

From the Field

“Improving the knowledge and skills of Victoria County’s farmers & ranchers”

From the Field

November, 2017

Special points of interest:

- 2017 Year in Review
- Cotton & Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop
- Victoria CEU Day
- What to Know about Zika Virus
- Electronic Version of Newsletter Available

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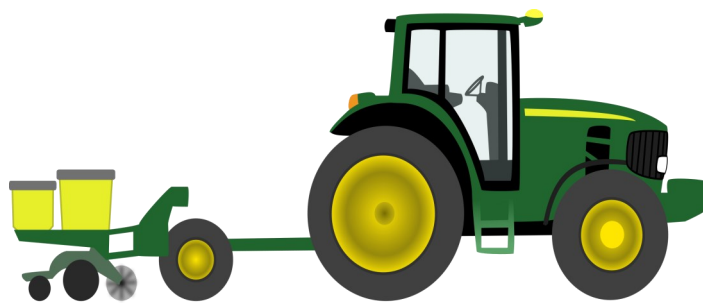
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2017 was a really strange year!

As we come to the close of yet another year, it’s hard not to sit back and analyze how different of year 2017 really seemed to be. Farmers began planting earlier than normal with the warm and almost non-existent winter. We had great, timely spring rains that made crops grow vigorously. We harvested some of the largest yields in many years with corn averaging 120-130 bushels/acre and grain sorghum averaging 7000 lbs. We began the long process of picking the cotton just a touch earlier and there were some reports of 4 bale/acre fields. Then, on August 26th, Hurricane Harvey hit and truly turned this area upside down. Fortunately, most of the cotton was picked but

some was still on the plant or sitting in modules in the fields. We estimate that 15-20% of the cotton harvest was lost to the hurricane. The Farm Service Agency had over 100 claims of damage. The damages ranged from lost cattle, dead livestock, destroyed fencing, washed away hay, barns damaged, hay fields flooded, equipment damaged, etc. All in all, we counted ourselves lucky that the hurricane didn’t do more damage as we

saw in Rockport and Port Aransas. The agriculture community is strong and vigilant. We will rebuild, plant again, and reap another harvest. Thank you to all the folks that helped and are continuing to assist those people that were/are affected by the hurricane. We can only hope that 2018 will be what people call a more “NORMAL” year. May God bless you and give you peace, wisdom, and health in the new year.



Upcoming Programs

Victoria Cotton and Grain Risk Management & Marketing Workshop, December 5th, Victoria Educational Gardens Pavilion, 283 Bachelor Drive, Victoria, \$20/person (includes lunch and 2 General CEU's, RSVP by November 28th

Victoria County CEU Day, February 1st, Victoria County Educational Pavilion, 283 Bachelor Drive, Victoria, \$40/person (includes lunch and 5 CEU's), RSVP by January 25th

Victoria Livestock Show, February 23—March 5, Victoria Community Center, Sale on March 5th. www.victorialivestockshow.com



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Victoria Cotton & Grain Risk Management & Marketing Workshop



Tuesday, December 5, 2017
 Victoria Educational Gardens Pavilion
 283 Bachelor Drive (Victoria Reg. Airport)

2 General CEUs

Registration—7:30AM

Program 8:10AM –3:00PM

\$20 Registration Fee (includes lunch) Paid at the Door

*** RSVP Required by November 28th**

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Victoria County CEU Day

Friday, February 1, 2018

Victoria Educational Gardens Pavilion
283 Bachelor Drive (Victoria Reg. Airport)

5 CEU's (2-Integrated Pest Management, 1-Laws & Regs, 2 General)

For Texas Department of Agriculture Private, Commercial,
and Non- Commercial Licensed Pesticide Applicators

Registration—7AM

Program begins at—7:30AM—1:00PM

\$40 Registration Fee (includes lunch & training)—Paid at the Door

*** RSVP Required by January 25th**

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What Texans Need To Know About Zika Virus

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Michael Merchant, Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist

What Is Zika?

