on top of their soil's needs.

Bowling said nitrogen is a familiar addition via fertilizer, but a soil test will determine whether applications need to include phosphorous or potassium or an amendment like lime to reduce soil acidity. "We're out of the coldest part of the year, so it is a good time to test your soil," she said. "It takes two to three weeks to get the results back, so getting that done now and having a plan about fertilization or other soil amendments that need to be added throughout the season is a critical part of successful turfgrass care and management."

# Spring Lawn To-Do List Page 2

**BECKY BOWLING, PH.D.**

## **Get lawn equipment ready to go**

No preseason lawncare to-do list is complete without considering the lawn equipment you use throughout the season. Mower blades need to be cleaned, sharpened and maintained. Spray applicators should be calibrated, and other lawncare tools should be cleaned and ready to use.

"You want your equipment to be clean and operating properly," she said. "Dirty equipment can move pests around and dull mower blades shred grass rather than cut it, which can lead to diseases."

Bowling recommends removing debris on the mower and cleaning under its deck by removing debris that cakes to the bottom. Compressed air is a good tool for cleaning off mowing equipment. Also, check the spark plugs, oil and apply grease to the various fittings for moving parts on the machine.

"It's just a good practice to have your equipment ready to do the job when it's needed," she said. "It not only prolongs the equipment's life but is a part of maintaining a healthy lawn."

## **Postpone preemergent**

Bowling said annual preemergent applications, a staple for most spring lawn care regimens, might need to be postponed until turfgrasses show they are rebounding from the recent arctic blast.

"We want to proceed with caution this year," she said. "It's important to remember that preemergent herbicides are intended for healthy, established turfgrasses. Many of the products available to homeowners can inhibit root growth and may hinder or slow turfgrass recovery if winter injury has occurred."

Instead, Bowling recommends bagging and removing clippings that may include flowering weeds and/or removing weeds manually or spot spraying weeds directly with post-emergent.

"I just want everyone to be aware this is an unusual year and I don't recommend a blanket application to a lawn that appears to be under stress," she said. "Homeowners should also be mindful about applications to areas that need to be resodded or seeded because those herbicides may interfere with turfgrass establishment. Always read and follow herbicide labels as it relates to application timing for the best results."

## **Don't love your lawn to death**

Along similar lines as holding off on herbicides, Bowling recommends that homeowners not be so hasty in fertilizer and water applications.

Bowling said the first rule in fertilizing turfgrass is to wait until after it has been mowed twice. Watering should only begin when the turfgrass needs additional moisture – often beginning in June for many parts of the state.

Premature fertilization can benefit competition like weeds rather than turfgrasses, Bowling said.

Fertilizers shouldn't be applied until daytime temperatures reach 80-95 degrees consistently. By then, soil temperatures are up enough to promote active growth, and plants will do well with some additional nutrients.

Additionally, watering lawns too soon prevents them from establishing a strong root system, which helps them fight off disease and supports them through hot, dry summer months to come.

"This happens every year, but it's especially important this year," she said. "A lot of people have the intention of helping their lawn with water and fertilizer, but they're really hurting it. We want grasses to be up and growing before we fertilize, and root systems become robust when they are becoming active and forced to grow to seek out moisture."



## Prevent the spread of oak wilt in Texas this spring

*Leighton Chachere*

Oak wilt is one of the most destructive tree diseases in the U.S., killing millions of trees in 76 counties of Central, North and West Texas. Texas A&M Forest Service urges Texans to help stop the spread of oak wilt by avoiding pruning or wounding oak trees through June.

“This native fungus has been affecting oaks for decades in Texas; prevention and early detection are vital to stop the spread,” said Texas A&M Forest Service regional forest health coordinator, Demian Gomez.

Oak wilt spreads easiest between February and June because of high fungal mat production, high insect populations and the high susceptibility to disease for oaks. In the spring, red oaks that died of the disease last summer and fall may produce spore mats under the bark. With a fruity smell, these mats attract small, sap-feeding beetles that can later fly to a fresh wound of any oak tree and infect it, starting a new oak wilt center.

Any new wound can be an entry point for infection including those produced by pruning, construction activities, livestock, land or “cedar” clearing, lawnmowers, string trimmers and storms. To decrease the attractiveness of fresh wounds to insects, always paint wounds on oaks, no matter the time of the year.

