What's Up, Doc?

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Grayson County Agriculture and Natural Resources Newsletter

Vol 3: Issue 8 (August 2024) by D. Chad Cummings

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Winter Wheat Planting Season is Coming Soon!

In this issue, we look at the top winter wheat varieties from across the state in 2024 variety trials, to ensure you have a successful 2024-2025 winter wheat crop. Disease resistance, Hessian fly resistance, quality, and yield are all included in the variety considerations for both hard red winter, and soft red winter varieties.

USDA Crop Report for early Aug 2024 (Grayson County)

July 29, 2024

Corn is maturing rapidly across the county. In most fields, corn ears have turned downward. Harvest is underway across the county. Sorghum is maturing and close to harvest. Many soybean acres are being baled for hay, a few are left to harvest for beans.

Wheat ground is being prepared and tilled. Moisture across the county is still very good for late July. While we are listed as abnormally dry by the US Drought Monitor, we are still very green for this time of year. Soil moisture is still adequate for good growth across most of the county, and we have benefited from a few storm systems in July.

Livestock condition is good. Livestock market prices are still good for most classes, and between $250 to 400 per cwt on average at the nearest market. Nuisance flies and parasites are at moderate to high levels.

In all crops, there are no real insect or disease issues to note currently. Grasshopper populations were at treatable levels in a few hay fields. Fall armyworms and other caterpillar populations remained below treatable levels across the county.

Early August 2024

Fall armyworms have become problematic across north Texas. Reports of populations at treatable thresholds came in from Fannin, Grayson, and Collin Counties. Please be sure to scout for fall armyworms in lawns, gardens, pastures, and crop fields.

Fall armyworm in Duplex, TX, in August 2024 (Photo by Hartwell).

New Landowner 101: What to Do in August?

1. Soil test in food plots and in pastures, lawns, and gardens.
    a. http://soiltesting.tamu.edu
    b. Get forms from the website above or at our office (Courthouse, A-G-1)
2. Plant fall food plots in late August through September. Seedbed preparation (herbicide to control existing plants or light tillage) is a key to successful stand establishment.
3. Avoid herbicide applications to drought stressed or heat stressed brush or weeds. Herbicides will not work as well and may cause grass injury in extreme conditions. Individual plant treatments to actively growing brush is one method to decrease potential grass injury.
4. Clear trees and shrubs from pond and tank dams (roots can cause leakage, and utilize much water, especially Eastern Red Cedar and Willow).
5. Monitor water quality and turbidity of stock tanks and ponds – minimize fertilizer runoff where possible. Monitor for algal blooms and other aquatic vegetation that may decrease pond productivity or result in fish kill.
6. Apply lime per soil recommendations for cool or warm season crop plantings. Many times, lime may take 3 to 6 months to fully buffer acidic soil pH.
7. Prepare fall gardens, prep soil, clear old growth, plan lay out. Plant species including beans, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, mustards, lettuce, potatoes, squash and several other crops can be planted for a fall season or to over winter before producing fruit.

Fall Armyworm Spotlight

Fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J. E. Smith) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae), caterpillar. Photo by Drees.

Common Name: Fall armyworm
Scientific Name: *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J. E. Smith)
Order: Lepidoptera

Description: Caterpillars grow to about 2 inches long and are marked with green, brown or black colors arranged in stripes, with darker stripes along the sides. The top of each abdominal segment is marked with two pairs of black dots from which stiff hairs arise. The front of the dark head capsule is marked with a pale colored upside-down "Y." Adult moths have dark gray mottled forewings marked with light and dark areas. Wings are held over the back of the body when at rest. Outstretched, wings measure about 1 ½ inches from tip to tip. The hind wings are white.

The "true" **armyworm**, *Pseudaletia unipuncta* (Haworth) is difficult to distinguish from the fall armyworm in the larval stage. Caterpillars are pale-green to yellowish or brownish-green with bodies that are somewhat wider in the middle. They feed mainly at night, and like the cutworms, may curl up when disturbed. Small, young caterpillars skeletonize the surface of foliage and the inner surfaces of leaf sheaths while larger ones consume leaves, beginning from the outer edges. Host plants include corn, lawn grasses, legumes such as soybeans, small grains and others. Adult moths are predominantly pale brown to grayish brown wings. The center of each forewing is marked with a single small white spot.

