PANOLA COUNTY AGRILIFE EXTENSION

110 Sycamore St., Rm 212, Carthage, TX 75633 | (903) 693-0380

www.Panola.AgriLife.org | Facebook.com/PCAgriLife

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

October 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

10/2: District 4-H General Photography Contest registration opens
10/2: Ag Breakfast, 7:00am, Expo Hall
10/6: ALPA and 4-H Council Meetings, 6:00pm, Southside Baptist Church
10/8: Deadline to sign up for County Food Show
10/8: Diabetes Support Group Meeting, 10:00am, Sammy Brown Library
10/10: Panola County Master Gardeners Meeting, noon, Footprints in the Sand Monument
10/13: Extension Office closed for Columbus Day
10/13: Wildlife Informational Meeting, 5:00pm, Marshall
10/16: Panola County Food Show, 3:00-6:30pm, First Methodist Church
10/16: Panola County Hay Show, 6:00pm, Expo Hall
10/19: Major Lamb and Goat Validation, 2:00-4:00pm, Beckville Ag Barn
10/21: Horticulture in the Evening, 5:30pm, Sammy Brown Library
10/22: 4-H Youth Major Stock Show Information Night, 6:00-7:00pm, Panola County Sabine St. Annex
10/24: Registration deadline for the EPIC D-5 Leadership Lab in Palestine
10/27: Fall Major Heifer Validation, 6:00-7:00pm, Carthage Veterinary Hospital
11/22: Major Swine Validation, 9:00-11:00am, Expo Hall
11/30: Major Swine Validation, 2:00-4:00pm, Gary ISD FFA Ag. Barn

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

JOMO

A Joyful Alternative to FOMO

By Clarissa Moon
Inspired by an article from The American Heart Association

I have major FOMO (Fear of missing out). My husband hosts trivia every Tuesday which means I stay home with our daughter. Although I've had several months to adjust to it and embrace the positives, I do still experience FOMO with it occasionally. Today I came across an article that put words to my experience of making the most of it. Those words? JOMO (Joy of missing out). In a world where we're always connected through technology and social media, it can be hard to disconnect and embrace the joy of where you're at.

Let's start by exploring the negative effects of FOMO.

Comparison & Envy
Social media often showcases the most exciting parts of people's lives—celebrations, travels, and milestones. When your own routine feels dull in comparison, it's easy to feel inadequate. But remember, you're only seeing the highlight reel, not the full story.

Image Obsession
Trying to keep up can lead to curating your own life online, sharing only the best moments. This can create a distorted self-image and lead to overthinking your appearance, especially when obsessing over photos and selfies.

Isolation
While the internet can be a tool for connection, it doesn't always deliver. Passive scrolling without interaction can deepen feelings of loneliness and exclusion, especially when you're not actively engaging with others.

Burnout
The boundary between work and personal time has blurred. Constant texts and emails (or Facebook messages!) at all hours—can prevent you from truly unwinding, leading to stress, fatigue, and sleep issues.

Information Overload
Staying informed is important, but being bombarded with breaking news and online drama can heighten anxiety. Our brains tend to fixate on negative headlines, which can overshadow the good. Plus, the news in general, is almost always negative stuff it seems like!

Time Drain
Frequent app-checking and notification chasing can eat up hours of your day. The fear of missing out can turn into a compulsive cycle, making it hard to disconnect and be present.

Now let's flip the script and talk about JOMO!

Be Present
The endless flow of notifications, messages, and curated images can drain your mental energy—even just having your phone nearby can be distracting. Disconnecting, even briefly, helps you refocus on your surroundings and engage fully in your current experience.

Focus on Self-Growth
Stepping away from social platforms allows you to stop measuring yourself against others. Instead, you can concentrate on personal progress, setting your own goals and striving to improve day by day—without the pressure of comparison.

Build Meaningful Relationships

Real connection goes beyond likes and short comments. Face-to-face conversations, where you truly listen and share, foster deeper bonds. These interactions can be far more fulfilling than digital exchanges and help reduce feelings of isolation.

