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## Tom's Tidbits

Welcome to the first edition of Mills County Agriculture. I hope everyone is off to a great 2016. We have had some beautiful weather and some timely rainfall. This has set us up for a beautiful spring and hopefully a beautiful summer. In 2016, I am going to step out of my comfort zone and try to keep you up to date on a quarterly basis with an agriculture newsletter. We hope to provide you with timely up to date information that we think will be useful to you. We will provide the newsletter through our Agriculture email list we have in our office. If you like to receive a hard copy please let us know and we can mail it, or if you know of anyone that would like to receive this newsletter please send us their email. This is new so we would like to hear your comments on this newsletter and if you find it useful. As we learn to embrace technology, you can now find us on Facebook by searching "Mills County Agriculture".



**Tom Guthrie,  
 CEA, AG-NR**

## 2016 Texas Custom Rates Survey

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Department of Agricultural Economics is conducting the 2016 Texas Custom Rates Survey. Each year our offices receive many requests for current custom rate information and the latest Custom Rates Publication. The survey and publication are the only source to find the going rates paid for these types of services. Questions in the survey include rates paid/charged for specific tillage, planting, application, harvesting, and other services or operations performed on a custom basis. If you have knowledge of rates in your area, and appreciate the value of publishing this

type of market information, please consider participating in the survey which can be found online at:

<http://agecoext.tamu.edu/crs2016>.

The survey will ask that you only complete the questions that pertain to your operation, therefore most people should be able to complete the survey in 10-15 minutes or less. The survey will be open through mid-April. Your participation will help make sure the published information is the most accurate and reliable possible. If you have any questions regarding the survey please contact Dr. Steven Klose ([sklose@tamu.edu](mailto:sklose@tamu.edu)).

# Wheat Update

Information provided by Dr. David Drake, AgriLife Extension Agronomist, San Angelo



Close Up Of  
Stripe Rust

With the return of cool wet weather we have renewed concern of stripe rust in wheat. Although not as wide spread as last year, in many fields the lower leaves are covered in pustules and the rust spores will coat your boots in severe cases. Susceptible varieties: Coronado, Grainfield, Cedar, Fannin, and the Oklahoma varieties (Garrison, Ruby Lee, Iba, Duster); seem to be the hardest hit. Before applying a fungicide it might be of more

benefit to consider waiting until the flag leaf is fully emerged. The flag leaf provides the majority of carbohydrate for grain fill and protecting it is the highest priority. A fungi-

cide application will only provide about 14 days of protection so the highest cost benefit would be to a fully emerged flag leaf. Some fields, depending on variety and planting date; have partially emerged flag leaves and others may be a couple of weeks away. A well timed application will also help protect from leaf rust that could appear with more rain and warmer weather. Spraying a resistant variety does not increase yield so check the variety resistance ratings before spraying. Variety information is available at:

<http://varietytesting.tamu.edu>.

Also scout fields for aphids, bird cherry oat aphids (dark blue with a red dot on the back) have been seen in the area. For the most part

lady bugs are keeping these aphids confined to spots and the barley yellow dwarf virus, transmitted by the aphid; is already running its course. One report of wheat streak mosaic virus in Concho Valley was observed last week and a sample has been sent off for confirmation. With warmer weather more of these symptoms may appear. 2015-2016 was a mild winter which would have helped the wheat curl mite survive and spread the disease. Please report other fields, so samples can be sent to the plant disease diagnostic lab in Amarillo. The web site:

<http://sickwheat.tamu.edu>

has more information on wheat diseases.

*"This is a good  
grass to eat now so  
use it while you  
got it..."*



Recent Photo  
of Wintergrass

## Texas Wintergrass

Texas Wintergrass has become a common grass seen in local pastures. It is a native, cool season perennial and not a warm season grass. Right now is the optimum time to graze it before it goes to flower, and puts out the awned floret or seed.

This is where it gets its common name "speargrass". Data gathered from Extension Range Specialist, Baron Rector

out of College Station shows that on March 27th in a previous year this grass had 12% crude protein, 0.12% phosphorus, and 44% digestible organic matter. On February 28th in a dry late winter spring, the crude protein was 6%, 0.06% phosphorus, and 37% digestible organic matter. Data from April and May show 10-13% crude protein and 0.08-0.15% phosphorus. When we have rainfall like this year the numbers will be on the higher end. This is a good grass to eat now so use it while you got it as it will lose its quality by June.