A noctuid moth, *Melipotis* sp. (Lepidoptera:Noctuidae). Photo by Drees.

Life Cycle: Winter is spent primarily as pupae, although all stages may be encountered during mild winters. Adults emerging in early spring mate, disperse and lay eggs on host plants. Females lay clusters of a hundred or more eggs that are covered with fuzzy, gray scales from the female's body. Caterpillars hatch from eggs in about 10 days and begin feeding together, first on the remains of the egg mass and then on the host plant. Larvae grow and molt between several stages (instars) over a period of 2 to 3 weeks, before digging a burrow up to 8-inch deep in the ground in which to pupate. The pupa is about ½ inch long, reddish brown to black, smooth and hardened. Adults emerge in about 2 weeks. Several generations can occur annually. It is most common in late summer or fall.

Habitat and Food Source(s): Caterpillars have chewing mouthparts. Adults have siphoning mouths. Fall armyworms feed on a wide range of plants, including Bermudagrass, corn, fescue, Johnsongrass, rice, ryegrass, small grain crops, sorghum, Sudangrass and timothy. In corn, caterpillars can injure foliage as well as the ears. Caterpillars often occur locally in large numbers and migrate together like an army as they devour host plants, eating all above ground plant parts. They feed at all times of the day or night. In turfgrass, caterpillars may be driven to the surface by sprinkling soapy water onto infested areas. Adult moths are attracted to lights and in pheromone traps.

Pest Status: Caterpillars are commonly encountered in agricultural fields and landscape plants and turf; medically harmless.

For additional information, contact your local Texas AgriLife Extension agent or search for other state Extension offices.

Literature: Brook *et al.* 1982. https://cdn-de.agrilife.org/extension/departments/scsc/scsc-pu-157/publications/files/fall-armyworm-identification-and-control-1.pdf

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), What We Are Doing Now to Prevent Further Spread

Texas A&M Forest Service discusses some of the ways you can prevent further spread of EAB

We (Texas A&M Forest Service) investigate suspected EAB infestations with particular concern paid to detections occurring in previously un-infested counties.

Don’t Move Firewood

EAB can travel long distances inside firewood, much further than it could by flight alone. EAB can also travel in unprocessed ash logs, ash nursery stock and other ash commodities.

An EAB quarantine regulates the movement of firewood, ash nursery stock, ash timber and other material that can spread EAB. It is important to know where the emerald ash borer quarantines are if you are traveling between infested states or counties that are known to be infested. EAB quarantines in Texas are established and enforced by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

Authorities are asking people follow these simple rules:

- Leave firewood at home. Don’t transport firewood, even within the state.
- Use firewood from local sources near where you’re going to burn it, or purchase firewood that is certified to be free of pests (it will say so on the label included with the packaging).
- If you have moved firewood, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.
- Learn more at Don't Move Firewood.

Biological control

The Operation Biocontrol Program being conducted by USDA APHIS has successfully released parasites that specifically target EAB across the eastern United States. In many regions, these parasites have been recovered and show promising results as the suppress EAB populations to low densities but, as of 2023, none of these tests have been successful in the Southern United States.