Embrace Boredom

Believe it or not, boredom can be beneficial. It creates space for creativity and exploration. Without constant digital stimulation, your mind is free to wander, imagine, and discover new interests or ideas.

Ready to get started?

Going cold turkey and throwing your smartphone/social media out the window may not be a suitable option, so here are a few ideas for "baby steps" on embracing JOMO.

1) Set aside 30 minutes a day to put your phone on "do not disturb" mode and enjoy life away from your phone. Ideally, you'd put away all screens for this time.

2) Set boundaries for checking work email and responding to messages when you're off the clock. Reclaim your personal time.

3) Create a window of time to check the news or socials and only do so at the set time. You could also use some hacks to help with this. Some things I do or have done in the past: get an email (or listen to a podcast) highlight of the news headlines and let that be your news connection. Also use apps and screen time settings on your phone to set boundaries about when and how much you can use certain apps.

Pumpkin Cheesecake No Bake

DinnerTonight.tamu.edu

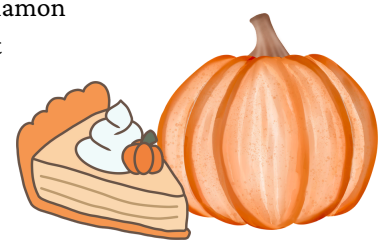
INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs Plain
- 2 Tablespoons butter Unsalted, Melted

Cheesecake

- 8 ounces whipped topping Fat Free, Thawed
- 8 ounces cream cheese Fat Free
- 1 cup vanilla greek yogurt Nonfat
- 1 ounce Cheesecake Instant Pudding Mix Fat Free, Sugar Free
- 3/4 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/2 teaspoon Pumpkin Pie Spice Blend
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clean and prep baking area.
2. Add melted butter to graham cracker crumbs and mix until well combined.
3. Transfer buttered graham cracker crumbs into a pie dish or Springform baking pan and press them tightly into the bottom of the pan. Place pan into the refrigerator for 10-15 minutes to chill.
4. In a large bowl, add whipped topping, cream cheese, and Greek yogurt and mix until well-combined using a handheld mixer.
5. Add the instant pudding mix to the bowl and mix until smooth. Add in pumpkin puree, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and vanilla extract, and continue to mix until well-combined.
6. Remove pie pan from refrigerator and place mixture on top of crust. Ensure the mixture is evenly distributed.
7. Place pie in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours or freezer for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
8. *Consistency of pie mixture will depend on time refrigerated or frozen*
9. Serve and enjoy!

Genetic Testing:

What is it and is it worth it?

What Is Genetic Testing?

Genetic testing examines your DNA (in blood, saliva, or tissue) to find inherited traits or mutations. Doctors use it to assess disease risk, how your body handles drugs, and if certain illnesses are likely to run in your family.

There are several types of tests, including:

- **Predictive tests** (to see if you're likely to develop a condition before any symptoms)
- **Carrier tests** (to check if you could pass on a genetic trait to children)
- **Diagnostic tests** (to confirm a suspected genetic condition)
- **Pharmacogenomic tests** (to see which medicines and doses suit you best)
- **Prenatal or newborn tests** (to screen during pregnancy or right after birth)
- **Direct-to-consumer tests** (tests you can order without a doctor)

Benefits of Genetic Testing

Here's what you might gain from doing one:

1. Early warnings — You could learn about health risks before problems show up, giving you time to act.
2. Personalized care — Treatments and monitoring plans can be tailored to your DNA.
3. Smarter family planning — You can better understand what risks your children might inherit.
4. Better medication choices — Genetic info can guide doctors on which drugs or doses are safer or more effective for you.
5. More precise screenings — If you have higher risk, you may get more frequent or specialized tests.
6. Psychological preparation — Knowing what you're facing allows you to make informed life decisions.

Drawbacks of Genetic Testing

It's not all upside — here are some of the risks and downsides:

1. Stress and anxiety — Learning about higher risks can be emotionally heavy.
2. Limited predictions — Results don't guarantee whether, when, or how badly a disease might occur.
3. Cost — Testing, follow-up visits, and counseling can be expensive.
4. False reassurance or worry — A "negative" result doesn't guarantee safety; a "positive" result doesn't guarantee illness.
5. Lack of actionable steps — For many genetic findings, there may be no clear medical treatment or prevention.

