Maverick County Extension Office Fall Ag Newsletter

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Hi, and welcome to the Fall Ag Newsletter Edition of the Maverick County Extension Office. As we are getting ready for the could season after a long hot and dry summer things seem to change for a more comfortable temperature, but the rangeland was very affected by the past drought, especially the native grass. Summer crops are most finished harvesting including the coastal bermuda grass is getting dormant following the normal annual cycle. I was driving around the county the other day, and I was able to see a great quantity of round hay bales for sale from El Indio to Quemado.

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Many producers throughout Texas are noticing an increasing fall armyworm population in their rangelands and forages in areas after receiving rainfall over the last few weeks. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts recommend producers be prepared to protect their valuable forages. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension forage specialist and professor in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Overton, said the most important thing for producers right now is to realize the areas receiving rain will see grass growth that could fuel armyworm populations. Damage from infestations could be problematic for cattle operations dealing with short hay and forage supplies due to drought. Forage producers planting cool-season forages, such as winter wheat, annual ryegrass, or any small grains, are at higher risk of armyworm infestations. Young seedlings are subject to more damage than more mature perennial warm season forages. Scouting is the most effective way to know if you're dealing with armyworms and deciding how to manage populations. "After a rain, producers should walk through their fields at dawn, when armyworms are most likely to be active and see if the population size warrants treatment with an insecticide," Corriher-Olson said. Producers should be looking for armyworms that are green with brown or black colorations and are identified by the white inverted Y on their heads. Mature armyworms can grow up to 1.5 inches in length. When scouting forages and seeing a spike in armyworm population, if there are more than three armyworms per square foot, producers are advised to determine which insecticide to spray and do so immediately. "Most producers keep insecticides on hand that are labeled for different scenarios," said Corriher-Olson. David Kerns, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension state integrated pest management coordinator and professor in the Texas A&M Department of Entomology, said the bigger the worm, the more they can eat. "If you have a large population of large larvae, you'll need to handle them immediately because they can consume an entire field overnight," Kerns said. Most producers are likely to use a pyrethroid insecticide due to the low cost, but that might not get rid of the majority of the population because they only last up to five days. Additionally, the armyworms must be directly exposed to the pyrethroid by touching or eating the plant.

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This next informative publication from the TAHC is from the Month of late August, but I think it should be a concern to always consider

Anthrax Confirmed in a Briscoe County Beef Cow

AUSTIN, TX – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials received confirmation of anthrax in a beef cow, on a premises in Briscoe County on August 25, 2023. This is the first case of anthrax in the county this year.

The premises is located 5 miles north of Silverton, Texas, and has been quarantined. TAHC rules require proper disposal of affected carcasses on the premises prior to release of the quarantine.

"TAHC personnel are closely monitoring the case in Briscoe County," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC State Veterinarian and Executive Director. "This is not the first time we have seen anthrax in the county. This case serves as a great reminder to monitor susceptible animals and speak with a veterinary practitioner if you suspect your animals are exposed, and to vaccinate before your animals are exposed." Anthrax is a bacterial disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, which is a naturally occurring organism with worldwide distribution, including certain parts of Texas. Anthrax cases in Texas are most often found in a triangular area bound by the towns of Uvalde, Ozona, and Eagle Pass. However, anthrax was confirmed in Briscoe County in 2020 and other locations in the Texas panhandle have been identified since then.

An increase in anthrax cases after periods of wet, cool weather, followed by hot, dry conditions is common. In these conditions, animals ingest the odorless, colorless, and tasteless anthrax bacteria when they consume contaminated grass and hay or by inhaling the spores. Outbreaks usually end when cooler weather arrives. In this case, weather conditions were favorable for the infection.

After exposure to anthrax, animals typically show clinical signs within three to seven days. Once clinical signs appear, death usually occurs within 48 hours. Acute fever followed by rapid death with bloody discharge from body openings are signs of anthrax in livestock. If a noticeable amount of deer or exotic wildlife are found dead, and carcasses show bleeding characteristic of anthrax, remove livestock from access to carcasses immediately. Owners of livestock and animals displaying clinical signs consistent with anthrax or experiencing death of animals should contact a private veterinary practitioner or a TAHC official immediately.

Producers are encouraged to follow basic sanitation precautions when handling affected livestock or carcasses. The TAHC encourages wearing protective gloves and long sleeve shirts and washing thoroughly afterward to prevent accidental spread of the bacteria to people. For more information on how anthrax affects humans please visit https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/anthrax/Information.aspx.

For more information about anthrax, visit:

TAHC Anthrax

Factsheet: https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactsheet_Anthrax.pdf

This publication includes a couple of interesting topics of concern for our local producers that I captured during these past weeks. Look forward to the winter edition.

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