

Palo Pinto County Agriculture and Natural Resources Newsletter



2021 In-Depth

Palo Pinto County
Jason Westbrook | Cattle

Year End Program Summaries 2021

RELEVANCE

Cattle ranching is an important part of the Texas economy. The Lone Star state is number 1 in beef cattle production in the United States, and Texas is home to 248,800 farms and ranches totaling 130.2 million acres. Cattle ranching is not only part of the Texas economy its part of its culture. The USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture showed that Palo Pinto County sold 3.3 million dollars in cattle and calves which were raised on 572,847 acres in the county. Therefore, the cattle industry plays an important role in the economic viability in Palo Pinto County. Each year the Agricultural Committee plans and implements programming efforts to support cattle ranching and pasture management. Many programs were held to educate producers on important topics throughout the year. Demonstrations and applied research are also implemented to support best practices for the industry.

Texas Beef Commodities

- 12% of the cattle in the United States are in Texas
- Texas has the largest cattle inventory in the world
- Texas accounts for 15.5% of the cash receipts for cattle in the United States
- Texas is the fourth largest food provider in the United States
- Texas has more cattle on feed than Australia or Canada combined
- 86% of land in Texas is in some form of agricultural production

RESPONSE

The Agricultural Committee developed a series of programs to address various topics. These included a 5 CEU Pesticide Workshop for those with a TDA private applicator license, a multi county Land Symposium and Plant I.D. program, Water Well Testing program, multi county Soil Fertility program, and the North Texas Cattle Clinic which discussed markets, toxic plants and crop insurance.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- The program targeted approximately 100 farms and ranches in Palo Pinto County.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Bayer, Alligare, TDA, Texas AgriLife Extension, NRCS, Johnson League Ranch, and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Service contributed to the success of the program.

VALUE

Cattle Ranching

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs targeted to large and small-scale livestock producers help generate safer food and fiber products with maximum efficiency. The result is quality, consistent, affordable products and industries that support the state's rural economies.



**Palo Pinto County
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**Palo Pinto County 4-H and Texas
A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Palo Pinto County**

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Wildfire Prevention Program February 17, 2022

Palo Pinto County Extension Office
221 South 5th Ave., Palo Pinto
Please RSVP to 940-659-1228

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
"The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating"

RESPONSE

Program announcements to producers and landowners were advertised by direct mail, email and Facebook. Newsletter and press releases were also used to promote events and programs. Quarterly news articles were used to support programs.

- Pesticide Workshop
- Multi County Land Symposium
- Water Well Testing
- Multi County Soil Fertility Program
- North Texas Cattle Clinic
- Cedar Elm Demonstration
- Plant I.D. Demonstration

The Pesticide Workshop was held online January 21, 2021 with 109 attending. The Multi County Land Symposium was held in Stephenville, Texas on April 30, 2021 with 33 attending. The Water Well Testing program was held August 16, 2021 with 31 participating. A multi-County Soil Fertility Program was held in Jack County on April 20, 2021 with 7 attending, and the North Texas Cattle Clinic was held in Young County on October 19, 2021 with 21 attending. The Plant I.D. demonstration was held at the Multi County Land Symposium and the Cedar Elm trial was held at the Johnson League Ranch in Gordon, Texas.

Evaluation Strategy

A pre/post evaluation was utilized at the Land Symposium to measure knowledge gained and adoptions of best practices. A total of 30 of 33 participants (90.9%) completed the pre/post survey instrument.

RESULTS

- Understanding and identifying forbs before program 20.0%, after program 80.0 %.
- Understanding and identification of native and introduced grasses before program 26.7% after program 83.3%.
- Understanding of forage value for livestock and wildlife before program 53.3 after program 96.7%
- 92.0% of attendees anticipated an economic impact of \$16 to \$25 per acre
- 74.1% anticipated the economic benefit due to improved forage quality.
- Participants who plan to adopt identifying native, introduced and forbs in pastures was 70% (14 of 30).
- Participants who plan to adopt improved forage value for livestock and wildlife was 80% (16 of 30).

Summary

The value of programs provided to stakeholders is relevant as seen by the results of the programming efforts. Many topics were addressed as well as landowner calls that were received by the Extension office. The committee will continue to focus efforts on having an economic impact to all stakeholders.

