

## *The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter*

September - 2006

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### PRIVATE APPLICATORS TRAINING

**B**exar County Extension Office conducts Private Applicators Training every **first** Thursday in March, June, September and December. The training begins at 8:30 a.m. in our office, 3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., Ste 208. Class is \$25.00, which includes a manual and worksheet. Please RSVP to Sonija at 210-467-6575.

**NOTE: The September 2006 Private Applicators class will be held on Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> (the SECOND Thursday in September).**

### SUMMER TIME IS ANTHRAX TIME IN TEXAS

Disease confirmed in far Southwest Texas

It's the same song, yet another verse for naturally-occurring anthrax cases in livestock and wildlife, cited the Texas Animal Health Commission on July 25.

Two far Southwest Texas counties are the latest sites for the disease. Anthrax has been confirmed in a pen of deer in Val Verde County, and in a charolais bull in Crockett County.

A little rain, a lot of hot weather and the invisible, spore-forming bacteria *Bacillus anthracis* has resurfaced, putting unvaccinated livestock and grazing wildlife at risk in the area.

Anthrax is naturally occurring around the world. After an animal dies from the disease and isn't properly burned, the bacteria will lie dormant in the soil. The anthrax bacteria resurfaces on grass or forage only under idea weather and soil conditions during spring and summer months. By the time an animal ingests the anthrax bacteria and exhibits staggering, trembling or convulsions, death is inevitable.

Most of Texas' anthrax cases occur in a triangle bounded by Uvalde, Ozona and Eagle Pass, which takes in portions of Crockett, Val Verde, Sutton, Edwards, Kinney, Ulvalde and Maverick counties. However, anthrax can occur anywhere. Among the cases confirmed this summer are several horses, farmed buffalo and other livestock in Minnesota; cattle in Saskatchewan, Canada; free-ranging bison in the Northwest Territories in Canada; sheep, goats, and cattle in Turkey; cattle in Peru; sheep in Russia; and several cows in Wales, in the United Kingdom.

"We know anthrax often goes under-reported, as we hear of anecdotal reports of livestock or deer losses without laboratory confirmation," said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas' state veterinarian and head of the Texas Animal Health Commission "Many ranchers forego the veterinary inspection and laboratory test, and, instead, just begin vaccinating. Anthrax cases are not unusual, but a laboratory confirmation should alert ranchers and livestock owners that it is time to vaccinate their animals in Val Verde, Crockett and surrounding counties."

Hillman pointed out that visitors to the region, including hunters, are usually concerned about anthrax. "But there is no need to worry, if proper precautions are taken," he said. "If you travel to an area where an anthrax case has occurred, avoid touching or handling sick or dead animals, don't pick up bones or shed antlers, and don't swim in ponds or streams where there are dead animals nearby. The same advice goes for your pets, too. By the time hunting season starts, cool weather usually puts an end to anthrax cases. Always harvest only healthy-looking animals."

Anthrax is a reportable disease in Texas. Suspected cases are to be reported to the TAHC at 800-550-8242.

## HAY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Governor Rick Perry has ordered the Texas Department of Transportation to suspend trucking restrictions so the state's producers can receive emergency deliveries of hay.

The temporary lift applies to height restrictions on round hay bales and carriers' permit fees. Perry anticipates that hay from neighboring states will help farmers and ranchers throughout the state make it through the final hot months of the year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated a 77 percent loss in hay production.

The suspension of the trucking requirements will expire on October 31<sup>st</sup>. ([www.ktsa.com](http://www.ktsa.com))

## DEVICE SCANS ANIMAL'S RETINA FOR IDENTIFYING

Producers can now monitor and wirelessly transfer livestock identification files from their OptiReader device, integrated with IOGEAR's Bluetooth Adapter. The complete solution scans a farm animal's retina, which is as unique as a human fingerprint, and sends it via Bluetooth technology to a central file server up to 330 feet away.

Optibrand has been using IOGEAR's Bluetooth Adapter for two years and has found it to be the most suitable device for integration in the OptiReader, a combination of a handheld computer and an ocular digital video camera. The camera uses LEDs to illuminate the ocular fundus and transmits full-motion video of livestock's retinas at 19 frames-per-second to the handheld computer.

Traceback of animals to farms of origin, tracking the movement of animals from farms to markets and abattoirs, and within and between countries, are all critical to animal disease control. Reliable identification and source verification systems, such as OptiReader with Bluetooth technology, make quarantine and containment of animal illness possible.