### Identifying the disease

Oak wilt is often detected by yellow to brown veins in leaves of infected live oak trees. During the spring, evergreen oak trees will shed their old leaves, while simultaneously growing new leaves. Oak wilt foliar symptoms are different from this seasonal transition in that they affect every leaf. For red oaks, pale young green or brown leaves can be observed during the spring in infected trees.

All oaks are susceptible to oak wilt disease. However, red oaks are most susceptible and can die in as little as one month after being infected. Live oaks show intermediate susceptibility but because of their interconnected root systems, they can move the disease easily. White oaks are the least susceptible, but they are not immune to infection.

While red oaks play a key role in the establishment of new disease centers, live oaks and white oaks can also move the oak wilt through root grafts. Prevention is key, but early detection is crucial to limiting the spread of oak wilt.

It is critical to avoid pruning oaks at this time of year to prevent the spread of oak wilt, and should only be considered if there are immediate safety concerns.

### Storm damage considerations

The recent winter storm caused significant ice damage across Texas, and oak trees were not an exception.

“Wounds created by the ice storm are no longer fresh and do not need to be painted; however, any new wounds created during cleanup must be painted immediately,” said Texas A&M Forest Service biologist, Robert Edmonson.

For more information on ice damage and oak wilt, visit [Ice Damage and Oak Wild](#).

Some cities and municipalities, including Austin, the city of Lakeway, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and Round Rock, have oak wilt programs in place with municipal foresters dedicated to managing the disease.

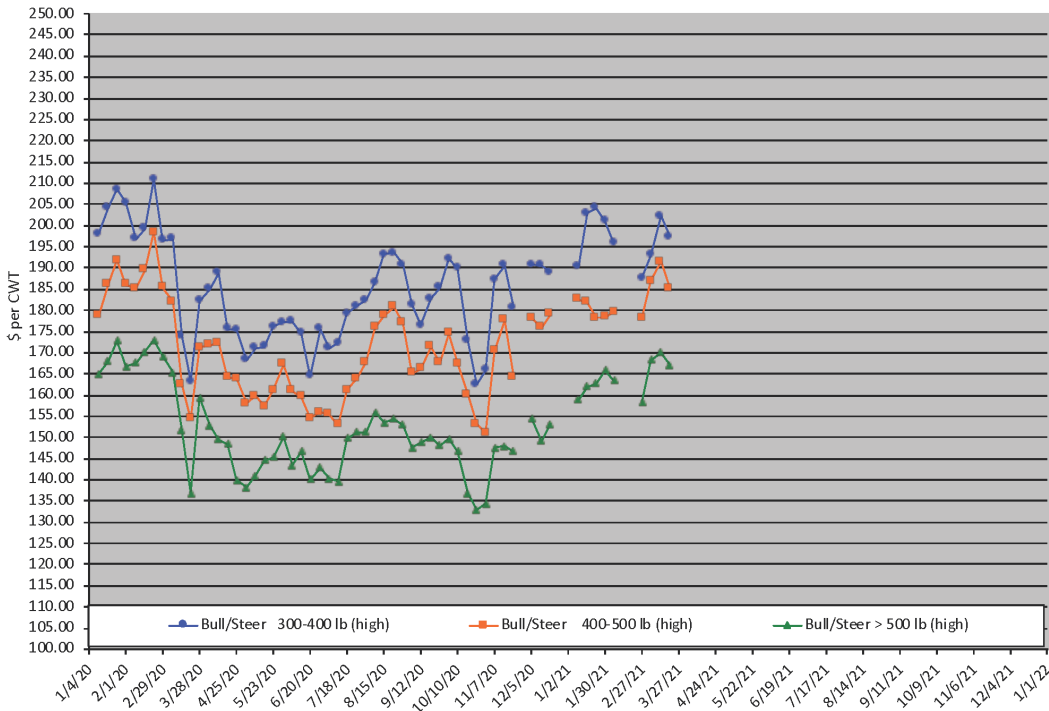
Texans can also contact their local Texas A&M Forest Service representative with any questions about this devastating disease.

# Cattle Price Trends

## Calf Price Trends

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

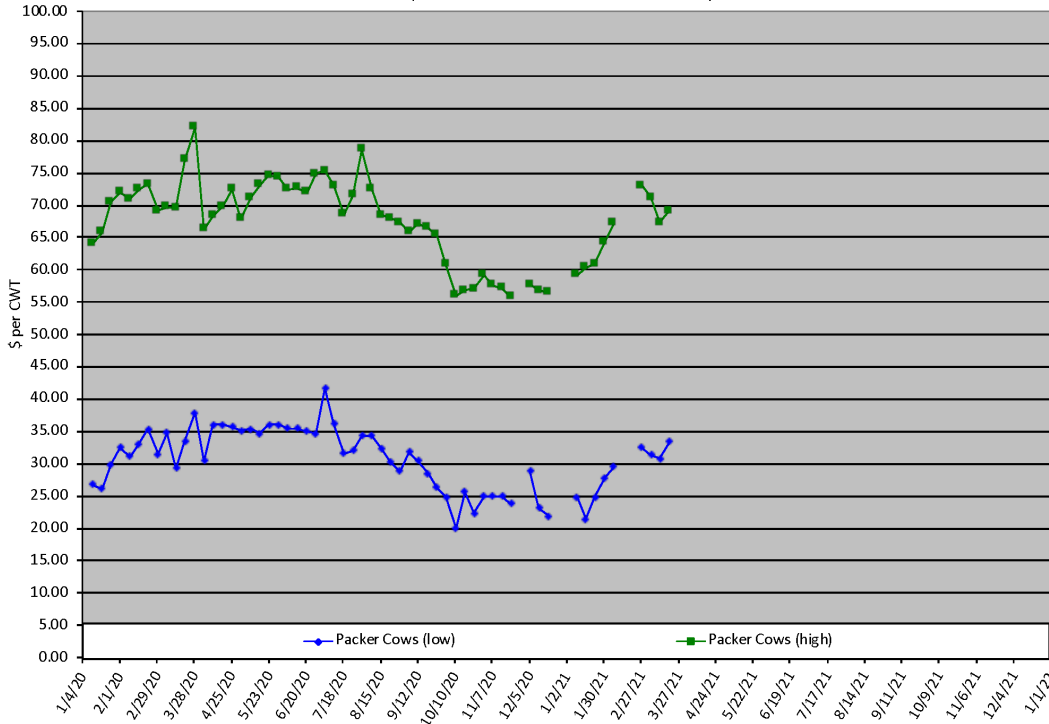
For a weekly email copy of this chart please subscribe at <http://beeffax.tamu.edu> or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent  
Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist



## 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://beeffax.tamu.edu> or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent  
Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist



Cattle price trends for the week ending 3/20/21. The graphs show the average of the highest prices reported for 6 livestock auction markets located in East and Central Texas

For more info go to [beeffax.tamu.edu](http://beeffax.tamu.edu)

# Establishing Bermudagrass

As temperatures rise we often start getting an itch to plant. When it comes to establishing bermudagrass from sprigs there are several things to keep in mind before we start tilling the soil...

- 1. Location:** Choose a well drained soil; bermudagrass does not do well on wet-land (except for Jiggs Bermudagrass).
- 2. Variety Selection:** Match variety to soil type, average rainfall, production goals, and willingness to manage (provide fertility, etc.)
- 3. Weed Control:** Destroy existing vegetation by spraying actively growing weeds with glyphosate. Ideal time to start is the year prior to actual planting. In late summer/early fall year prior to planting, destroy existing vegetation with 5 quarts/acre of glyphosate. Weed control following establishment can be critical to achieving a stand.
- 4. Soil Fertility:** Obtain a soil sample the fall prior to planting. Apply recommended limestone during land preparation. Any recommended phosphorus should be applied during seedbed preparation to incorporate into the soil. When sprigs begin to green up, apply 40 to 60 lbs of actual N/acre and any potassium (K) according to soil test recommendation.
- 5. Sprigs:** Identify a reliable source of sprigs well before planting time. Your County Extension Agent may know of someone locally who provides sprigs. Plant into a moist seedbed at 2 to 2 ½ inches deep. Do not plant deeper than 3".
- 6. Planting Date:** Sprigs can be planted from March, when danger of a heavy freeze is past, until August. The earlier you plant, the longer you will have to get established and the better chance they will survive a severe winter. The underground rhizomes develop much slower than the above ground stolons and are necessary for winter survival. Planting later into the summer increases the risk of losing newly planted sprigs to drought.

# Farm City Week Results

Keller Robinson of Elysian Fields FFA sold his grand champion steer on Thursday for \$12,000 to Knox Financial and Casey Slone Construction.

Emery Soape of Harrison County 4-H sold the reserve grand champion steer on Thursday for \$6,000 to Longview Livestock Commission and River City Iron and Metal.

Charleston Smith of Hallsville FFA sold his grand champion hog on Thursday for \$2,500 to Parker Fence Company.

Isabella Emery of Marshall FFA sold her reserve grand champion hog on Thursday for \$3,000 to Longview Livestock Commission and River City Iron and Metal.

Payton Rice of Hallsville FFA sold his grand champion lamb on Thursday for \$2,250 to Patterson Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram of Marshall.

Preston Rice of Hallsville FFA sold his reserve grand champion lamb on Thursday for \$1,800 to Jennifer True Love.

Cord Campbell of Hallsville FFA sold his grand champion goat on Thursday for \$3,250 to Patterson Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram of Marshall.

Avery Hunt of Hallsville FFA sold her reserve grand champion goat on Thursday for \$2,500 to Ben Pinkston with Classic Oilfield Services.

Lillie Pierce of Elysian Fields FFA sold her grand champion rabbits on Thursday for \$1,750 to King's Paving.

Maddie Skinner of Marshall FFA sold her reserve grand champion rabbits on Thursday for \$4,000 to Patterson Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram of Marshall.

Karleigh Robinson of Elysian Fields FFA sold her grand champion broiler on Thursday for \$1,900 to S & R Construction.

Haylea Murray of Harleton FFA sold her reserve grand champion broiler on Thursday for \$1,500 to Knox Financial.

Alex Peralta of Hallsville FFA sold his grand champion ag mechanics project on Thursday for \$1,600 to Steven Hagler.

Tucker Soules of Harrison County 4-H sold his reserve grand champion ag mechanics project on Thursday for \$1,200 to Mike Smelly.

**Credit to Marshall News Messenger for results**





**HARRISON COUNTY**  
Jr. Livestock Show  
**FARM CITY WEEK**





# Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

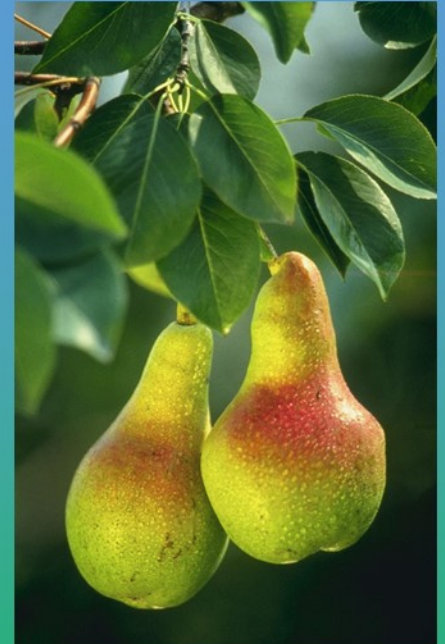
**Please mail this completed form along with your membership dues of \$25.00 per couple by April 1<sup>st</sup> to:**

Susan Goode  
Harrison County Cattlemen's Association Treasurer  
P.O. Box 98  
Waskom, TX 75692

**Please RSVP by April 1<sup>st</sup> to 903-935-8413 if you plan to attend the Annual Meeting so we know how many steaks to cook.**

I'm interested in serving as a board member

**To apply please print this form out and mail to to address listed (if you have any problems email [kelsie.hopkins@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kelsie.hopkins@ag.tamu.edu) for a form)**



# MAKE A **BIG** SPLASH

## Backyard Small Fruit Production Workshop

Space is limited, call today! 903-236-8429

**Location:** Enoch's Stomp Vineyard 871 Ferguson Rd, Harleton

**Date:** April 14, 2021

**Time:** 9AM-12PM

**Cost:** **FREE**

**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts Cooperating. If you need auxiliary aids to attend this or any Extension Program please contact the Extension office at 903-236-8429 one week prior to event.*

***KEEP IN TOUCH!***

**903-935-8413**

**102 W. HOUSTON  
MARSHALL, TX**

**FACEBOOK @HARRISONCOUNTYAGRILIFEEXTENSION**