



The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter

June - 2004

Introducing New Bexar County Agriculture Agent

Jerry Warren was recently hired as the Agriculture Agent for Texas Cooperative Extension, Bexar County and began work on May 3, 2004.

Jerry and his wife Linda moved to San Antonio from Terry County, (Brownfield, TX) where he was employed as an Agriculture County Extension Agent.

Other previous employment includes County Extension Agent for Upton County, (Rankin, TX); Farmer/Rancher Eastland County, (Gorman, TX); and County Extension Director for Farm Service Agency in Orange and Clay counties.

Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) Confirmed in West Texas

The country's first case of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) since 1998 was confirmed Wednesday, May 19, on a premise with nine horses and eight head of cattle near Balmorhea, in Reeves County in west Texas. VS is a viral disease that occurs sporadically in the U.S., usually in southwestern states. The disease can affect horses, cattle and pigs, and occasionally, sheep, goats and deer, causing blisters to form in the animal's mouth, on teats or along the hooves, resulting in excessive salivation, lameness or oozing sores.

The clinical signs of VS can cause concern because they mimic those of a highly contagious foreign animal infection foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) which has been eradicated in the U.S. since 1929. Laboratory tests must be run to differentiate between the two diseases, when cattle, pigs, sheep or other cloven-hooved animals develop signs of the disease. Unlike FMD, VS also can affect horses and other members of the equine family. Although the disease does not affect food safety, infected livestock are withheld from slaughter until they recover.

"We always launch a disease investigation when blisters or sores are reported in livestock, to determine if foot-and-mouth disease has been introduced into the U.S.," said Dr. Max Coats, deputy director for Animal Health Programs for the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. "Because horses are not susceptible to FMD, we knew, in this case, that the animals had vesicular stomatitis (VS), or possibly had come in contact with poison or a toxic plant. The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, has confirmed that the three horses in Reeves County have VS."

Dr. Coats said researchers have determined that VS outbreaks are started by a virus transmitted by arthropods, such as ticks, mites, biting midges, mosquitoes or house flies. Following an incubation period of two to eight days, infected animals may develop clinical

signs of disease. The outbreak then can be perpetuated by biting insects that carry the disease from infected to healthy livestock. VS-infected animals also can spread the virus if their saliva or the fluid from ruptured blisters contaminates equipment or feed shared by herd mates. Sick animals should be isolated until they heal, he said. Dr. Coats noted that all livestock on the affected ranch in Reeves County will remain quarantined for several weeks, until they no longer pose a health threat to other livestock. Prior to quarantine release, the animals will be re-examined by a state or federal regulatory veterinarian, to prevent the spread of disease to other premises.

"VS is rarely fatal, and infection usually runs its course in a couple of weeks," commented Dr. Coats. "Infected livestock may need supportive care to prevent secondary infections where blisters have ruptured. The affected animals also may lose condition, because they will avoid eating as long as their mouth is sore. Lesions can also occur along hooves, resulting in temporary lameness."

"The only thing 'regular' about VS is its irregularity," he said. "Thirteen years passed between a 1982-83 outbreak of VS and one in 1995 that involved infection on more than 365 ranches in five states. These affected states were New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah and Texas, where infection was confined to only one premise."

"Texas was spared in May 1997, when the disease was detected in Arizona in horses. By late fall, when the outbreak ended, infection had been detected on 380 ranches in four states; Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah," he continued. "Prior to the today's case, VS was most recently confirmed in 1998, in Texas' Reeves County, and in New Mexico."

"As a biosecurity measure, ranchers and veterinarians should wear rubber or latex gloves when handling potentially infected animals, and they should wash their hands thoroughly afterward. Humans reportedly may contract VS and develop flu-like symptoms that can last four to seven days," warned Dr. Coats.

"If your livestock develops blisters, erosions or sores, don't pass it off as another case of VS," Dr. Coats said. "It is extremely important that we collect samples and have laboratory tests run to determine the cause of illness. Report these signs of disease to your private veterinary practitioner or the TAHC immediately. The TAHC hotline number is operational 24 hours a day 550-8242, and a TAHC or U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarian always is on call to take reports and work with at 1-800- your private veterinarian at no charge."

"If you plan to ship horses or other livestock out of state, contact the state of destination prior to transporting the animals," urged Dr. Coats. "Because VS has been confirmed in Texas, some states

may require our shipments of livestock to undergo additional inspections or testing. Producers and veterinarians may contact the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242, if they need contact information for animal health officials in other states.”

