

# >>> AGRICULTURE NEWS <<<

December 2025



## TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

### WINTER GRAZING & PREPARATION

>>> PAGE 2-3

Winter grazing for a greener spring, and other tips to prepare for cold weather

PAGE 4 <<<

New factsheet and website for Equine Herpesvirus information

### EQUINE HERPESVIRUS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

>>> PAGE 7-8

December 29-30, Jan. 3 - Blanco County Youth Show & Exhibit Hall  
February 18 - Herd Health Management  
Online - Generation Next, Grassland Management School.



# Winter Grazing

## Protect Pastures Now for a Greener Spring

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Winter may feel like a quiet season, but it is one of the most important times for rangeland health. Once grasses go dormant, they stop producing new growth and rely completely on the energy stored in their roots. How we manage grazing pressure in December and January has a direct impact on how quickly pastures recover in spring.

Even though grasses look brown and inactive, the stubble left standing plays a major role in protecting the plant. That leftover growth insulates the growing points from cold weather, shields the soil from moisture loss, and helps maintain a healthy root system.

When grasses are grazed too short during winter, roots shrink and plants struggle to green up quickly in March and April. Overgrazed winter pastures often come back thinner, weaker, and more vulnerable to weeds.

Leaving adequate residual grass height through winter is the best protection. In the Hill Country, keeping several inches of stubble on key native species provides enough cover for those plants to rebound once temperatures warm. This remaining growth also reduces erosion and offers valuable structure for wildlife during a season when natural cover is limited.

Because forage growth has stopped for the year, livestock will continue to consume what's left without the pasture's ability to recover. Adjusting stocking rates, increasing hay or supplement quality, or rotating livestock more often can help reduce pressure on rangeland. These small management shifts now can prevent months of slow recovery in the spring.

The benefits of good winter grazing show up early. Pastures that enter winter with moderate use almost always green up faster, produce more forage, and require fewer inputs than those grazed too heavily. A little careful management now sets the stage for a healthier, more productive spring.

# Top 3 Winter Prep Tips for Livestock

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As temperatures drop, December is the ideal time to make sure your water systems and livestock areas are ready for freezing weather. A little preparation now can prevent frozen pipes, damaged equipment, and unnecessary stress on animals.

## ✓ **Insulate Water Lines**

Wrap exposed pipes and fittings to protect them from freezing and bursting. Insulation sleeves or heat tape on trouble spots can save both time and costly repairs later.

## ✓ **Keep Water From Freezing**

Make sure livestock always have access to fresh water. A safe trough heater can prevent solid ice during hard freezes, and placing a floating object, like a soccer ball, helps keep a small opening from freezing over on cold, windy nights.

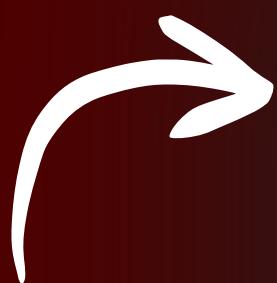
## ✓ **Provide Reliable Shelter**

Give animals a protected space to escape wind and moisture. A sturdy windbreak, along with clean, dry bedding, helps maintain body heat and reduces cold stress during winter snaps.

# Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1 & EHV-4): What Horse Owners Need to Know

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The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has made available an EHV-1 fact sheet as well as a Web companion resource page. Compiled by AgriLife Extension's Drs. Chelsie Huseman, Jennifer Zoller and Tom Hairgrove in the Department of Animal Science, this resource covers disease basics, how the virus spreads, recommended biosecurity practices as well as reporting cases to the Texas Animal Health Commission.



Click the  
pages to  
access the  
website

**TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION**

ANSCE-PU-462  
December 2025

## Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1 & EHV-4): What Horse Owners Need to Know

Chelsie Huseman, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Jennifer Zoller, PhD<sup>1</sup>, and Tom Hairgrove, DVM PhD<sup>2</sup>

Equine herpesviruses (EHV) are widespread among horse populations, with EHV-1 and EHV-4 being the most clinically significant. EHV-1 can cause respiratory illness, abortion in mares, and a severe neurologic condition called equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM). EHV-4 primarily causes respiratory disease and rarely leads to abortion or neurologic signs. Most horses are exposed early in life and may carry the virus in a latent state, which can reactivate during stress such as travel, illness, or competition. EHM occurs when EHV-1 infection leads to inflammation and damage to blood vessels in the brain and spinal cord, resulting in neurologic deficits. While only a small percentage of infected horses develop EHM, the condition can be life-threatening and often requires intensive care.

### Transmission of EHV

Transmission occurs through direct horse-to-horse contact, aerosolized droplets from coughing or snorting, and indirect contact via contaminated surfaces such as stalls, trailers, tack, and water buckets. Humans can also act as mechanical carriers, spreading the virus on hands, clothing, and equipment. Horses may

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor and Extension Horse Specialist  
<sup>2</sup>Professor and Extension Specialist

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

▶ 1

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

▶ 2

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# Prescribed Fire

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## FIGHTING WILDFIRE WITH FIRE

### FIRE SUPPRESSION PARADOX

Fire suppression leads to increased fuel loads, making future fires harder to suppress



OVER  
**8.9**  
MILLION

acres consumed by wildfires in 2024 in the United States.



Texas had the **largest wildfire** in the United States in 2024

1,054,153 acres in size.

### PRESCRIBED FIRE TO MITIGATE WILDFIRE RISK & SEVERITY



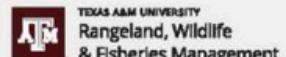
### WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI):

The zone where human development and wildland vegetation meet, creating a high-risk environment for wildfires



### FIRE CAN BE A TOOL FOR PROTECTING YOUR COMMUNITY!

- Establish a community wildfire protection plan
- Implement annual fuel reduction projects
- Foster community support



This is made possible through a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, with support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

This project is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Conservation Technical Assistance, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Cooperative Agreements program. Funding is provided by USDA-NRCS-NHQ-ST-24-NQD00001313.

# Blanco County Master Gardener Program

A big thank you to Nina Sozansky, our outgoing Master Gardener President for all of her hard work and dedication to the Blanco County Master Gardeners



**27 VOLUNTEERS**  
Contributed hours  
towards  
horticulture education.

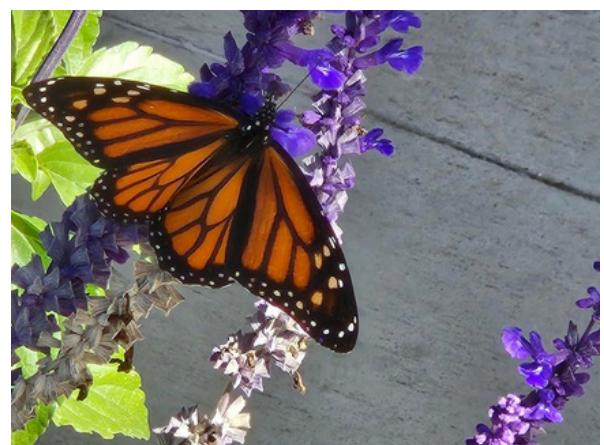


**1643 Contacts**  
Reached in Blanco Co. in  
education & community  
programs

For more information on Blanco County Master  
Gardeners, visit  
<https://txmg.org/blanco/>

## =Welcome=

We want to welcome  
Charlie Buescher as  
the new  
**Master Gardener  
President!**



**Blanco County Annex Master  
Gardener's Courtyard Garden**

Blanco County



Upcoming Events



December 29-30, 2025

January 3, 2026



Youth Show December 29-30, 2025

Youth Show SALE January 3, 2026

Exhibit Hall SILENT AUCTION for Food Items - Dec. 30, 2025

SILENT AUCTION for Sewing, Hobbies, Fine Art  
& Photography Projects - Jan. 3, 2026

Join us in showing support and encouragement for the aspiring talents shaping the future of our community. Your presence makes a meaningful impact, so let's unite to uplift and celebrate the promising achievements of Blanco County's youth.



January 12-17, 2026 & SALE January 17, 2026

# Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch

## Online Ag Business Start-up School



The Generation Next curriculum targets new landowners, those inheriting land, or those looking to start a new agricultural operation on an existing ranch. It is taught as an online school where participants will work towards developing a business plan with plenty of support from professionals who specialize in each field and topic.

**Course Includes:** 12 online classes of expert instruction with a complete business plan by the end of the course, and a Generation Next t-shirt and certificate.

### Topics covered:

- How to start an agricultural business
- Understanding business taxes
- Insurance needs for your ranch
- Tracking your finances
- Evaluating your land resources
- How to set up grazing and wildlife management leases
- Basic ranch laws – fencing, water, etc.
- Land management techniques
- Alternative operations & direct marketing
- Setting goals with measurable objectives for success

To read what graduates are saying about the course, visit [generationnext.tamu.edu](http://generationnext.tamu.edu)



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### Registration Link:

[RWFMC001 Generation Next:  
Our Turn to Ranch — Spring 2026](http://RWFMC001)



**NEXT ONLINE CLASS:  
JAN. 26 - APR. 19, 2026**

*The course will require approximately 2 hours of your time (at any time!) per week, for 12 weeks. You only need access to a computer with internet capabilities.*

For more information contact:

Dr. Megan Clayton  
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 830-988-6123  
[generationnext.tamu.edu](http://generationnext.tamu.edu)

**Registration Fee: \$300**  
*Enrollment is limited to the first 100 people who register.*

# Save the Date!

**Wednesday,  
February 18, 2026**

Blanco County Fairgrounds  
 619 US 281  
 Johnson City, TX

### Tentative Topics:

- Herd Health Management
- Parasite control in small ruminants
- New World Screwworm
- Vaccine schedules for livestock
- Windfall Tax

# GRASSLAND management SCHOOL

### THIS SCHOOL OFFERS:

- 30 educational videos
- 10+ hours of expert recommendations
- Guidance for producers and agencies on:
  - Developing project teams
  - Land preparation and planning
  - Selecting seed mixes
  - Planting technologies
  - Establishing strong stands
  - Key lessons learned from the field



The Nature Conservancy  
 South Dakota



NORTHERN  
GREAT PLAINS

Click the flyers  
on the left to  
learn more!

# TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION



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