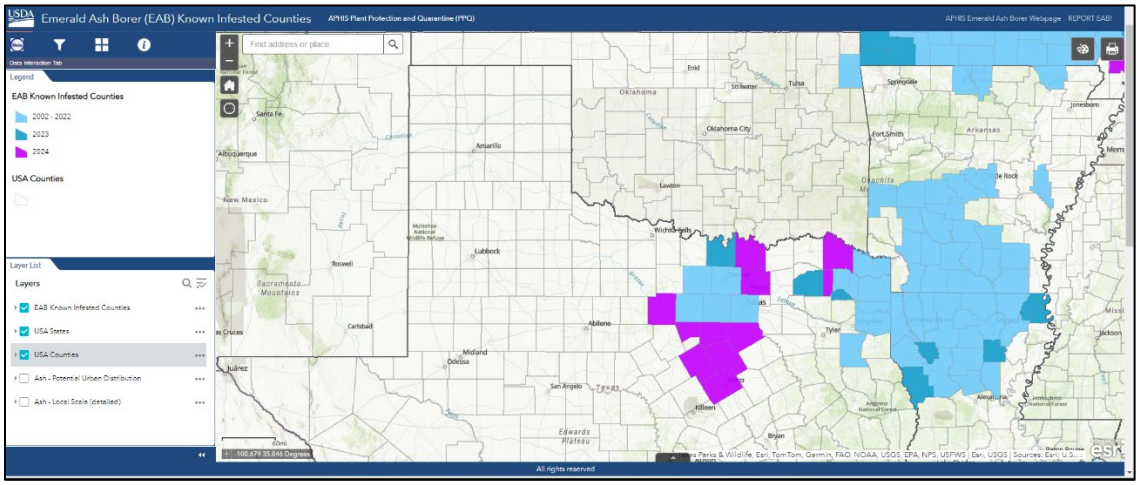
Trapping Efforts

We (Texas A&M Forest Service) are responsible for Texas' EAB detection program. Triangular purple box traps are placed in ash trees to determine if EAB are in the area. The traps are coated with an adhesive that captures insects when they land.

The color attracts EAB and is relatively easy for people to spot among the foliage. If you see an EAB trap, stay clear of it. It is capturing vital data that could be compromised if you disturb it.

In preparation for the arrival of EAB to the state, we helped develop a multi-partner, state EAB response plan.

The EAB response plan includes establishing each involved agency's responsibilities, removing ash trees as a preemptive measure, selecting ash tree treatments and planting tree species not susceptible to EAB. This assessment and implementation process typically takes 60-90 days and is submitted to the public for comment before being implemented.



https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/eab/eab-infestation-map

Top Wheat ‘Picks’ List Released by AgriLife Extension

Some new varieties among producer options

August 5, 2024 - by Kay Ledbetter

On the heels of the 2024 wheat harvest, Texas A&M AgriLife experts who evaluate how wheat varieties grow under adversity have selected top performers and released their annual Wheat Grain “Picks” List in time for producers to prepare for planting.

“It is always an exciting time closing out one season and looking onto the next,” said Brandon Gerrish, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service statewide small grains specialist, Bryan-College Station. “Though it feels like the harvest season just ended, planting season will be underway in another four to six weeks in the northern Panhandle, and we will start to collect seed for our trials in the coming weeks.”

Gerrish said the “Picks” list is for top-performing varieties based on a three-year running average, to account for the yearly wide-ranging conditions across the state.

AgriLife Extension agronomists and Texas A&M AgriLife Research wheat team members performed 46 trials in 31 locations this year. Gerrish said the trials are not just for grain but also provide a look at forage and silage production.

The varieties are selected not just on the highest yields, but also based on their milling and baking quality, important disease resistance traits for leaf or stripe rust and wheat streak mosaic virus, insect resistance to greenbugs, wheat curl mites and Hessian fly, and standability.

Growing conditions

Gerrish said it is always important to understand the growing conditions the yield trials were subjected to when looking at the yield data of a given year.

The 2023 planting season started under extreme drought throughout much of the state, Gerrish said. He is hopeful that some recent thunderstorms across the state will provide more favorable conditions for the new season.

“This year we had nearly 52 inches of rain in Greenville and then 1.5 inches of rain in Dumas, so there’s a broad spectrum of growing conditions,” he said. “That’s why our picks are region-based, because though there are some varieties that will do well in more than one region, finding varieties that perform well statewide are rare, and oftentimes varieties are not tested in all four regions.”

Gerrish said he is concentrating on getting the data to producers as early as possible so they can look at weather conditions and performance data and adjust their planting decisions accordingly.

He said producers in the southern part of the state will look to plant by early October if they are trying to get fall forage and by early to mid-November for grain-only production.

In the Panhandle, planting dates depend on the moisture, Gerrish said. With irrigation, some producers will plant in early to mid-October if it is wheat grown for grain. But if they need forage or are planting wheat for dual purposes, they could plant as early as Labor Day. Dryland producers will want to be ready to plant when the rains come.

“We are trying to release our Picks list earlier because we want to give producers a chance to evaluate their varieties and look at the data before they buy their seed,” he said.

Highlights from the 2023-2024 season

Gerrish said crop testing is a revolving door. Sometimes, a variety like TAM 111, released 21 years ago and still among the top five varieties planted around the state, hangs on. Some years, new varieties make the list. This was an exceptional

year, with six new varieties in the testing, which will provide growers with new options moving into the next season.