"Diseases threaten animals on a daily basis and it is crucial that we have the best and most reliable tool our clients can use to keep track of

their livestock," said Bruce Golden, chief executive officer at Optibrand. "Following our extensive tests with different vendors, we chose IOGEAR's Bluetooth Adapter because we found it to be the most dependable and cost-effective solution on the market."

For further information on the company and its connectivity solutions, visit [www.igear.com](http://www.igear.com).

## PASTURE, RANGELAND, FORAGE RISK MANAGEMENT INSURANCE

*Jose G. Peña, Professor, and Extension-Management*

The USDA announced recently that government subsidized Pasture, Rangeland and Forage risk management pilot insurance programs will be available starting in 2007. Policies will be available for sale through local crop insurance agents in late August or early September 2006, with a sales closing date of November 30, 2006. Subsidy rates vary by the amount of coverage purchased.

For specific details and links to the various components of these programs go to: [http://www.rma.usda.gov/\[policies/pasturerangeforage/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/[policies/pasturerangeforage/)

## CEU OPPORTUNITIES

### SOIL STEWARDSHIP

*The Seventh Annual South Texas Farm & Ranch Forum*

SEPTEMBER 14 & 16, 2006

Palo Alto College, Costanza & Verstuyft Farms, and Medina River Natural Area

RSVP to Helen Holdsworth at 210-826-2904 by September 12, 2006

### FALL BEEF CATTLE WORKSHOP

**\*6 CEUs PENDING\***

Saturday, October 14, 2006 - Boysville Livestock Center – Converse, Tx.

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. registration

Program will begin at 9:00 a.m., Lunch provided. Cost of event is \$15.00

Call Sonija at 210-467-6575 to RSVP by October 12

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN BEXAR COUNTY

September 16 – “Hunt Texas: The Basics” Workshop, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Helotes 4-H Center, 12132 Leslie Rd., Helotes. The workshop is designed to provide new hunters with the basic skills needed to successfully pursue a variety of Texas game species. To register, send your name, address, phone number, number of attendees and check for \$20 per person to TPWD San Antonio Urban Wildlife Office, 12861 Galm Rd., San Antonio, TX 78254. Make checks payable to: Alamo Area Master Naturalists. For more information contact David Veale, TPWD Private Lands Biologist at 830-424-3407 or Richard Heibrun at the San Antonio, TPWD Urban Wildlife Office at 210-688-6444.

September 18 – 22: Beef 706 hands-on beef training seminar, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. 512-355-2333.

September 28 – October 1: Home and Garden Expo, Alamodome, San Antonio, 1-877-615-8564.

## A DRY TIME FOR LIVESTOCK AUCTION

An article titled "Drought Auction" by William Pack, San Antonio Express-News business writer, appeared on the front page of that paper's Sunday, Aug. 13 Business section. It addressed the effect the extended drought has had on livestock and the business of livestock auctions throughout the state.

Pack wrote that "cattle auctions are the heartbeat of the state's \$8 billion cattle and calves market," paraphrasing Bill Hyman, executive director of the Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas.

The auction business has improved in recent months, he wrote, noting that at an Aug. 2 auction in Seguin there were more than 1,200 head of cattle auctioned off, including 300 cows, which represented about 25 percent of the animals sold. He noted that this was an indication that cattlemen were liquidating their herds, and that this liquidation has been especially active in areas where the drought has been the worst.

According to the article, South Texas herds are generally estimated to be at 40 percent or less of their average size, with Central Texas herds typically at about 25 percent liquidated. In addition, many cattlemen have been forced to decide whether to pay double or triple the normal price for hay or to continue to put more time and money into irrigating and fertilizing their fields. Such expenses, along with the cost of fuel, "have made it hard for ranchers to keep up the pace they did in the past," Pack wrote.

On the positive side, the article concluded, livestock prices have remained generally strong and, unlike the hard times seen in 1996, ranchers who had to sell their animals this year will at least have money to restock when rain finally falls.

*Please visit our website at:*  
**[bexar-tx.tamu.edu](http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu)**  
**(Click on Agriculture and Natural Resources)**  
*for updated information on*  
*Private Applicator*  
*CEU'S and more*

The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter  
3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., Suite 212  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
(210) 467-6575

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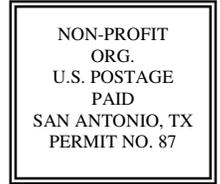
Editorial Staff  
Jerry Warren  
[jw-warren@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jw-warren@ag.tamu.edu)

Sonija Tedesco  
[sbtedesco@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:sbtedesco@ag.tamu.edu)



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Texas Cooperative Extension  
3355 Cherry Ridge Drive S-212  
San Antonio, Texas 78230  
September 2006



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DATED MATERIAL!**