Bigger Issues to Consider

- Sharing results with family: Do you tell relatives about findings that might affect them?
- Privacy and discrimination: Although laws exist (like GINA in the U.S.), there's concern about misuse of genetic data in employment or insurance.
- Follow-up care: After results arrive, you'll need guidance to interpret them and plan.
- Ethical dilemmas in reproduction: Genetic testing during pregnancy or fertility treatments raises questions about choice, consent, and boundaries.

Bottom Line

Genetic testing can give you powerful insights into your future health — but it's not a perfect crystal ball. Whether it's worth it depends on your family history, health goals, and how prepared you are to deal with complex information. Talk to a trusted doctor or genetic counselor before deciding.

HORTICULTURE IN EVENING SERIES

October 21 @ Sammy Brown Library
Registration: 5:30pm
Program: 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Bees: Understanding them and Starting Bees in Backyard
Presenter: Dr. Garett Slater – Honeybee Extension Specialist (Overton, Tx)

Diabetes Support Group Meeting

October 8
Sammy Brown Library
10:00am

Ag. Industry Breakfast

October 2, 2025
7 am @ Panola County Expo Building.

Topic:
Managing Herbicide Resistance
Program will focus on identifying resistance issues (pigweed, ryegrass, ect.) and chemical rotation strategies as well as integrating mechanical options to reduce chemical dependence. ***(CEU: IPM)***

Importance of **Soil Sampling and Fertility Management** in East Texas Pastures

By: Lee Dudley

Healthy, productive forage begins beneath the surface, with the soil. In Panola County, where improved bermudagrass serves as a cornerstone for cattle operations, timely soil sampling and thoughtful fertility management play a critical role in ensuring long-term pasture productivity, persistence, and profitability.

Soil testing is not just a routine chore; it is an investment in efficiency. A soil sample provides a snapshot of nutrient availability, pH balance, and fertility status. Without it, fertilizer applications become guesswork, often leading to under- or over-application. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension emphasizes that soil sampling should be conducted at least every two to three years for pastures, and more frequently for hay fields.

Regular soil tests allow landowners to:

- Track long-term fertility trends in their fields.
- Prevent costly over-fertilization when nutrients are already sufficient.
- Detect deficiencies early, avoiding stand decline in our forages.

As the saying goes: “Don’t guess—soil test!”

One of the most common challenges in East Texas soil is acidity. When soil pH drops below 5.5, nutrient availability declines, while aluminum and manganese can reach toxic levels for plant roots. Applying agricultural lime corrects acidity, improving nutrient uptake and forage response to fertilization. Lime is most effective when applied several months before planting or fertilizing, as it requires both time and moisture to adjust soil pH.

Regular monitoring of soil pH through sampling ensures that lime applications are timely and targeted. Bermudagrass thrives best when soil pH is maintained near neutral (6.0–7.0), where N-P-K fertilizers can work most efficiently.

For Bermudagrass, nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) are the three pillars of fertility. Each plays a unique role:

- Nitrogen (N): Drives top growth, forage yield, and crude protein content. Hay fields, tend to lose large amounts of nitrogen with every cutting. Without supplementation, yields quickly decline.
- Phosphorus (P): Supports root growth, stand establishment, and early vigor. Since phosphorus is relatively immobile in the soil, incorporation prior to establishment is especially important.
- Potassium (K): Often the overlooked nutrient, potassium regulates water use, stress tolerance, and disease resistance. Research shows potassium deficiencies are a leading cause of Bermudagrass stand loss in Texas. Each ton of bermudagrass hay can remove over 40 pounds of K_2O, making regular supplementation essential.

When properly balanced, N-P-K fertilization not only boosts yields but also improves forage persistence, winter survival, and overall cattle carrying capacity.

Fertility is not a one-time fixit, it is an ongoing management strategy. Nutrients removed from hay and grazing must be replaced, and soil conditions shift over time. By combining timely soil testing, corrective lime applications, and balanced N-P-K management, Panola County landowners can sustain vigorous bermudagrass stands that feed herds efficiently and economically.