Two of the top producers this year, he said, were TAM 116 and High Cotton, an Oklahoma State University release. High Cotton had a phenomenal season in its second year of testing, ranking third in South Texas, first in the Blacklands, seventh in the Rolling Plains and second in the High Plains irrigated trials for 2024, Gerrish said.

TAM 116, along with CP7017AX, continued to impress in the High Plains irrigated trials. TAM 116 ranks in the top yield group at all five locations. CP7017AX ranked in the top yield group at four of the five locations and maintained its first-place ranking in the four-year regional average.

“Next year could be a very different story, but it will be interesting to see if they can repeat their performance and yield stability over the years,” he said.

TAM 116 has been added to the “Picks” list because it was tested as an experimental line before becoming a named variety. High Cotton is only in the second year of testing, so it cannot be placed on the Picks list. However, Gerrish said they are definitely placing this one on the watch list.

Two other new varieties, Amigos and GoWheat 9216H, both Texas A&M AgriLife releases, have the traits — good resistance to leaf, stripe and stem rust as well as Hessian fly resistance — and yield potential to be great options for growers in the South Texas and Blackland regions.

Amigos has also shown good forage potential in its first year of forage trials in South Texas and the Blacklands. Bob Dole, an AgriPro variety, had another strong showing in the Blackland region for grain this year and also ranked first in the McGregor forage trial.

Another new Texas A&M variety, DynaGro7322, is an awnless variety that won’t typically be the best option for grain production but will give growers the flexibility to graze out or bale the wheat.

Gerrish said this year, the Rolling Plains Picks lists remained largely unchanged, with Amigos being added to the Northern Rolling Plains and Green Hammer to the Southern Rolling Plains. Both have also shown good potential as dual-purpose varieties.

Also, after losing all dryland trials in the High Plains, that list remained largely the same, with TAM 113 and TAM 116 at the top of the list, along with WB4792 and Canvas.

AP Prolific was added to the full and limited irrigation Picks list, while Showdown was added to the full irrigation list in the High Plains. Both appear in the top yield group for three-year, two-year and 2024 regional yield averages.

Full reports by region

The top wheat Picks and yield trial data are now posted on the TAMU Variety Testing Website (https://varietytesting.tamu.edu/smallgrains/). The Regional Summaries can be found on page 12.

“While this list is meant to serve as a guide of the varieties that we would choose to include and emphasize on our farm, farmers who are currently growing other varieties they are happy with should continue to do so,” Gerrish said. “It’s best they try these varieties on a limited basis first to see how they compare for their particular operation.”

Participants gather at the 2024 Howe Wheat field day, to learn about wheat variety results, disease resistant wheat varieties, and integrated pest management.

2024-2025 Texas Wheat Grain Variety Picks List

Courtesy Texas A&M Dept. of Soil & Crop Sciences – For Texas Wheat & Small Grains Info., https://varietytesting.tamu.edu/smallgrains/

High Plains Picks List			N. Rolling Plains Grain Picks	S. Rolling Plains	Blacklands/NE Texas Picks List		South Texas Picks List	
Dryland	Limited Irrigation	Full Irrigation	Dryland	Picks List	HRWW	SRWW†	HRWW	HRSW
TAM 113			WB4595¶	WB4595¶	Bob Dole	*Blackland 2344	*AmigosΔ	Limited
	TAM 114	TAM 114	TAM 115	TAM 114	*GoWheat 9216HΔ	*Dyna-Gro 9332	TAM 304	results
TAM 116	TAM 116	TAM 116	*AmigosΔ	Gallagher	*AmigosΔ	GoWheat 6000		for past
WB4792¶	WB4792¶	WB4792¶	Bob Dole	Bob Dole	*WB4523¶	*Progeny #Buster		3 years.
	CP7017AX¶	CP7017AX¶	WB4792¶	*Green Hammer				
	*AP Prolific	*AP Prolific						Call for
		*Showdown	**Watch**					details.
Canvas			Dyna-Gro 7322‡					
			*High Cotton					
			*Showdown					

High Plains Watch List			N. Rolling Plains Dual Purpose Picks	S. Rolling Plains Watch List	Blacklands/NE Texas Watch List		South Texas Watch List	
Dryland	Limited Irrigation	Full Irrigation	Dryland		HRWW	SRWW†	HRWW	HRSW
	*High Cotton	*High Cotton	WB4792¶	*High Cotton	*High Cotton	AGS 3022	*GoWheat 9216HΔ	
	Monarch¶∞	Monarch¶∞	WB4595¶	Showdown		*Dyna-Gro 9393	*WB4401	
			Green Hammer	*Canvas				

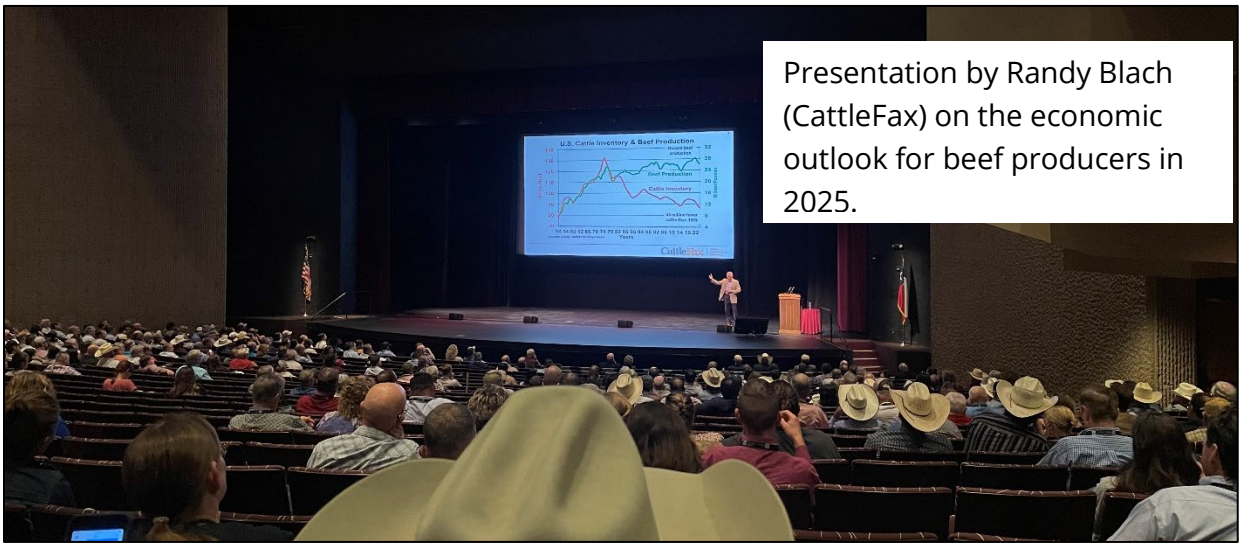
***New Pick, 2024-2025.** ΔNew release, little seed. **¶Certified Seed Only (CSO).** License bars saving own seed for planting. †Soft red winter wheat. ∞Hard white winter wheat. ‡Beardless.

Highlights of the 2024 Beef Cattle Short Course in College Station (August 5-7th)

Mobile, handheld, wireless ultrasound for investigating GI issues in equine patients.

Panel discussion on sustainable beef production and pasture management.

Annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course



Presentation by Randy Blach (CattleFax) on the economic outlook for beef producers in 2025.

Events Coming Up in NTX

Aug 13

- Grayson County Master Gardeners General Meeting (*Sherman; 11:30 am*)

Aug 23

- Winter Pasture Seminar (*Bonham*)

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-pasture-seminar-tickets-944931965947?aff=oddtdtcreator&fbclid=IwY2xjawEjItJleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHWjkrH-V2yjjWvWNSyir6aKqGwQg1TGjVcHRi6aKxK06uu9Jz7N-6nP6aQ_aem_vTG_eMCGL3W2ClEsG683xw

Sept 11-12

- Women in Agriculture Conference (*Ft Worth*)

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-women-in-ag-conference-tickets-935973069647

Sept 20

- Small Acreage Production Tour (*Bonham and throughout Fannin County*)

Oct 18

- New Landowner Workshop - Pond Management, Special Valuations, and Fall Tree and Pasture Preparations (*Gunter*)

Visit our website at Welcome to Grayson County - Grayson (grayson.agrilife.org) (https://grayson.agrilife.org/) to sign up for the events.