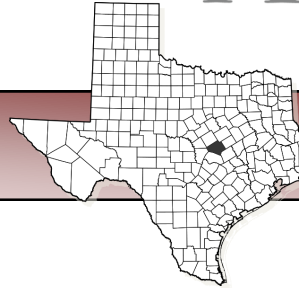


# BELL COUNTY

TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION

## AG & NATURAL RESOURCES



## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ MAY CATTLE MARKET ROUNDUP
- ◆ LONE STAR HEALTHY STREAMS PROGRAM
- ◆ RANCH GATHERING
- ◆ STILES FARM FIELD DAY
- ◆ BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE
- ◆ OUTDOOR WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

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EXTENSION SERVICE  
BELL COUNTY  
1605 N. MAIN STREET  
BELTON, TX 76513  
(254) 933.5305

### FEATURED ARTICLE

## RAINWATER HARVESTING

Rainwater harvesting is an innovative alternative water supply approach anyone can use. Rainwater harvesting captures, diverts, and stores rainwater for later use.

Implementing rainwater harvesting is beneficial because it reduces demand on existing water supply, and reduces run-off, erosion, and contamination of surface water.

Rainwater can be used for nearly any purpose that requires water. These include landscape use, stormwater control, wildlife and livestock watering, in-home use, and fire protection.

([RainwaterHarvesting.tamu.edu/rainwater-basics/](http://RainwaterHarvesting.tamu.edu/rainwater-basics/))

### KEY COMPONENTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CONSTRUCTING A RAIN BARREL

- catchment
- tank size
- insect/debris filter
- draining
- overflow
- waterproof seals
- placement/access

### DID YOU KNOW?

Keeping insects out of your rain barrel is extremely important. Any container capable of holding water for 8—10 days can produce hundreds of mosquitos a day.

**Constructing a rain barrel can be a low cost and very rewarding project. Contact the Bell County Extension Office for more tips on water conservation and constructing your own rain barrel at home.**

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## MAY CATTLE MARKET ROUNDUP

DERRELL S. PEEL, OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Cattle and beef markets have pushed the spring rally higher and extended it longer than anyone expected. Feeder cattle prices are up 12-14 percent since the beginning of the year while fed cattle and Choice boxed beef are up about 23 percent. Select boxed beef is up about 16 percent since January 1. Feeder and fed cattle markets appeared (once again) to perhaps have peaked seasonally this past week. Fed prices pulled back from the previous week's highs near \$145/cwt. However, Choice boxed beef continued to climb finishing the week at nearly \$248/cwt. The Choice-Select spread has widened to over \$22/cwt. following an exaggerated seasonal pattern similar to one year ago. The May boost of Memorial Day beef buying is likely done and markets may pull back a bit though grilling demand will continue on to Father's Day in June and Independence Day in July.

Markets have been buoyed by tighter than expected supplies of beef; stronger than expected domestic demand; continued strong beef exports; and speculative support in live and feeder cattle futures contracts. The bullish psychology of the market has been supported by earlier news that China would reopen to U.S.

beef and last week to the announcement that an agreement should be in place by July. It is, however, still not clear what requirements must be met and how much and how fast U.S. beef will flow into China.

Smaller carcass weights are continuing to help hold beef production increases in check. Beef production is up 4.3 percent so far this year while total cattle slaughter is up over six percent for the year to date. In the most recent week of actual slaughter data, steer carcass weights were down 21 pounds from one year ago while heifer carcass weights were down 18 pounds year over year. This is partially offset by heavier cow and bull carcass weights at the current time.

Forage conditions look very good across much of the country, with the exception of some parts of the Southeast. Although too much of a good thing led to flooding in many regions, recent rains have pushed back dry and drought conditions that emerged through the first quarter of the year. Favorable forage supplies and price, combined with attractive feed grain and supplement prices, will help moderate cattle production costs in 2017.

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### STATE JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW & STATE JUNIOR HEREFORD SHOW COMING TO THE BELL COUNTY EXPO THIS SUMMER

Come out to the Bell County Expo this summer to watch these State association breed shows

**TEXAS JUNIOR HEREFORD/POLLED HEREFORD COMBINED STATE SHOW**  
**"TEXAS HEREFORDS & YELLOW ROSES": JUNE 14-17, 2017**

**TEXAS JUNIOR ANGUS ASSOCIATION STATE SHOW: JUNE 9-11, 2017**





## OUTDOOR WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

- Mulching plant beds helps soil retain moisture.
- Water plants and lawns during the coolest parts of the day such as mornings or late evenings.
- Plant native species that don't require extra water.
- Weed flower gardens.
- Monitor your rain gauges so that you don't over water.
- Use stored rain water rather than municipal or well water.
- Sweep outdoor patios, furniture, and windows with a broom rather than washing with water.
- For lawns, reduce watering to two days a week.
- Use timed devices for watering lawns.
- Water landscape with liquid left over from cooking vegetables.

## THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

The Pond Calculator App, or PondCalc, is a comprehensive tool for recreational pond users as well as aquaculture producers. One of the most common problems in pond management is over estimation of pond size. This tool allows the user to quickly and easily calculate the surface area of any shaped pond and then calculate the number of acre feet, all without having to do any math. These calculations allow the user to determine accurate pond area and volume for the application of chemical treatments and herbicides. Download PondCalc on the iTunes App Store.



## TAMU BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE

The annual Beef Cattle Short Course will be held August 7th through 9th on Campus at Texas A&M. This is a great opportunity to gain knowledge from the many educational seminars and hands-on demonstrations. This event also has one of the largest trade shows for agricultural producers. Registrations will be online at [BeefCattleShortCourse.com](http://BeefCattleShortCourse.com).