In a time of rising input costs, the small investment in soil testing pays significant dividends. Forage producers who test regularly, adjust their pH with lime, and apply N-P-K based on recommendations will see improved yields, healthier stands, and greater resilience to stress.

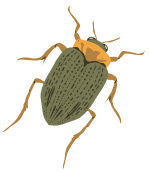
INSECTS

in Panola County

Crowned Slug Caterpillar
Image by: Beth Honea - Panola Master Gardener

SEND US YOUR INSECT PICTURES!

We are building an Insects in Panola County database.



Click the link below to see what we have already.

VIEW INSECTS IN PANOLA COUNTY

Master Gardeners Meeting

October 10 • Noon • Footprints in the Sand Monument

This will be a workday for cleaning flower beds at the monument on the loop.
Remember to wear comfortable clothes and bring chairs and lunch,
the group will have a picnic while we clean.

Rebuilding the Cow Herd

in the Face of Record-High Market Prices

By: Lee Dudley

Across Texas and the nation, all market classes of cattle are bringing record prices. While this is good news for often cash strapped beef producers, it also places those same producers in a difficult position when considering herd rebuilding. Due to record low cattle inventory numbers, every animal has value at livestock auctions, making the decision to retain heifers for replacement one of the most challenging calls a rancher can make.

The surge in cattle prices has been fueled not only by strong beef demand but also by historically low cattle inventories. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, all cattle and calves in the United States on January 1, 2025, totaled 86.7 million head, down about 1% from 87.2 million in 2024 and just a few million more than the 82.08 million estimate from all the way bac in 1951. Beef cows that have calved numbered 27.9 million, down 1% from 2024 and marking a new record low since 1965. Heifers for beef cow replacement were 4.67 million, down 1% from last year, while heifers for beef cow replacement expected to calve fell about 2% to 2.92 million.

The 2024 calf crop was estimated at 33.5 million head, unchanged from 2023 but still historically small. These numbers provide further evidence of continued herd contraction. Ranchers' choices—whether to place calves on feed for profit now or retain them for breeding—will determine whether the U.S. herd turns toward expansion or continues shrinking.

Selling heifers today provides immediate profit at record-high levels. Retaining those same heifers means forgoing a premium paycheck in hopes of long-term herd rebuilding and future calf crops. This "opportunity cost" is at the heart of today's decision-making. A heifer kept in the herd represents both an investment and a delayed return—she will not generate income until her first calf is weaned, often two years down the road.

On the other hand, selling now may maximize profit in the short term but also delay herd recovery, particularly, with the likely outlook that future replacement prices remain high.

Before making rebuilding decisions, producers should carefully consider land capacity, input costs, and cash flow needs. The premium price of replacements may extend the break-even period for several years. Gradual rebuilding, adding a few replacements each year can reduce financial strain while maintaining herd stability.

Developing home-raised replacements remains one of the most cost-effective strategies. By retaining the best heifers from proven cows and focusing on nutrition, herd health, and reproductive management, producers can build a herd tailored to their environment without paying top-dollar at market.

Regardless of market conditions, forage remains the limiting factor for East Texas producers. Overstocking in pursuit of higher revenue can degrade pastures, reduce long-term carrying capacity, and increase reliance on purchased feed. Building the herd slowly, while balancing available forage and soil fertility, ensures long-term sustainability.

Rebuilding the cow herd when every class of cattle is bringing record prices is both an opportunity and a challenge. The historically low cattle inventory reported by the American Farm Bureau Federation and others shows that contraction is still ongoing, even if the pace has slowed. The choice to keep heifers back or sell them for immediate profit weighs heavily on every producer. There is no single right answer, each operation must evaluate financial needs, forage resources, and long-term goals. But by taking a balanced approach whether through gradual retention, careful purchasing, or innovative management, Panola County cattlemen can position themselves for success as the cattle cycle evolves.