# Sugar Cane Aphids



Forage sorghums have always been valuable crops in our area due to their low maintenance and hardiness. There have been very few pests associated with them in the past but the sugar cane aphid (SCA) has changed the game over the past cou-

ple of years as we have saw crops lost due to this pest. It looks like this year will be no different.

Fortunately, we have been able to learn about this pest the past two few years. In general, producers will need to scout early and often as populations explode very rapidly. It is recommended that you scout fields once a week until you find colonies and then twice a week until threshold levels are reached. Usually, once you find 50 or more aphids per leaf average across the field action should be taken. Once you are at this threshold you have two options: harvest or treat. If the crop is being grown for forage and has reached a stage where harvest is economical then that is the best option. Once the crop has developed thick canopies then treatment may not be a good option as the insecticide may not penetrate

the canopy for a good kill. Once sooty mold starts forming on the honey dew excreted by the SCA, treatments are not very effective. Traditional aphid products do not work well on this aphid. Currently the only treatment option is Sivanto at 5-8 oz/acre. Transform is a product that offered good control but has been removed from the market. It is unsure if it will be available in 2016 or not.

Planting sorghum as early as possible helps get the crop large enough to harvest before the SCA populations get to the point that severe damage occurs. Having the ability to harvest for either hay or silage within a week to 10 days after infestation is also important. The longer you wait the more damage and yield loss.

## Tips for Managing Pastures and Rangelands to Reduce Sheep & Goat Gastro Intestinal Nematodes (GIN) in Central Texas.

One of the side effects of receiving adequate rainfall is greater internal parasite problems. We saw it this past summer and may see the problems again this summer. Often we just think about drenching to manage these problems and forget about managing our pastures.



### Rangeland:

- \*Keep browse for goats (turn off the bulldozer)
- \*Keep forbs for sheep & goats (park the herbicide sprayer)
- \*Stock so goats browse more than graze
- \*Control burning helps

### Pastures:

- \*Grass is for sheep and cattle; not so much for goats
- \*Plant mixtures: grass, legumes, forbs, shrubs, trees
- \*Overseed with legumes to increase protein content
- \*Look for forbs with high condensed tannins
- \*Cultivation helps “clean” a pasture

### Both:

- \*Keep stubble height taller than 4”
- \*Avoid over-grazing
- \*Avoid over-stocking
- \*Rest at least 60 days between rotations
- \*Avoid concentrating animals in certain areas for long periods
- \*Lamb/kid to avoid high GIN hatching periods
- \*Supplement protein to mothers & kids/lambs
- \*Avoid grazing until dew burns off
- \*Graze mixtures of horses, cattle, sheep & goats

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Extending Knowledge  
Providing Solutions



You can find us on Facebook  
as Mills County Agriculture



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service educates Texans in the areas of agriculture, environmental stewardship, youth and adult life skills, human capital and leadership, and community economic development. Extension offers the knowledge resources of the land-grant university system to educate Texans for self-improvement, individual action and community problem solving. The AgriLife Extension Service is a statewide educational agency and a member of the Texas A&M University System linked in a unique partnership with the nationwide Cooperative Extension System and Texas County Commissioners Courts.

## Program Dates

April 4th 6:00 p.m. **Aquaponics Program** \$10.00 Brownwood, TX 325-646-0386

April 7th 9:00 a.m. **Central Texas Pecan Short Course** \$25.00 4 CEU's Goldthwaite, TX 325-648-2650

April 20th 9:00 a.m. **Mills County Conservation Tour** 2 CEU's Goldthwaite, TX 325-648-2650

April 21st 3:00 p.m. **Pond Management Program** \$10.00 2 CEU's Goldthwaite, TX 325-648-2650

May 2nd 9:00 a.m. **San Saba Pecan Field Day** San Saba, TX 325-372-5416

May 13th **Lonestar Healthy Streams Workshop** Goldthwaite, TX 325-648-2650

May 12TH 9:00 a.m. **Cross Timbers Brush Management Program** \$40.00 3 CEU's Stephenville, TX 254-968-4144

Educational programs of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

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