Future Programming

As 2022 arrives the Agricultural committee will plan and implement new programs to address the needs of Palo Pinto County. Applied research and demonstrations will be discussed and planned as needed.



For More Information :

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AGRILIFEEXTENSION.TAMU.EDU

RELEVANCE

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service released the 2019 Census of Horticulture Specialties report, the only source of detailed production and sales data for horticulture, floriculture, nursery, and specialty crops for the entire United States. The data show that horticulture sold a total of 13.8 billion in floriculture, nursery, and landscape products. Texas was fifth in the nation with \$599 million in sales. Each year the Extension office receives many phone calls regarding lawn and gardening questions. Horticulture is important in that it represents a large portion of one's property value. Palo Pinto County has a Master Gardener program that serves as the Horticulture/Garden Committee. Many programs are developed to support the horticulture and garden industry. These programs also address issues that might arise in the community.

Top Commodities in U.S. horticulture sales in 2019

- Nursery stock, \$4.55 billion
- Annual bedding/garden plants, \$2.24 billion
- Sod, sprigs and plugs, \$1.27 billion
- Potted flowering plants, \$1.2 billion
- Potted herbaceous perennials, \$923 million
- Propagative horticultural materials \$720 million

RESPONSE

The Horticulture/Garden Committee developed numerous programs to address various topics. These included a landscape program, propagation program, lawn maintenance program, snakes in the garden program, drip irrigation program, wildlife photography program and invasive plant species program. The committee also held several tours that included a garden tour and aquaponics tour at Tarleton State University. A multi-county pecan show was held that included Jack, Young and Parker counties. Several of the pecan entries made it to regional and state Pecan shows. The committee also manages several gardens in the county.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- The program targeted homeowners, landscape professionals and landowners within Palo Pinto County.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- The Palo Pinto County Master Gardeners, NRCS, Tarleton State University and Texas Agrilife Extension contributed to the success of the program outcome.

VALUE

Horticulture

Earth-Kind® Landscaping

The Earth-Kind® program teaches participants how to care for gardens and landscapes with environmentally friendly, research-proven techniques. Instructional topics include water conservation, responsible fertilizer application, and non-chemical options for controlling pests. Use of Earth-Kind® practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.



RESPONSE

Program announcements to producers and landscapers were advertised by direct mail, email, and Facebook. Newsletter and press releases were also used to promote events and programs. Quarterly news articles were used to support programs.

- Landscape Program
- Propagation Program
- Lawn Maintenance Program
- Snakes in the Garden Program
- Drip Irrigation Program
- Garden Tour
- Wildlife Photography Program
- Aquaponics Program
- Invasive plant Program

The landscape program was held in Palo Pinto, Texas on January 18, 2021 with 8 attending. The propagation program was held on February 15 in Palo Pinto Texas with 10 attending. A lawn maintenance program was held March 15, 2021 with 10 attending. Snakes in the garden was held on April 19, 2021 in Strawn, Texas. A drip irrigation program was held in Palo Pinto, Texas on May 17th with 8 attending. The garden tour was held in Mineral Wells, Texas on June 21st with 7 attending. On September 20th a wildlife photography program was held at PK Lake. October 18th the committee took a tour of the aquaponics lab at TSU with 6 attending. 7 attended the invasive plant program on November 15th.



Evaluation Strategy

A pre/post evaluation was utilized at the Invasive Plant program to measure knowledge gained and adoptions of best practices. A total of 7 of 7 participants (100%) completed the pre/post survey instrument.

RESULTS

- Understanding of invasive plants before program 14.3%, after program 85.7 %.
- Understanding of how bastard cabbage affects wheat farmers before program 14.1% after program 71.4%.
- Understanding of giant cane golden bamboo before program 28.6 after program 85.7%
- Potential economic benefit to improve property value before program 33.3% after program 66.7%
- Economic value of program per attendee - \$79.91
- Participants who increased knowledge on at least one program item was 100% (7 of 7).
- Participants who plan to adopt at least one practice or technology was 100%(7 of 7).

Summary

The value of programs provided to stakeholders is relevant as seen by the results of the programming efforts. Many topics were addressed as well as homeowner calls that were received by the Extension office. The committee will continue to focus efforts on having an economic impact to all stakeholders.

Future Programming

As 2022 arrives the Horticulture and Garden committee will plan and implement new programs to address the needs of Palo Pinto County. Applied research and demonstrations will be discussed and planned as needed.

