FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Texan Express

FROM: Brian D. Yanta, Goliad CEA-Ag

DATE: December 9, 2005

RE: Around the County

During the peak of fuel prices that we experienced during the hurricane season, (and as diesel prices slowly creep higher with increased heating oil use in the northeast) I had several producers interested in the cost to treat brush with $3.00 farm diesel. Contrary to popular belief the price to treat brush did not double even though the price of farm diesel did, well relatively speaking.

We conducted an individual plant treatment demonstration on huisache in the fall of 2001. The demonstration can be viewed online: http://goliad-tx.tamu.edu/applied/huisachecontrol02.pdf

I took the basal treatments, added the popular 2% Remedy® treatment and updated all of the costs. I adjusted the percents between the 15% Remedy® basal treatment that was applied to get a figure for the 2% treatment, increased the fuel amount used by 50% since this treatment is not a low volume basal treatment.

In doing so it was obvious that the 98% diesel solution cost per plant would have doubled since all the ingredients in this mix make up a small portion of the total solution. But looking at 15% mix and the 25% mix the cost per plant only increased by about 2 cents per plant, not doubling. In these mixes the expensive ingredient is the Remedy® not the diesel. Consequently every ingredient has increased since 2001 as you can see in Table 3.

Table 1. Chemical, Labor, Total Cost / Acre and Cost/Plant, Myers Ranch, Goliad, Texas, 2001

Treatments	Chemical Cost/Ac	Diesel Cost/Ac	Labor Cost/Ac	Total Cost/Ac	Cost / Plant[1]
Remedy 2% Diesel – 2005 adj	$1.52	$4.78	$4.69	$10.99	8 ¢
Remedy 15% Brush Busters - 2001	$10.25	$1.04	$4.69	$15.98	12 ¢
Remedy 15% Brush Busters – 2005 adj	$11.28	$2.08	$4.69	$18.05	14 ¢
Remedy 25% Penetrant 10% Streamline basal - 2001	$9.33	$0.46	$4.69	$14.48	11 ¢
Remedy 25% Penetrant 10% Streamline basal – 2005 adj	$10.14	$0.91	$4.69	$15.74	12 ¢

[1] 129 plants per acre

In 2002 we conducted a mesquite trial (http://goliad-tx.tamu.edu/applied/mesquite02.pdf). Again I took the diesel treatments, adjusted for the higher fuel price, and again added the 2% Remedy® mix with the same assumption of using more fuel due to the nature of the application. The two cent per plant figure held on this demonstration as well. The cent per plant figure is the rule of thumb that you need to apply to your situation since the cost per acre will depend on how many plants are present, diameters of stems, and if the plant is multi-stemmed.

Table 2. Chemical, Labor, Total Cost / Acre and Cost/Plant, GBRA, Fannin, Texas 2002

Treatments	Chemical Cost/Ac	Diesel Cost/Ac	Labor Cost/Ac	Total Cost/Ac	Cost / Plant[1]
Remedy 2% Diesel – 2005 adj	$7.26	$11.02	$7.00	$26.30	10 ¢
Remedy 15% Penetrant 10% - 2001	$55.65	$3.60	$7.00	$66.25	18 ¢
Remedy 15% Pentrant 10% – 2005 adj	$59.88	$8.44	$7.00	$75.32	20 ¢

[1] 370 plants per acre

Table 3. Comparative prices, 2001 and 2005.

Product	**2001**	**2005**
Remedy/gallon	$87.50	$92.99
Cidekick Penetrant/gallon	$18.00	$20.15
Blue Dye/gallon	$12.00	$30.40
Surfactant/gallon	$10.00	$12.00
Diesel[1]/gallon	$1.50	$3.00

[1] Used $1.25/gallon for mesquite demonstration

The 15% low volume basal mix and the 25% streamline basal mix are recommended by the Brush Buster Program. These mixes have proven effective throughout the state in a number of replicated trials. Those trials have removed all variables and have proven to be effective year round. The 2% mix is also recommended by Extension. It is found in our B-1466 Chemical Weed and Brush Control Suggestions for Rangeland. We have not conducted any trials with the 2% mix, but it is widely used throughout the county with great success. In B-1466 it is recommended to use this mix by the following protocol: "Apply to the base of trunk 12-18 inches above the soil surface down to soil surface. Apply until solution puddles on soil surface." However it is recommended that this solution only be used in hot, dry conditions when the soil is pulled away from the stem, while the low volume and streamline basal treatments are year round options.

Brush encroachment is a continual problem on most ranches in Goliad County. Brush treatments whether mechanical or chemical are not a one time job, and follow-up treatments are necessary. The Brush Buster program is a tool to help the landowners manage brush encroachment by using the best recommended treatments. Individual plant treatments are the best recommended practice today since wildlife and specie selection are such important considerations. Selectively targeting problem species that consume water and limit forage production are logical and responsible brush management strategies.

So the question still remains can you afford to treat brush even with higher fuel prices, or can you afford not to?