

Thank you!!!! Thanks to all of you that took the time to either respond to the Qualtics evaluation or attend one of the listening sessions this week regarding the flexible planning pilot. There were some outstanding responses regarding the pros and cons and ALL responses were well thought out and professionally communicated. Actually, there were honestly a few that weren't too well thought out, but all I can say is "be happy".

### **???Question of the Week???**

The "Why" question that I wanted to focus on this week is; "Why pilot programs and why do we agree to do these?" I know many of you have had this thought the last several years, and we certainly have led the agency in this effort recently. Here goes;

- Pilots allow a small group of individuals to test an idea to see if it might be feasible to use throughout the state. There have been many pilots over the years that have been very successful and then developed into statewide programs.
- I've always preferred to be directly involved in potential changes because of the opportunity for input during the process and being ahead of the curve if the pilot goes statewide. A great example of this was the TEXAS planning and reporting systems you helped pilot and ultimately created that later went statewide. I'm sure some aspects of the flexible planning pilot will be adopted also.
- We do realize when we take on a pilot project that not everyone is open to change from their normal approach to doing things. Change is hard for sure. It takes extra time and additional training and sometimes it's not all that "comfortable". I'm grateful for those of you with an open mind to trying new things.
- If done correctly, pilots result in improvement in some aspects of the job by either providing more efficient work, more improved results, or yes in some cases no improvement at all. Any of these results can be very valuable when making decisions regarding implementation.

Regardless of whatever side of this discussion you fall, again, I am very appreciative of your willingness to "give it a try" and provide feedback. The entire state benefits from the extra effort you provide and it has not gone unnoticed. Thanks again!

### **Radio Opportunities**

We are off and running on these radio programs and there have been some outstanding presentations this week from the agents. Thanks for being the trendsetters and examples to everyone. Next week brings the following; Jason Miller, Katy White, Seth Byrd, Charles Hillyer, and Marcel Fischbacher. Remember to have your presentations sent or recorded two days prior to your selected date. I sent a protocol and schedule last week so look those over and be prepared for your turn.

### **Demonstration Results for 2015**

I realize everyone has been busy, but I'm still looking for results of applied research and demonstrations conducted last year. So far I have received reports from JD Ragland, John Villalba, Scott Strawn, JR Sprague, Cristen Brooks, and Blayne Reed. Everyone else, please get yours sent in as soon as you can. Remember, everyone is required to conduct 2 demonstrations/applied research projects during each

year and provide the results for interpretation and use. Remember to use the appropriate shell when summarizing your results.

### **New Specialist Positions**

There will be two new Extension specialists for you to utilize located here in the region. We are halfway through the process of interviews and seminars for the Dairy Specialist position that is 100% Extension and will be headquartered in Amarillo. Next Wednesday is the second and last presentation from a candidate and you are all welcome to join us for that presentation. The second position is a State Swine Specialist position that will be joint appointment of 75% Extension and 25% WT. Responsibilities will be teaching at WT and Extension responsibilities in working with you to provide assistance to commercial swine operations in our state.

### **Evaluations/Fees from Programs**

Please make every effort to send your state fees and evaluations to the appropriate people as soon as possible after meetings. Paper evaluations should go to Paul Pope or if they were done on turning point, send them to me and I will crunch the numbers. So far we have a few trickling in, but for the most part they've been coming in slow. Don't sit on these for half the year (or all of it) before sending them in. They get backed up at the end of the year because of procrastination by everyone. It would be good for all of us to have this information well ahead of the end of the year to use for summaries.

### **Evaluation of all AG Programs**

Speaking of evaluations, we are almost a quarter of the way through 2016 and there have been some tremendous programs presented throughout the region related to Ag/NR. As you know, it is required that you evaluate your in-depth program areas but I would like to encourage you to evaluate all Ag programs from this point forward. This will be expected in 2017 but we still have the opportunity for remaining programs in the current year. The information is outstanding that we have collected the past 2 years but I feel like we are leaving out some quality results from all the programs you are conducting but not evaluating. Going forward please evaluate all Ag/NR topics and programs conducted in your county, multi-county, and district. These results will be valuable for you in measuring the difference you make, summaries for the year, and preparation for performance appraisal and career ladder advancement. It will also strengthen our regional numbers in each program area.

### **Training Videos**

Jordan has loaded the Lync training presentations on our website and you can use these to get caught up on your trainings, refresh your memory, or pull valuable information for newsletters, radio, etc. These are password protected so you will need to text, email, or call me for the password (806-376-0051). We do this to keep up with who participates.

Please note the Lync trainings are on the new website. Make sure you are on the same page as this blog. Look to the right, click on Lync recordings, and it will ask for the password. The direct link to this is <http://agrilife.org/northregionanr/>.

### **Pesticide Applicator Information**

Thanks to Kerry Sider for sending the new updated PA-400 P application form out to some of you. This is the form you provide with the unchanged D-1411 (training verification form) at the conclusion of your trainings. These forms are required for producers to take the private applicator test and get their license. The PA-400 P is updated to reflect the increase in the cost of the license. Discontinue using the old form. The new form can be found at:

[http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/forms/PEST/Applicator/pa\\_400P\\_application\\_for\\_pesticide\\_applicator\\_license.pdf](http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/forms/PEST/Applicator/pa_400P_application_for_pesticide_applicator_license.pdf)

### **This Weeks Agenda**

March 7 – 21 Houston and Austin Stock Shows

March 8 – Jason Miller – Regional Radio Program

March 9 – Katy White – Regional Radio Program

March 10 – Seth Byrd – Regional Radio Program

March 11 – Charles Hillyer – Regional Radio Program

March 12 – Marcel Fischbacher – Regional Radio Program

Be careful and good luck to those of you going to Houston and Austin in the coming weeks.