EPIC

D-5 LEADERSHIP LAB

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2025

LAKEVIEW METHODIST CAMP
PALESTINE

Register @ texas.4honline.com
September 15 - October 24. 2025

$130 per camper; $100 per adult
(must be a registered 4-H volunteer)

Late Registration October 25-28
plus $50 late fee

Open to District 5 4-H youth in grades 3rd -12th (separate workshop sessions for Junior and Senior youth)

- Blacklight Dodge Ball Competition
- Zipline across the lake
- Jump Pillow
- Gaga Ball
- Game Room
- Team Building and Leadership Activities
- Hands-on Workshop Sessions
- Silent Disco Dance with Outer Space Costume Contest
- EPIC T-shirt, camp activities, meals, snacks and lodging

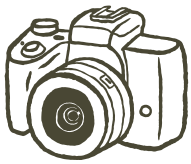
LAUNCH YOUR LEADERSHIP!

For information contact your local county Extension office
District 5 Event Guidelines: https://D54-H.tamu.edu

If you need any type of accommodation to participate in this program or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Carolyn Walton at 903-834-6191 by October 24, 2025. 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.

DISTRICT 5 4-H 2025-2026

General Photography Contest



Registration: October 2 - February 13

Open to clover kids, 4-H Members, and Adults

Contest Fee $15, up to 15 photos can be entered.
No fee for clover kids

Upload photos by February 20, 2026

2025-2025 Theme:
Volunteers in Action

October is SOCKTOBER

Panola County 4-H Council
is hosting a Sock Drive during the month of October.

Bring a new pair of comfy socks to your local 4-H Club meeting in October. Socks should be adult size, non-slip bottoms are a plus.

All donations will go to local
Assisted Living Community residents.

PANOLA COUNTY
4-H CLUBS

Club Name	Club Manager	Meeting Date & Time
ALPA Adult Leaders & Parents Association	**Bridget Twomey** 903-692-0119	1st Monday, 6:00pm Southside Baptist Church
BECKVILLE 4-H	**Brandy Dudley** 903-690-1108	4th Monday, 6:00pm, Beckville Sunset Elementary
CARTHAGE 4-H	**Rachel Laney** 940-232-5412	4th Tuesday, 6:00pm Expo Hall
DEBERRY 4-H	**Shawntel Wells** 903-690-6552	3rd Thursday, 6:30pm 332 CR 310 | DeBerry
FAIRPLAY 4-H	**Eric Pellham** 903-754-2582	2nd Monday, 6:00pm Allison Chapel UMC in Fairplay
GARY 4-H	**Jennifer Whitby** 903-692-1729	3rd Monday, 6:00pm Gary ISD Cafeteria
MURVAUL CREEK 4-H Livestock Project Group	**Bridget Twomey** 903-692-0119	2nd Tuesday, 6:00pm Murvaul Methodist Church
ROBOTICS 4-H	**Nicola Ritter** 979-575-0617	Mondays, 6:00-8:00pm First Methodist Church
SHOOTING SPORTS 4-H	**Mauri Pierce** 903-263-7551	4th Sunday, 2:00pm Expo Hall
STILL WATERS 4-H	**Corie Young** 903-692-7737	3rd Tuesday, 6:30pm Still Waters Cowboy Church

ALPA & 4-H Council Meetings

October 6 • 6:00pm
Southside Baptist Church
1218 S. Market St.

MAJOR Livestock Show Info:

Fall Major Heifer Validation: October 27, 6-7pm, Carthage Veterinary Hospital

Major Stock Show Information Meeting
October 22, 6-7pm
Sabine Street Annex (Our old office)

Major Swine Validations: 2 Dates!
November 22, 9-11am, Expo Hall
November 30, 2-4pm, Gary ISD Ag Barn

Panola County FOOD SHOW

October 16, 2025 • 3:00-6:30pm • First Methodist Church

201 S. Shelby St. Carthage, TX

4-H Food Show is an individual contest where 4-H members submit a recipe, prepare the recipe, and give a short presentation about the nutritional value, cost, and other general information about the recipe.
You can choose one of four categories for your recipe: Main Dish, Side Dish, Appetizer, Healthy Dessert.

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 8!
CLICK HERE!

