

# MCCULLOCH COUNTY AG NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER

## FARMER AND RANCHER APPRECIATION DINNER

The McCulloch County 4-H is hosting its first Farmers and Ranchers Appreciation Dinner on September 22, 2018 at the Heart of Texas Event Center at 804 San Angelo Highway, Brady TX 76825, and the event will begin at 6:30pm. The McCulloch county 4-H has partnered with the Brady Civic club to serve adult beverages at the event. 4-H kids have begun selling meal tickets and advertising around town. Meal tickets will be \$15 a piece for a pork loin meal and all the fixins prepared by the Knights of Columbus, and the bar sponsored by the Brady Civic Club. There will be music, a silent auction, door prizes and more. This event will be open to the public for anyone to attend, but its main goal is honoring all the farmers and ranchers who work hard in McCulloch county and support our 4-H youth.

## DO YOU PLANT SMALL GRAINS?

The recent rain was a blessing. Most of the pastures in our area have "greened up" and are growing some grass. How much grass we can grow from now until our first frost this fall is the question. We now have some soil moisture and I am getting a lot of questions concerning planting some small grain for grazing/hay. According to several sources, there should be enough oat and wheat seed available to purchase for planting this fall. I am hearing that most triticale seed will be harder to find and higher priced.

Forecasters are now calling for El Nino to kick in possibly this fall, and that is could last through winter. As growers begin preparation for planting small grains, variety selection is important as far as yield potential and input costs. If you are possibly going to take the crop all the way to grain production check the variety's characteristics, particularly disease pressure. Also, carefully consider seed quality, germination percentage, vigor, and test weight.

According to Extension Specialists, they don't see a significant yield increase in grain by going about 60lbs per acre. Some producers are now planting on a seed per acre basis rather than pounds per acre. Seed size can range from 10,000 seeds per pound to 18,000-19,000 with wheat. Planting on a pound per acre basis you could be doubling on halving the amount of seed you are actually putting in the ground.

Specialists are also advising to put 1/3 of your nitrogen out in the fall. Nitrogen will be needed by the plant to promote early tillering which are most productive tillars. More roots mean the plant can access more soil, more moisture, more nutrients.

## THE LONGHORN TICK

Confirmed reports of the longhorned tick, *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, in seven states have prompted a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist to alert Texans to its possible arrival here. Dr. Sonja Swiger, AgriLife Extension veterinary/medical entomologist at Stephenville, said the longhorned tick isn't named for the iconic bovine symbol of the Lone Star State, but rather for the distinctive, but underrated "horns" sprouting from a portion of its head. "This tick is a relative newcomer to the United States and though it has not been confirmed here in Texas, it has been confirmed in Arkansas," she said. "It's not at all choosy about

who or upon what mammal it feeds on or who it dines with, as it has been found feeding right alongside other external parasites.”

Some ticks, like the cattle fever tick, prefer to complete their life cycle on a single host. Not the longhorned tick, which Swiger said is a three-host tick, meaning it requires three different hosts to complete its life cycle. Animals on the menu include, but are not limited to: cattle, white-tailed deer, horses, goats, sheep, dogs, cats, opossum, birds and raccoon.

Swiger said she has no reports of it feeding on people in the U.S., though it is known to attack people in Asia and the Pacific. She did say the longhorned tick is not a known carrier of the pathogen causing Lyme disease.

“Even though there are no reports of it being a Lyme disease carrier, this tick is a known vector of several bacterial, viral and protozoan disease agents that affect both livestock and humans,” Swiger said. “So, it’s worth keeping an eye on.

“It’s an exotic East Asian tick, originally from China, which moved to Australia and then to different locations in the Pacific and eventually here,” Swiger said. “It’s highly adaptive to a broad range of climates as evidenced by the seven states where it’s been documented, which along with Arkansas, include New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania. So, it’s at home in climates from tropical to temperate and is also quite cold tolerant.”

Swiger said it’s an aggressive biter that frequently builds intensive infestations on domestic hosts such as livestock.

“Their presence causes great stress to the animal, which translates to reduced growth and production, and exsanguination, or serious blood loss,” she said.

To make matters worse, Swiger said the tick is parthenogenetic, meaning females can reproduce without a male, so a single fed female tick can create a whole population by herself.

To prevent and offset concerns, Swiger said producers, homeowners and hunters this fall should consider conducting surveillance of ticks on their livestock, pets and harvested game and submit any suspicious ticks they find to: Texas Animal Health Commission, State-Federal Laboratory and follow instructions at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/vets/TicksandFlyLarvaeSubmissions.pdf>.

“If historic record is any indication, once it arrives, it appears the longhorned tick is here to stay,” she said. “But with diligence and management similar to that used with other tick species, serious trouble can be kept to a minimum.”

For more information on this and other ticks, access the Tick App at <http://tickapp.tamu.edu>, or contact Swiger at 254-968-4144, [slswigar@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:slswigar@ag.tamu.edu).

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