Zika is a mosquito-transmitted disease caused by the Zika virus. This virus is not new, but from 2007 to 2014 the virus spread into new countries and perhaps became more dangerous to people. The illness caused by the Zika virus is usually mild compared to other mosquito-carried illnesses like dengue fever, West Nile virus, and chikungunya. Only one in five people infected with Zika will feel ill. These individuals typically develop mild symptoms that include fever, joint pain, red itchy eyes (conjunctivitis) and rash. Symptoms typically occur 2 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms in some individuals may be more severe. The association between Zika and Guillain-Barre syndrome (a type of paralysis) is under investigation. Until recently, Zika was considered a mild disease with few lasting effects. However, public health officials are now concerned that pregnant women who contract Zika can pass the virus on to their unborn babies, which may result in a birth defect known as microcephaly. Microcephaly is a condition where the fetal brain and head do not fully develop and reach normal size. Currently, there is no vaccine or preventive treatment for Zika, nor is there a cure for microcephaly. For more information about the effects of Zika on humans, see <https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360/>.

How Do I Get Zika?

A person gets Zika from the bite of an infected mosquito. In turn, mosquitoes get the virus when they bite a person who is infected with the Zika virus. The best carrier (vector) of the Zika virus is the yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*. The Asian tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*, can also carry the Zika virus. The degree to which *Aedes albopictus* may be contributing to Zika transmission in the Americas is unknown. Both these mosquitoes are common in Texas, and may be found in the same communities. Since 2002, the most important mosquito transmitted disease in Texas has been West Nile virus. West Nile virus is carried by a different mosquito, the southern house mosquito, *Culex quinquefasciatus*. Unlike the *Culex* mosquitoes which fly only at night, *Aedes* mosquitoes are active throughout the day and into the evening. For this reason, it is critical to protect against mosquito bites both day and night. Under certain circumstances, Zika can also be transmitted sexually from men to women. To date, this is the only way local transmission of Zika is known to have occurred in the United States. In countries where mosquitoes spread Zika, sexual transmission of the virus is relatively less common. For this reason, the US Centers for Disease Control recently recommended that women with confirmed cases of Zika, or who have experienced symptoms of the virus, wait at least eight weeks after the start of their symptoms before trying to get pregnant. Additionally, men with confirmed cases of Zika, or who have had symptoms of the virus, are now advised to wait at least six months after their symptoms begin before having unprotected sex. These recommendations are based on current knowledge of how long the Zika virus remains active in the body and in semen.

Should I Be Worried About Zika?

As of March 2016, the Zika virus has not been locally transmitted by mosquitoes to humans in Texas. Currently, the risk of Zika infection in Texas appears negligible. During the winter and early spring, the principal risk is for travelers to areas where Zika is active. However, local transmission of Zika might be possible during the active mosquito season (average daily temperatures above 75 degrees F) and more people return to the State while infected. This risk is expected to remain low for most of Texas. Your local health department, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the local media are good sources for changes in the risk of Zika in your area. The most current information on Zika in Texas is at: <http://texaszika.org/>. Stopping Zika There are two steps you can take to reduce your risk of getting Zika or West Nile virus from a mosquito. First, you can make your home environment less likely to breed mosquitoes. Second, you can reduce your risk of a mosquito bite by dressing appropriately and wearing mosquito repellent when you are outdoors. All mosquitoes require bacteria-laden water in which to breed. *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes breed in small water- and debris-filled containers like bottles and cans, buckets and wheel barrows, tarps, gutters, birdbaths, flower pot dishes, and tires. Any container that can hold water for 8 to 10 days can produce dozens to hundreds of mosquitoes a day. Clean rainwater or irrigation water that fills a container with organic material (leaf debris, grass clippings, etc.) takes about four days to produce enough bacteria to sustain mosquito breeding. Because the mosquitoes that carry Zika fly less than 200 meters from their larval breeding site, most of the biting mosquitoes in your backyard come from containers in your or your close neighbor's yard. Again, the first step to stopping Zika is to fill or eliminate any water containers around your home. Mosquitoes can bite any time you are outdoors— even for short trips to water the garden or pull weeds. Anyone staying outdoors for extended periods in mosquito-infested areas should wear long sleeves, long pants and light-colored, loose fitting clothing to prevent mosquitoes from biting. Skin applied repellents can also provide good protection for 2 to 12 hours. DEET, picaridin, and IR-3535 are some of the better repellents for exposed skin; however, for shorter exposure times many other effective products are available.

Be Aware!

In an effort to be more efficient, we are trying to move to an electronic version of this newsletter. Please call the office if you want to receive this newsletter in the electronic format. We currently send over 300 newsletters out via paper. If you don't have email and would like to continue to receive the paper copy, we will continue to send the letter out in that format. Thanks!



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Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension event are encouraged to contact their County Extension Office at 361-575-4581 at least one week in advance of the program in order for arrangements to be made.



If you have name, address, phone, or email changes, please contact the office at:

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