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## LONE STAR HEALTHY STREAMS PROGRAM

The Lone Star Healthy Streams program educates Texas livestock producers and landowners on how to best protect Texas waterways from bacterial contributions associated with livestock production and feral hogs. There is no cost to attend.

**WHEN:** FRIDAY MAY 26TH, 2017  
**WHERE:** CAMERON YOUTH EXPO CENTER  
301 S. HOUSTON AVENUE  
CAMERON, TEXAS 76520  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM—3:00PM



\*\*1-IPM and 2-General CEUs available for pesticide applicators\*\*

Workshop presentations will focus on the Little River watershed health and will discuss basic watershed function, water quality, and specific best management practices that can be implemented to help minimize bacterial contamination originating from beef cattle, horses, and feral hogs.

Please RSVP by May 20th. For more information and to RSVP for the workshop contact the Bell County Extension Office at 254-933-5305, the Milam County Extension Office at 254-697-7045, or by going to: <http://lshs.tamu.edu/workshops>.

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## STILES FARM FIELD DAY

The annual Stiles Farm Field Day will be held on Tuesday, June 20th, at the farm in Thrall, Texas. Come out to the farm for a day of education, community, and food! Registration starts at 7:30am at the Stiles Farm Foundation headquarters, 5700 FM 1063, Thrall TX 76578. Registration costs are being covered by the Williamson County Farm Bureau. 3 CEU hours are being offered.

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## RANCH GATHERING

Our friends at Texas and South Western Cattle Raisers Association (TSWCRA) are hosting a "Ranch Gathering" in Lampasas, Texas on May 25th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the hostesses house located at 1406 US Highway 281. This meeting is open to TSWCRA member and other ranches from the area.

Please RSVP to TSWCRA at 1(800) 242-7820 ext 192 or to [RSVP@TSWCRA.org](mailto:RSVP@TSWCRA.org)

Program topics include law enforcement and a legislative update as well as a steak dinner and door prizes. Become a TSCRA member during the event and you will receive a TSCRA gate sign (\$40 value), courtesy of Bayer!



**Texas and Southwestern  
Cattle Raisers Association**  
To Honor and Protect the Ranching Way of Life

## USDA-ARS TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH/EXTENSION FIELD DAY

USDA-ARS-GSWRL and Texas A&M AgriLife Scientists and Staff would like to invite you to visit the GSWRL Research Field Site and join us for tours of the fields on **JUNE 1ST, 2017**. This is a great time to learn about the current research being conducted. Bring your family and friends with you to enjoy this day. There is no fee for this program. We look forward to seeing you!

**GRASSLAND, SOIL AND WATER RESEARCH LABORATORY  
BLACKLAND RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER  
808 E. BLACKLAND ROAD  
TEMPLE, TEXAS 76502**



8:00 a.m. Welcome (*at the parking garage*)  
8:35-8:50 Soil health *Buddy Faulkenberry and Rick Haney*  
8:55-9:10 The water cycle, making every drop count *Matt Machacek*

### GRASSLAND RESEARCH

9:15-9:30 Bioenergy Crops: Canola and Switchgrass *Jim Kiniry*  
9:35-9:50 Diversity and competition in grasslands *Brian Wilsey and Wayne Polley*  
9:55-10:10 Remote sensing for field-scale assessment of crop health *Wayne Polley*  
10:15-10:20 What happens when you fertilize native prairie *Phil Fay*  
10:20-10:35 Grassland restoration in the Blackland Prairie *Bill Fox*

### CROPPING SYSTEMS RESEARCH

10:40-10:55 Cropping Systems Modeling: Determination of key crop parameters through field measurements *Norman Meki and Jim Kiniry*  
11:00-11:15 Safflower Production Trials *Hal Collins and Doug Smith*  
11:15-11:30 Sunn Hemp/Cowpea Cover Trials *Hal Collins and Doug Smith*  
11:30-11:45 Cotton row spacing and potassium fertility trials *Chad Hajda and Hal Collins*  
11:50-12:10 Switchgrass response to changing precipitation *Rob Heckman and Phil Fay*  
(*back at headquarters rain out shelter*)

**12:30 LUNCH (AT THE PARKING GARAGE) RSVP REQUESTED (254) 933-5305**

### DISPLAYS & POSTERS OF OTHER RESEARCH (AT THE PARKING GARAGE)

- Soil health laboratory tour *Buddy Faulkenberry and Chris Holle*
- Natural Resources Conservation Service Information booth
- Grazing nutrition and monitoring of livestock. *Jay Angerer, Jesse Goplin and Tony Owen*
- Effects of burrowing prairie crayfish on soil nutrients, carbon, nitrogen, microbial populations, and soil seed bank. *Tara Nawrocki and Hal Collins*
- Precision Agriculture & Precision Conservation. *Chad Hajda and Doug Smith*

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## AG EMAIL LIST

Please e-mail me and ask to be added to the Texas A&M AgriLife e-mail list for Bell County. Most information is sent out from this office will be e-mailed in the future.

[L-Zoeller@tamu.edu](mailto:L-Zoeller@tamu.edu)



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## THE BEST OF DINNER TONIGHT—2017 HEALTHY COOKING SCHOOL

Tuesday, May 23, 2017  
6:00 p.m.— 8:00 p.m., Doors open at 5p.m.  
Bell County EXPO! Center  
301 W Loop 121

For more information and to register, visit: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/dinnertonight>

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If you are interested in a topic that you would like to see addressed in the newsletter, let us know.

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