Texas Lab Approved to Use New Rapid Screening Test for BSE

Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory in College Station has been chosen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to participate in the recently enhanced surveillance program for bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

The Texas lab is one of seven state laboratories across the nation that will sample about 268,000 animals for BSE during the coming year. That’s a 10-fold increase over the 20,543 tested during the last fiscal year. Other participating state labs are located in California, Colorado, Wisconsin, Washington, Georgia and New York.

“USDA’s intensive BSE surveillance program requires increased laboratory capacity strategically located across the country,” said Dr. Ron DeHaven, deputy administrator for Veterinary Services.

Rapid BSE Test

The laboratories will use approved rapid tests for BSE. At press time, USDA had licensed rapid-screening tests from Abbott Laboratories, Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc., IDEXX Laboratories Inc. and Prionics AG.

Abbott distributes the rapid Enfer BSE test, which tests every bovine brain sample in duplicate, said company vice president Jim Koziarz. “If either test result is reactive, the brain specimen is resampled and retested in duplicate. This type of testing method ensures that a true positive would be reliably detected.”

Bio-Rad officials say its rapid TeSe® test can detect very low levels of the abnormal prion proteins believed to cause BSE and can produce results in just four hours. By contrast, the gold standard immunohistochemical test used to confirm BSE in the Washington State cow can take up to two weeks.

The IDEXX HerdChek® BSE Antigen Test produces results in two to four hours and will cost between \$10 and \$20 per kit.

The Prionics®-Check BSE Western test will be distributed by Roche in the United States. Between 2001 and 2003, the product was used in 18 million of the 30 million BSE tests worldwide without false positive results.

Debate over private testing

Several companies, led by Creekstone Farms Premium Beef of Arkansas City, Kan., are pressuring USDA to let them privately test all of their cattle for BSE.

Their request is based on the hope that currently closed foreign markets would be reopened to their product if 100 percent of the cattle were tested. The request has sparked a national debate.

An exclusive survey by Meatingplace.com shows that nearly 60 percent of beef packers and processors support efforts to allow private testing if it will help them regain access to foreign markets.

USA Today, the nation’s largest newspaper, endorsed private testing in an editorial published on March 25. In the same issue, Kansas cattle producer Jan Lyons disagreed. Lyons is president of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

She said, “Private companies shouldn’t feel compelled to succumb to non-scientific demands of foreign markets. Nor should they be allowed, for marketing gain, to suggest 100 percent testing produces a safer product. Doing so is scientifically inaccurate and misleading to consumers.”

U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte urged USDA to use caution in making its decision. He said companies eager to regain the 10 percent export market with 100 percent testing, risk causing serious consequences for the domestic market that accounts for 90 percent of their business.

Many companies “would be forced to follow suit,” Goodlatte warned, increasing costs without any public health benefit. “Don’t agree to do for foreign markets what you’re not willing to do domestically.”

On the other hand, many people believe that all U.S. cattle should be tested. In California, two state legislators have introduced a bill that would prevent freshly slaughtered beef from being shipped by processors in the state until it was tested free of BSE.

The bill would also impose strict record-keeping requirements for tracking of animals. However, there are no provisions that would require testing of beef shipped into California from other states.

On Friday, April 9, USDA denied Creekstone’s request for private testing, saying, “it would have implied a consumer safety aspect that is not scientifically warranted.”

Cattle Tuberculosis (TB) Testing Lags, Could Impact Reinstatement of Texas’ TB-Free Status

Dairy and purebred cattle owners must complete the task that we agreed to accomplish by stepping forward to have herds tested for cattle tuberculosis (TB), if Texas is to regain Class “Free” status for TB eradication, warns Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas’ state veterinarian. As of early May, 349 Texas dairies and 115 purebred beef herds have been tested for the bacterial disease since November 2003. While the dairy industry is making significant progress, it still falls far short of testing necessary to assure the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other states that Texas has conducted adequate disease surveillance to find any remaining infected herds. Texas’ TB plan, developed in 2002 by a joint industry and regulatory working group, calls for testing the state’s 850 + dairies and at least 2,500 of its beef seed stock herds by the end of August 2004. The plan was submitted to the USDA, along with a commitment to comply with the program.

Since 1983, cattle TB has been detected in 15 Texas dairies and six purebred beef herds. In 2000, after two infected herds were detected. Dairy and purebred beef cattle are no more susceptible to TB than commercial cattle, but they usually are maintained in a herd much longer, due to their value of milking or breeding. Once exposed to cattle TB bacteria, it may be several years before dairy or purebred cattle are tested, or all culled and sent to slaughter, where carcasses are examined. (Milk is safe to drink, because required, routine pasteurization kills TB bacteria).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) could deny a bid for Texas to regain TB-free status, citing lack of disease surveillance, if we don't meet our testing objectives," explained Dr. Hillman, who heads the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. "The TAHC, through a cooperative agreement with the USDA, is funding 'fee-basis' payments to private, certified veterinarians who conduct herd test, eliminating out-of-pocket expense for the cattle owner. Unless we are granted an extension, this federal money will not be available after the end of August, so it's crucial that producers take action to schedule a test now."