OPEN TO CLOVER KIDS!
***Must be enrolled in 4HOnline by registration deadline

PROTECTING HIGH-VALUE CATTLE

Managing the Risks of Acorn Poisoning

By: Lee Dudley

With record-high cattle prices in today's market, every animal in the herd represents a significant investment. Protecting herd health has never been more critical, and one seasonal threat that East Texas cattlemen must be mindful of is acorn poisoning. As fall fronts and rain showers move across the county, green acorns begin falling from oak trees bringing both opportunity for curious cattle and danger for producers.

In years when forage is plentiful, cattle are less likely to seek out acorns in large quantities. But when pastures are stressed or hay supplies run short, hungry animals will turn to acorns as a readily available feed source. Unfortunately, acorns especially green, immature ones contain tannins, compounds that can cause severe digestive distress and even death if consumed in large amounts. At today's market levels, the loss of even a single cow to acorn poisoning is not just a blow to herd numbers, it's a major financial setback.

Symptoms of acorn poisoning typically appear 8–14 days after consumption begins. Cattle may become dull, lose their appetite, and show signs of constipation followed by diarrhea. Other red flags include weight loss, gaunt appearance, blood in manure, nosebleeds, and excessive urination. In severe cases, animals may go down and fail to rise, with recovery if it occurs taking weeks.

The best management tool is prevention. Removing cattle from oak-dense pastures when acorns are dropping can eliminate most of the risk. These areas can be reserved for later grazing once acorns have matured, turned brown, and lost some of their toxicity. For cattle that must remain in affected areas, providing access to high-quality hay and protein supplements helps reduce acorn consumption by meeting nutritional needs. For those cattle that become severally affected by acorn poisoning, treatment is of little value. However, for those cattle remaining on the "poor" oak tree pastures, provide supplemental feed containing hydrated lime (Calcium Hydroxide) and protein, which are "antidotes" for the tannins can be beneficial.

When hay is limited, producers face tough decisions. Poor-quality hay fed in large amounts may meet energy demands but leaves cattle protein-deficient. Good-quality hay in short supply corrects protein needs but may not provide enough energy. In either case, supplementing strategically with protein and energy feeds is critical for keeping cattle healthy and less tempted by acorns.

At current cattle prices, the margin for error has narrowed. Losing a cow to acorn poisoning is no longer just a herd health issue, it is a direct hit to profitability. By staying proactive monitoring pastures, adjusting grazing rotations, and maintaining adequate feed reserves, producers can reduce the risk of acorn-related losses.

If you suspect acorn poisoning in your herd, contact your veterinarian immediately for guidance. For more information on managing herd health risks, contact Lee Dudley, County Extension Agent–Ag & NR, Panola County, at (903) 693-0380.

Understanding the Need to Supplement Whitetail Deer

By Lee Dudley

Across the United States, the debate over supplemental feeding of whitetail deer continues to stir strong opinions. Unlike the high-profile political debates, this ongoing discussion among wildlife enthusiasts, hunters, and land managers revolves around whether feeding native whitetail deer is a sound management strategy. In 22 states, there are partial or total bans on feeding or baiting deer. However, here in Texas, we have the freedom to feed deer year-round. Even within our state, opinions vary widely, from those who oppose feeding altogether to those who advocate for feeding "24-7-365."

In this article, we'll explore the reasons behind supplementing deer diets and help you better understand the nutritional needs of whitetail deer. This information is crucial for hunters and land managers in Panola County who want to make informed decisions about whether and how to properly supplement our local whitetail deer populations.

Supplementing the diets of whitetail deer is driven by several key reasons. The most common reason is the use of bait to enhance hunting success or increase wildlife viewing opportunities for ecotourism. This approach can be beneficial, but it's important to understand that supplementing deer diets isn't just about attracting them for harvest or observation.

Another important reason for supplementing deer is during times of nutritional shortfalls, such as during the summer, winter, or periods of drought. This practice aligns with the strategies used in cattle management, where supplementation is necessary when natural forage alone cannot meet the animals' dietary needs. Just as we supplement cattle during lean times to maintain their health and productivity, providing supplemental feed to deer during periods of scarcity helps them survive and thrive.

