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Grain Marketing Workshop

The Bell, Hill and McLennan County Extension Offices will host the 2026 Feed Grain Marketing Plan Workshop on March 24 at the McLennan County Extension Office, 4224 Cobbs Drive in Waco. Registration begins at 8 am. Breakfast will be provided by the McLennan County Farm Bureau Board, and United Ag–Waco will sponsor lunch. Workshop topics will include *Budgets and Break-Even; Farm Policy Update: ARC or PLC; Risk Management: Crop Insurance and Farm Program Choice; Weather and Climate; Market Outlook: Decision Making and Marketing Plans; Finance and Marketing Panel Discussion*. Speakers of this program include: Dr. Jason Johnson, Extension Economist; B.J. Baule, Regional Climatologist; Natalie Graf, Ag and Food Policy Center; Justin Richards, Capital Farm Credit; Ryan Janek, Ag Texas Farm Credit; Jacob Little, Crop and Range Insurance; Hank Nelson, Ag and Food Policy Center; Dwight Raab, Farm Business Farm Management; Shawna Ranley, Capital Farm Credit; Mark Welch, Extension Economist; JR Holub, Itasca Coop. There is no cost to attend, but interested individuals are asked to RSVP by calling the Extension Office at 254-757-5180.

Pecan Field Day

On April 7th, the Extension offices in Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hill, Limestone and McLennan Counties will host a Pecan Field Day at **Russell Pecans, 12633 Gholson Road, Waco**. Registration will begin at 8:30 am. The cost is \$25 and includes breakfast and lunch. Two TDA IPM CEU's will be offered for pesticide license holders. Program topics will include *Pecan Grafting: Tools and Methods and Live Demonstration; Orchard Pest Identification and Management; Pecan Variety Overview; and Understanding Alternative Insecticide Use and Alternative Applications*. Our guest speakers and demonstrator will be Dr. Monte Nesbitt, Assistant Professor and Extension Pecan/Fruit/Citrus Specialist and Dr. Kyle Slusher, Assistant Professor and Extension Entomologist. Breakfast will be provided by the McLennan County Master Gardeners, and lunch will be from Bubs BBQ and Burgers. Seating is up to you, Do Not Forget your favorite lawn chair. Matt and Dan Russell of Russell Pecans will host the event. Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP by calling the Extension Office at 254-757-5180.

DO NOT TOP CRAPE MYRTLES

Each tree in the environment is unique, with having its own immunity, health, and stress level that it can tolerate. The environment is the primary factor a tree will not be healthy. Too much rain, not enough rain, too hot, too cold, digging, trenching, compaction, concrete, and many other things can all negatively affect a tree. The freeze of 2021, 20 inches of rainfall in 2022, the 15 inches of rain in May of 2022, followed by the lack of rain from June to November 2022, along with many other weather extremes have hurt a lot of trees. People will call and ask me for the secret sauce to heal their tree. The sauce does not exist. Only time and favorable growing conditions can offer a stress damaged tree any chance of survival. So, what are favorable growing conditions? Near normal rainfall and temperature, with consistent-steady moisture and temperature would be favorable conditions.

4224 Cobbs Drive – Waco, Texas 76710 – (254)757-5180

Central Texas Small Grain Field Day

The Annual Small Grain Field Day will be held on Wednesday, April 22, beginning at the wheat variety plots in the Kevin Huffman Field off Smith Road on the north side of Highway 84 between Waco and McGregor, near Cotton Belt Parkway. There are 12 entries this year: Green Hammer, WB 4523, GoWheat 9216H, LC Helix AX, Smiths Gold, WB 4440, Bob Dole, Amigos, Wyatt, Gallagher, High Cotton and WB 4418. We will have signs out the day of the field day. Registration will begin at 7:30 am in the field, with program starting at 8 am. The registration fee is \$10, and breakfast will be provided by AgTrust Farm Credit. Dr. Brandon Gerrish will lead a *walking tour through the Hard Red Winter Wheat Varieties discussing each one in detail*. Mark Nemecek of MJN Consulting will provide a *Scouting Report on Crop Insect and Disease*. We will then move to the McGregor Research Center, located South of McGregor. Dr. Jason Johnson, Extension Economist, will provide a *Commodity Market Update*. Dr. Calvin Trostle, Extension Agronomist, will present on *Nitrogen Fertilization of Wheat & Soil Testing*. The annual Tenderloin Steak Tip lunch will be served courtesy of our sponsors. Participants will receive 2 TDA CEU's, IPM and General. An additional IPM CEU will be available for those who participate with the McGregor Research Center Small Grain Insecticide & Fungicide Test Plots Tour following lunch.

Facebook and E-Mail Information

Keep up to date with program announcements and follow McLennan County Extension - Agriculture on **Facebook @McLennanAgExtension**. If you are not on our email list to receive information about upcoming programs, please email Nicole at nicole.kosier@ag.tamu.edu or call the office at 254-757-5180

Annual Vines and Wines

The 9th Annual Vines and Wines program will be held on Tuesday, May 12 at the McLennan County Extension Office, located at 4224 Cobbs Drive, Waco. Registration will begin at 8 am, and the cost to attend is \$35. Program topics include *Integrated Pest Management, Vineyard Pruning and Training, How Fruit Quality Influences Wine Quality, Irrigation Strategies for Texas Wines, Harvest Decisions, Nutrition Management and Petiole Sampling, Root Physiology - Environment - and Soil Health*. Our speakers include Dr. Kyle Slusher, Extension Entomologist; Patrick O'Brien, Extension Viticulturist; Andrea Botezatu, Extension Enology Specialist; Michael Cook, Extension Viticulturist; Daniel Hillin, Extension Viticulturist; and Lorenzo Rossi, Assistant Professor and Extension Research in Horticultural Crop Physiology. Italian lunch will be served, along with wine samples from our past Vines and Wines host vineyards.

Upcoming Program Dates

NO Sheep & Goat Conference in 2026
June 1 – Master Garden Intern class starts
June 16 – West Side Turn Row Meeting & Drone Demonstration
June 24 – Stocker Cattle Program - West Auction
August 27 – Hay Show
September 24 – Harvest Celebration



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Lawn Care

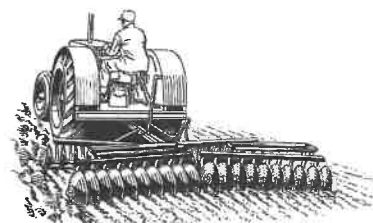
Lawns are awakening from winter. In the spring, I like to fertilize after mowing the yard twice. The grass will be actively growing then and ready to utilize the fertilizer. Fertilizing too early wastes nutrients on weeds. Feeding once in the spring and once in the fall is usually adequate for an acceptable lawn. If additional fertilizer is needed, apply it about 60 days after the first application. Pre-emergent should have already been applied (ideally Feb 15) to be effective this year as the weed seeds are already germinating. For the first spring mowing, set the mower blade about 1/4 to 1/2 inch lower than the normal grass height to promote top growth as well as spreading. I lower my mower deck as low as it will go by mid-March and scalp my yard at least twice. By the third cutting, my mower deck should be at normal mower blade height setting. For St. Augustine lawns normal blade setting is around 2-1/2 to 3 inches while Bermuda grass lawns will do fine at 1-1/2 to 2 inches in height. Turf does best with small doses of nutrients applied over time. A slow-release product works best and doesn't over fertilize! Over fertilization promotes too much growth and increases the risk for disease. For many years, specialists recommended a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio of fertilizer on lawns. High phosphorous levels in some the soil tests have prompted recommendations to change to a 1-0-1 or 1-0-0 (straight nitrogen) ratio. My favorite lawn fertilizer is still a 15-5-12 mix. Apply only 1/2 to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. of turf area. Water in well with 1/2" of irrigation. Try not to fertilize prior to a predicted heavy rain as these nutrients can easily run off in heavy rains into storm sewers, creeks and streams and be a pollution threat to the environment. Mowing is most important to keeping a healthy lawn. Most turfs will look their best and be healthier if mowed every four to five days. Let the clippings fall back to the turf where they will be converted to nutrients. Do not remove grass clippings, mulch them back into your lawn. Same for leaves. I never rake or remove leaves. Mulch them back into your lawn! Keep mower blades sharp for a smooth cut.

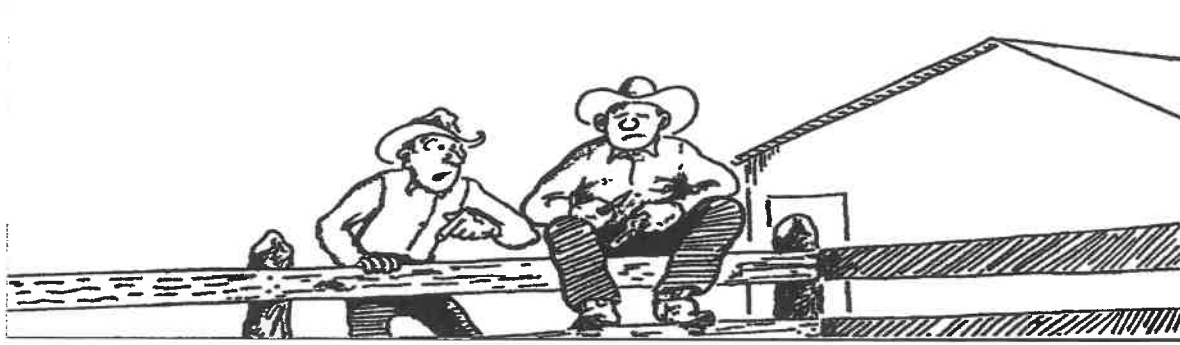
McLennan County Replicated Corn and Grain Sorghum Trials

Greg and Brady Westerfeld planted our replicated Corn Hybrid Trial on February 26 near Crawford. The Westerfeld family has planted this applied research plot for over 20 years. I love these replicated plots as we can remove any bias and give each entry a fair look at production. The Corn plot would not be possible without our industry partners at Axis – Colton Schmedthorst; DynaGro – Cord Willms; DeKalb – Larry Martin; Pioneer – Wendall Krunck; LG Seeds – Tom Waitley; B-H – Matthew Hajovsky; Wilbur Ellis – Creston Voges; and Simplot – Jerry George.

The replicated Grain Sorghum plot was planted on March 3, 2026, by Mark and Matthew Wiethorn. The Wiethorn family has been planting this applied research plot for over 20 years. I greatly appreciated our cooperators as they take time out of their busiest time of year to work with me to put out educational and research-based plots that provide local producers with factual information on how different sorghum varieties perform in local soils. No sales job, just facts farmers can use to plan future farming practices. Our wonderful industry partners who contributed the grain sorghum entries included DynaGro – Cord Willms; Pioneer – Wendall Krunck; Golden Acres; B-H – Matthew Hajovsky; Integra – Creston Voges; Warner – Brandon Akins; DeKalb – Buck Jones at Helena; and Advanta – Shane Halfmann.

Their cooperation helps make the educational research plots possible. A big thank you is extended to all partners for their continued support.





From the Top Rail: What Motivates You?

There was a time in my life when I chased awards and accolades. Now I am humbled when I receive recognition and I do appreciate it, but it's a result of past years' efforts accumulating. What drives you, what pushes you, what makes you get up in the morning and chase goals, success, is it a dollar, a dream? As I have aged and hopefully gained knowledge and wisdom, I realize I like to help people. I enjoy putting on a good Extension education program and see the dialogue between speakers and attendees, providing the experts in person to deliver answers and solutions to farmers and ranchers questions. We cannot offer it all, we try, but time, expenses, life etc. limits what we do but man I just really love putting on a great educational program and someone come up after and say, "that was a great program." That makes the time, the effort, the planning, the whole process enjoyable for me.

I volunteer for several organizations, and all have a role in supporting agriculture and youth. Through offering opportunities, scholarships, and funds we can provide so much more to our youth that are involved in agriculture. I am proud to serve on those committees and boards, and it takes time, it pulls me from work and from personal stuff, but it is so worth it. Over the years I see my ex 4-H kids who now have kids of their own showing, in public speaking, competing, and you can see and feel the respect and admiration from those parents of kids you made an impact on have for you. Same as me thinking of my great mentors and teachers that have helped me when I was much younger and learning. I take great pride in seeing those kids of "my kids" having success. I hope my mentors are proud of my efforts as much as I appreciate them investing in me.

Whatever motivates you, whatever gets you going and helps you fight through the tough days I hope you know, that others see your hard work and efforts, and do appreciate your thoughtfulness, a kind work, your dedication, your devotion to your craft. Too often we stay in our little circle and admire the work of others from afar but never say, "hey great job," or a simple "thanks." To all my wonderful Extension staff and volunteers, committee members, to our private industry partners: I cannot do my job at a high level without your partnership, without your involvement, without your help,your sponsorship, bringing breakfast, hosting a meeting, speaking, setting up tables, providing seed, the list goes on and on. You make me better. Today I just want to say, "Thank You." Any kind words or appreciation thrown my way is a direct result of "you" being in my Extension program. sMc.