"The herd test must include all cattle 24 months of age or older (including dry cows in dairies). Testing of purchased replacement animals is optional, but the cost is covered by the program and should be considered," said Dr. Hillman. "To conduct a test, the certified or regulatory veterinarian will inject cattle with a small amount of tuberculin in the skin of the caudal fold, an area on the underside of the tail. Seventy-two hours later, the veterinarian will visually and manually examine the injection site for a reaction, such as thickening of the skin. A response is an indication the animal may have been exposed to TB bacteria."

Around three to four percent of dairy cattle and about two percent of beef animals will respond to the caudal fold skin test. Until recently, a second 72-hour skin test, called the comparative cervical test, was needed to differentiate between an animal's exposure to cattle TB bacteria, or to avian TB, which is not a danger to herd health. The recent approval of the Gamma Interferon test has greatly simplified this follow-up testing process. Now state of federal regulatory personnel collect blood samples from 'caudal fold' responder cattle so Gamma Interferon tests can be run at the State-Federal Laboratory in Austin. Of more than 3,8000 Gamma test run during this testing program, about 34% or 132—have been in the suspect or reactor range.

"Animals also positive on Gamma test will be purchased by the USDA for slaughter and necropsy. Internal organs will be examined for lesions compatible with TB, and tissue samples will be submitted for confirmation to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa," said Dr. Hillman. He noted that the USDA's indemnity is based on the fair market value of the animal. For adult dairy animal, agricultural economists have determined the standard appraisal to be \$1,425. Beef animals are appraised individually by a certified appraiser. Producers, however, may negotiate for a higher payment by providing registration papers for registered cattle and/or production records for dairy cattle. The USDA also will pay for hauling and disposal or burial of the carcass.

If infection in the herd is confirmed, the owner has two options. The herd can be quarantined and undergo a series of retests, until all infected animals have been removed, and subsequent repeated testing

assures that infection has been eliminated. Or, the USDA will negotiate a purchase price for the herd and depopulate the animals, allowing the owner to return to normal business practices more quickly.

"Clearly, cattle TB must be addressed in Texas and in other states where infected herds also have been detected. This currently includes California, New Mexico, Arizona, Kansas and Michigan. In Texas, we need the support of dairy and purebred beef producers to find infection, if additional infected herds are present; prevent further spread of disease; and regain our ability to move breeding cattle across state lines without a TB test," Dr. Hillman noted. "Allowing cattle TB to gain a 'hoof-hold' would be extremely costly, in terms of credibility with consumers, and in our ability to trade freely with our interstate and international trading partners."

2004 Bexar/Comal/Guadalupe County Beef Field Day Draws Big Crowd

By Nathan Riggs, Extension Agent-IPM, Bexar County

An enthusiastic crowd of 126 people gathered at the Connell Life Skills and Livestock Center at Boysville on May 8, 2004 in Converse, Texas to learn about cattle handling, chute-side manners and safety, proper vaccination storage and delivery, castration, dehorning, branding and treating external and internal parasites. Drs. Ron Gill (Texas Cooperative Extension Livestock Specialist-Dallas) and Rick Machen (Texas Cooperative Extension Livestock Specialist-Uvalde) delivered this program in a humorous, educational and audience-level manner, that allowed all to learn and understand the basics of dealing with cattle in today's climate. Hands-on demonstrations of castration, dehorning, vaccination and the implantation of growth-enhancing products allowed producers, both young and not-so-young, to pick up some pointers from two gentlemen regarded as leaders among their peers in the cattle industry.

A big thank you to the event sponsors, Ewald Tractor, Lyssey and Eckel Feeds, Bexar County Farm Bureau and Fort Dodge/Animal Health, for providing refreshments, exhibits, products for demonstrations and funding the fajita lunch catered by Boysville staff.

The 126 attendees in the event represented eleven Texas counties and came from as far away as Austin, Cuero and Corpus Christi. Counties represented were Atascosa, Bexar, Comal, DeWitt, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Kendall, Median, Nueces, Travis and Wilson. The event was coordinated by the Bexar County Beef Cattle committee and the Extension offices in Bexar and Guadalupe counties.