A third reason for supplementing deer is to increase the carrying capacity of the land beyond what the native habitat can naturally support. This is a common practice in cattle management, where introducing improved forage varieties and supplementing feed increases the number of animals that can be sustained on a given piece of land. Similarly, by supplementing deer diets, we can support a larger population than the natural forage alone could sustain.

To effectively supplement whitetail deer, it's essential to understand their specific nutritional requirements. While both deer and cattle are ruminants, their diets differ significantly. Cattle are primarily grass-roughage eaters, while whitetail deer are selective browsers that prefer the leaves and stems of trees and shrubs, known as woody browse, and broadleaf herbaceous plants, known as forbs. Deer have a smaller rumen relative to their body size, making them less suited to digesting long, fibrous forages like grass.

The diet of a whitetail deer typically consists of 80% or more forbs and browse, with grasses making up less than 5% of their intake. The only grasses deer consume in any significant amount are those that are rapidly degraded in the rumen, such as small grains and ryegrass. Other native plants in a deer's diet include fruits, acorns, and mushrooms, which make up about 15% of their food intake.

Deer generally prefer forages with a digestibility of 65% or higher. For example, a deer consuming a diet with 6% crude protein can maintain its muscle mass when it consumes about 2% of its body mass in dry forage daily. However, for proper growth and reproductive success, a deer needs to consume 3% to 5% of its body mass daily in food with a protein concentration of 12% to 16%. If native forages cannot meet these requirements, deer are under nutritional stress, which can hinder their growth and reproductive success.

During periods of nutritional stress—typically late summer and winter—wildlife managers should focus on providing steady, ample nutritional forage to deer. This is often accomplished using planted forages, food plots, and feed rations designed to meet the nutritional needs of the deer.

By selecting the right improved forage species and supplement feeds, land managers can ensure that deer receive the critical nutrition they need during these challenging seasons. Proper supplementation not only supports the health and growth of individual deer but also contributes to the overall health and sustainability of the local deer population.

Supplemental feeding of whitetail deer is not just a matter of convenience or preference; it is a vital management strategy, particularly during times of nutritional stress. By understanding the specific dietary needs of whitetail deer and strategically supplementing their diets, we can enhance their health, support their reproductive success, and ultimately contribute to the sustainability of our local deer populations. For hunters and land managers in Panola County, making informed decisions about supplementation is key to maintaining a healthy and thriving whitetail deer population.

Harrison & Panola

Wildlife Informational Meeting

October 13 • 5:00pm • Free

Harrison County Extension Office

2005 Warren Drive | Marshall

Whitetail Deer Habitat & Management Strategies

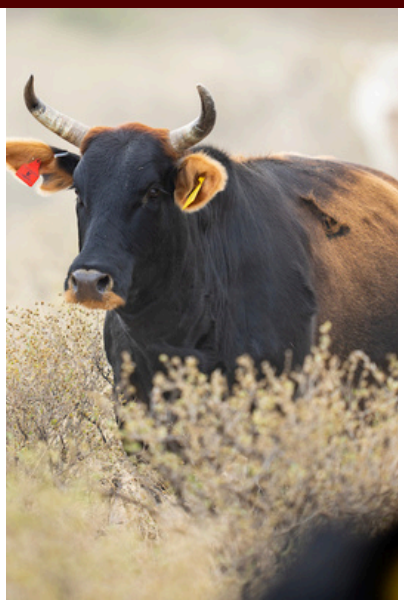
RSVP by October 3 • 903-935-8413

Panola County SWCD

HAY SHOW

October 16 | Expo Hall

Registration 5:30pm | Meal 6:00pm

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

Address:
110 Sycamore St., Room 212
Carthage, Texas 75633

Phone:
(903) 693-0380

Email:
panola-tx@tamu.edu

Website:
www.Panola.AgriLife.org

Facebook:
/PCAgriLife

LEE DUDLEY
Agriculture & Natural Resource, County Coordinator

CLARISSA MOON
Family & Community Health, 4-H Coordinator

LANI WEST
Support Staff - Secretary

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION