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Annual Beaumont Field Day

"Texas Rice Challenges and Solutions" is the theme for the 65th annual field day for Texas AgriLife Research Beaumont, 1509 Aggie Dr. The event begins July 12 with field tours at 8 a.m. and an indoor program at 10:45 a.m. Afternoon field tours will begin at 1 p.m.

Dr. Ted Wilson, Center Director, will open the program with a brief overview of the Center's research. Keynote speakers include Rep. Alan Ritter, Texas House of Representatives, District 21; Dr. Rodante Tabien, Associate Professor, Texas AgriLife Research at Beaumont; and Dr. Natalie Hummel, Associate Professor/Rice Extension Entomologist, Louisiana State University Ag Center. Rep. Ritter's presentation will address water issues in the Texas Upper Gulf Coast and the rest of Texas. Dr. Tabien will provide an overview of the latest rice varieties developed through the Texas A&M AgriLife Center at Beaumont, and Dr. Hummel will discuss the latest e-technology that is increasingly used to extend research information to growers, crop consultants, the scientific community, and the general public. The morning tour stops will showcase recent developments in rice breeding, physiology, nutrient management, and insect and disease management. An afternoon tour will include organic rice and biofuels crops.

Licensed private, commercial, and non-commercial pesticide applicators (TDA licensees only) participating in this field day may obtain 3 general continuing education credits for recertification.

The event is open to the public at no charge. A barbecue lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Brandy Morace at 409-752-3045, bmorace@aesrg.tamu.edu.

CEU Recertification Training

The Jefferson County Offices of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service will again offer recertification training for pesticide applicators licensed by the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Structural Pest Control Board on Thursday, November 1st, at Ford Park Exhibit Hall in Beaumont. Participants will earn a total of 5 CEU credits at the training. Check our website at a later date for more information and registration forms.

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. with the training starting at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude approximately 3:30 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be served - the cost is included in the registration fee. Pre-Registration fee will be $40 per person. Registrations will be accepted at the door for a $50 fee. No refunds will be given. Please remember to bring your applicators license with you to the training to ensure you receive credit for attending.

Southeast Texas
Hay Testing Campaign

In conjunction with the Southeast Texas Beef Symposium & Trade Show

At Ford Park, November 17

Hay samples must be submitted by Monday, September 24th.

Hay Classes

- Bermudagrasses
- Other Warm Season Perennial Grasses
- Warm Season Annual Grasses
- Cool Season Annual Grasses
- Legumes
- Legume-Grass Mixtures

$5 Fee for each Hay Sample Tested

All samples must be marked with name, contact information, what type of hay, and if it was grown or purchased

Hay samples may be dropped off at the following locations:

Jefferson County Precinct 1 Service Center
Jefferson County Precinct 2 Service Center
Jefferson County Precinct 4 Service Center
Hamshire Fannett Ag Science Building
Jefferson County AgriLife Extension Office

Southeast Texas Beef Symposium and Trade Show

Ford Park, Saturday, November 17

Mark Your Calendar

More Programs and Vendors!

Watch for more details coming soon!

County Extension Agents - Agriculture/Natural Resources

Tyler Fitzgerald
Chambers County
409-374-2123

Ricky Thompson
Jefferson County
409-835-8461

Roy Stanford
Orange County
409-882-7010

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact Cary Erickson, Jefferson County Human Resources Director at (409) 839-2391 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Experts: Texas cattle deaths due to prussic acid ‘isolated incident’

Contacts: Dr. Larry Redmon, 979-845-4826, l-redmon@tamu.edu
Dr. Tom Hairgrove, 979-458-3216, TBHairgrove@ag.tamu.edu

COLLEGE STATION – Texas AgriLife Extension Service experts said Tuesday the deaths of 15 cattle in Bastrop County recently were likely an isolated event and that no further problems are anticipated.

“There’s a lot of information and misinformation that continues to circulate about this recent isolated case of cattle dying after consuming a Bermuda grass hybrid known as Tifton 85,” said Dr. Ron Gill, AgriLife Extension livestock specialist. “It should be known that there is not a widespread problem or concern related to this forage or its use for grazing livestock or the production of hay for livestock consumption.”

The single incident occurred when 15 cattle died with clinical signs and preliminary diagnostic results consistent with prussic acid poisoning, said Dr. Tom Hairgrove, AgriLife Extension animal health specialist. The cattle were in a pure field of Tifton 85 Bermuda grass.