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RELEVANCE

From 1982 to 2016, the wild pig population in the United States increased from 2.4 million to an estimated 6.9 million, with 2.6 million estimated to be residing in Texas alone. Wild pigs have been listed as one of the top 100 worst exotic invasive species in the world. In 2007, researchers estimated that each wild pig carried an associated (damage plus control) cost of \$300 per year, and at an estimated 5 million wild pigs in the population at the time, Americans spent over \$1.5 billion annually in damages and control costs. Assuming that the cost-per wild pig estimate has remained constant, the annual costs associated with wild pigs in the United States are likely closer to \$2.1 billion today. Most damage caused by wild pigs is through either rooting or the direct consumption of plant and animal materials. Rooting is the mechanism by which wild pigs unearth roots, tubers, fungi, and burrowing animals. They use their snouts to dig into the ground and turn over soil in search of food resources. More recent studies published in 2016 and 2019 estimate that the annual loss to agriculture in Texas is approximately \$118.8 million. Impacts to crops are not limited to direct consumption. Trampling of standing crops and damage to soil from rooting and wallowing activities account for 90-95% of crop damage. The Brazos River runs through much of Palo Pinto County. This is an excellent habitat for feral hogs. Therefore, our county has a huge number of feral hogs that roam our river bottoms and pastures and destroy valuable pastureland as well as subdivisions within the county.

RESPONSE

The Texas A&M Agrilife Extension and the Palo Pinto County Ag Committee developed programs to address feral hog damage through discussion with landowners and agricultural professionals. A series of programs were developed addressing the available tools that landowners could use to abate feral hogs. A corral trap demonstration was held to educate landowners on trapping feral hogs. Two Multi County programs were held with Jack and Young counties. One of the programs introduced the new "Hog Stop" bait that sterilize male feral hogs from breeding after two weeks of feeding the product. The last program focused on aerial hunting from helicopters to make a quick impact.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The program targeted approximately 100 landowners and ranches in Palo Pinto County.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

Texas Wildlife Services, Hi Pro Feeds "Hog Stop" product and Outdoor Adventures contributed to the success of the program outcome.

VALUE

Feral Hog Abatement

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs for new and small acreage landowners teach participants the best practices to effectively manage the natural resources on their property. These practices help to conserve water, soil, and wildlife resources for all Texans. They also helped to build local tax bases by increasing property values.



RESPONSE

Program announcements to producers and landowners were advertised by direct mail, email, and Facebook. Newsletter and press releases were also used to promote events. Quarterly news articles were used to support programs.

- Corral Trap Demonstration Program
- “Hog Stop” Multi-County program with Jack and Young counties
- Aerial Hunting with “Outdoor Adventures” Multi-County program with Jack and Young Counties

The corral trap demonstration and program were held in Palo Pinto, Texas on May 21st and 47 attended the program. The “Hog Stop” Program was held in Perrin, Texas on September 21st with 38 attending the program. The aerial hunting program was held in Jacksboro, Texas on October 25th with 12 attending. 13 landowner calls were received throughout the year by the Extension office needing feral hog abatement. Many of the clients were referred to a local private trapper. Through this series of programs landowners and ranchers were educated on the tools available to abate feral hogs and their damage.

Evaluation Strategy

A retrospective post was utilized at the Corral Trap program to measure knowledge gained and adoptions of best practices. A total of 32 of 47 (68.1%) participants completed the retrospective post survey instrument.

RESULTS

- 84.4% of participants had a negative impact on their pasture properties in last year
- 75.0% of participants had a negative impact of wild pigs on fences, water troughs or other improvements
- 96.4% increased their knowledge of wild pigs and their control by attending the program
- 87.5 % increased their knowledge of efficient trap/bait techniques
- Anticipated economic loss per attendee due to feral hog damage \$4806.00
- 78.1% (25 of 32) plan to adopt baits with scent appeal
- 71.9% (23 of 32) plan to adopt pre-baiting of traps to encourage consistent hog visits
- 59.4% (19 of 32) plan to adopt larger traps

Summary

The value of programs provided through the Feral Hog Abatement Program was estimated at \$143,394. Therefore, the economic impact equates to \$1478 per individual that attended.

Future Programming

An Ag committee meeting will be held to discuss next steps for feral hog programming for 2022. Data will be reviewed, and next steps will be determined.



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