ICA 30th Anniversary Convention

Lockhart, TX – Mark your calendar to travel to Corpus Christi, Texas June 9-12 for the 30th annual Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas (ICA) convention and trade show at the Omni Bayfront Hotel. The agriculture industry is changing fast and to get the latest information on national identification, mandatory country of origin labeling, the Trans-Texas corridor and many other timely topics that affect your industry the ICA convention needs to be on your "can't miss" list this summer. This 30th anniversary meeting will also include a panel on Cattle Marketing that features several of the nations leaders in the field. In a small profit margin business like ranching it is important that you have the best knowledge available for marketing your cattle.

On Thursday June 10th Merial Ltd. will sponsor the Cattlemen's College that highlights practices you can incorporate in your operation to keep your cattle healthy and profitable. The Cattlemen's College and the ICA trade show, with over 50 booths and exhibits are free events. So, if you don't have the extra cash right now to register for the entire convention, come out anyhow to attend these educational programs

The annual meeting won't be all hard work either; there will be fun for the whole family! Bring your clubs for the golf tournament, your dancing boots for a country and western dance, and an appetite for great food and several sight seeing trips that will make for a wonderful summer vacation as well as great learning experience.

To get more information about this informative convention and trade show you can visit the ICA website at www.icatexas.com or call the office to register at 512-620-0162. So don't hesitate, make your reservations today!

2004 Multi-County Crops Tour

Various topics that will be discussed are as follows: Variety Trails; Conservation Tillage and Spray Application Methods; Forage Trial Results and Bermudagrass Management; Cotton Growth Management; Crop IPM and Insect Trail Results; Crop Marketing and Market Update; Laws and Regulations.

Date: Friday, June 18, 2004

Place: Luling Foundation Farm

Cost: \$15.00 (includes noon meal and refreshments)

Please RSVP to one of following County Extension Offices by June 15, 2004: Guadalupe Co. 830/379-1972; Comal Co. 830/620-344; Hays Co. 512/393-2120

***6 CEU's have been applied for.**

Seminars



Beef 706

A Hands-On Seminar on Beef Quality Excellence in Texas
Date: June 14-16, 2004

Place: Texas A&M University~College Station, Texas
Seminar & Meals are **Free** to Texas Beef Producers
Program paid for by YOUR Texas Beef Check-off Dollars
For further formation please contact Molly Collins at
1-800-846-41113

Ranch Estate Planning

Topics covered will include estate planning laws that have changed, as they affect your estate taxes and ultimately your business and family.

Date: August 4 and 5, 2004

Place: Texas A&M~ College Station Conference Center

Cost: \$100.00 includes materials, refreshments, and lunch

For further information please call 979/845-2226 or Email Sharon, s-wehring@tamu.edu.

Also, join the Animal Science Department at the **Beef Cattle Short Course and Trade Show**, August 2-4, 2004

For more information contact: Larry Boleman or Veronica Rosas at 979/845-3579

Private Applicator Training/Testing

Bexar County Extension Office will be conducting a Private Applicator Training Class on Thursday, June 3rd beginning at 8:30 a.m. located at 3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., Ste 212. The class is \$25.00, which includes the study manual and workshop. After the training, a TDA inspector will administer a licensing exam at no cost. If the test is passed, the cost of a Private Applicator License is \$60.00. The next Private Applicator Training class will be held on September 2nd. For more information please contact Sheilah at 467-6575

Academy for Ranch Management Workshops

The Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management is proud to announce The Academy for Ranch Management Workshops for 2004. The cost for each 3-day workshop (listed below) is \$395/person and includes meals and lodging. All workshops will be held at the Sonora Research Station.

**Restore and Manage Deer Habitat
Rangeland Restoration and Management**

**July 8-10
August 12-14**

Sign up now to reserve your space by calling Ray Hinnant at 979/845-5580. For more information, visit their website at: <http://rangeweb.tamu.edu/arm>.

Happy Father's Day!

Mailing List



To help defray costs, we are updating our mailing list. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact Sheilah by phone (210/467-6575) or email at (sjwright@ag.tamu.edu). Be sure to indicate that you wish to be removed from the Beef Cattle Newsletter list.

The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter

3355 Cherry Ridge Drive S-212
San Antonio, Texas 78230
(210) 467-6575

2004 Officers

David Janszen - Chairman
LeRoy Moczygamba - Vice Chairman
Diane Mahan - Secretary
Rene Mosqueda - Treasurer

Editorial Staff

Nathan Riggs
n-riggs@tamu.edu

Sheilah Wright
sjwright@ag.tamu.edu

Happy Father's Day!



Texas Cooperative Extension
3355 Cherry Ridge Drive S-212
San Antonio, Texas 78230
March 2004



**READ UPON RECEIPT!
DATED MATERIAL!**

Address Label