Results of analyses of rumen contents and fresh forage from the field in question by the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, an agency that is part of The Texas A&M University System, indicated potential prussic acid toxicity, and at this time there are no other known reported cases of prussic acid toxicity on Tifton 85 Bermuda grass, Hairgrove said.

“Tifton 85 is a hybrid Bermuda grass released from the forage breeding program at the USDA-ARS station at Tifton, Georgia in 1992 by Dr. Glenn Burton,” said Dr. Larry Redmon, AgriLife Extension state forage specialist. “Dr. Burton is the plant breeder who released ‘Coastal’ Bermuda grass in 1943.”

To date, there have been millions of acres of Tifton 85 Bermuda grass planted across the southeastern U.S., Redmon said. Since its release in 1992, Tifton 85 has become the most commonly planted Bermuda grass in Texas.

Due to its ease of establishment, excellent drought tolerance and excellent animal performance, literally millions of cattle, horses, sheep and goats have grazed Tifton 85 Bermuda grass since its release without incident, he said.

Many forage species, including Tifton 85, have the potential to produce prussic acid, a volatile and toxic compound, Hairgrove said.

“However, those levels have not been known to produce problems with grazing livestock,” he said. “With production for more than 20 years across millions of acres in the south, we have not been able to identify a previous report of prussic acid toxicity in livestock grazing in or fed Tifton 85.”

The pasture where the cattle died had been severely drought stressed from last year’s unprecedented lack of rainfall. A moderate amount of fertilizer was applied in mid- to late-April, and the pasture received approximately 5 inches of precipitation within the previous 30 days and was at a hay harvest stage of growth, Redmon said.

“Thus, the pasture did not fit the typical young flush of growth following a drought-ending rain or young growth following a frost we typically associate with prussic acid formation in other species of forage,” he said.

Because of this unique situation, AgriLife Extension and Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory personnel have conducted multiple site visits and forage analyses of plants from several field environments across Texas in an attempt to confirm levels of prussic acid accumulation in Tifton 85 Bermuda grass.

The diagnostic lab has also collaborated with other laboratories to perform quantitative forage analysis of prussic acid levels, said Dr. Tammy Beckham, Texas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory director. Repeated analysis is ongoing to assess potential for prussic acid accumulation in Bermuda grasses in Bastrop County. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has conducted DNA analysis to confirm the grass as Tifton 85.

Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, Texas AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension were recently funded to implement a pilot project on an enhanced passive surveillance system to provide early detection of animal diseases, including cases resulting from environmental factors.

"The EPS program involves 40 veterinary practices and more than 100 large animal practitioners reporting as one of five data streams," Hairgrove said. "In addition, three diagnostic laboratories in two states, livestock markets and harvesting facilities, and wildlife information is also included to provide a comprehensive view of animal health surveillance.

"This incident was reported to the EPS, which is currently being used to monitor animal health over a broad geographic area in Texas and New Mexico, in coordination with the Texas Animal Health Commission and New Mexico Department of Agriculture. Through the EPS, there have been no other reported problems with Tifton 85."

While any livestock loss is unfortunate, currently this episode in Bastrop County appears to be an isolated incident, Hairgrove said.

"Federal, state and local animal health officials and participating private veterinary practitioners will continue monitoring for other signs of animal distress, as well as continue to sample plants to assess potential for prussic acid accumulation."

For more information, contact Redmon at 979-845-4826 or Hairgrove at 979-458-3216.

2012 Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course set for Aug. 6-8

The 58th annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course, conducted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, is scheduled for Aug. 6-8 at Texas A&M University in College Station. "Our topics this year will fit right into what Texas beef producers are experiencing with forage management, beef cattle management and beef cattle marketing," Cleere said. "The long-term cattle market outlook is one of many other topics that will be discussed in the 22 different cattleman's college sessions at the short course."

Participants can receive a Texas Department of Agriculture private pesticide applicator's license during the short course and can earn at least seven pesticide continuing education units if they are already licensed, Cleere added.

Registration is $160 per person and includes educational materials, a copy of the 600-page Beef Cattle Short Course proceedings, trade show admittance, admission to the prime rib dinner, lunches, breakfasts and daily refreshments.

Registration information and a tentative schedule will be mailed to previous participants in May, but can also be found on the short course website at http://beef.tamu.edu.

Producers can register online at http://beef.tamu.edu or contact Cleere's office at 979-845-6931.