

COVID-19

The current COVID-19 situation is effecting all of us in different ways. Producers can't work from home and are essential to this county and state to make sure we have the food and fiber needed for our citizens. The Extension Service is here to help producers with information about things you can do on your farm to help the spread of COVID-19. Follow me on Facebook and Twitter with daily updates and tips on COVID-19. You can also watch this short video of Dr Jarrod Hardke giving some good advice for producers on the spread of this virus:

<https://bit.ly/2XC9reH>

General Conditions

Weather: We finally had a decent week of dry weather with temperatures getting up into the 80's a couple of days. Wednesday felt like summer time to me. Fields are starting to dry up and it is looking like we can actually start some agriculture work, but this weekend looms on the horizon. There is a good chance of rain tomorrow and Sunday. The prediction I am looking at shows up to 1 ½ inches of rain. This is one we need to miss. We need to get corn and rice in the ground. Next week also has predicted cooler weather with one night dipping down to close to freezing. This shouldn't be a problem if we warm on back up the next week. The only thing I can see it effecting is slowing down bermudagrass growth.

Arkansas River: The river has dropped down to 268 today and continues to fall out. The prediction is to be down to 255 by Tuesday. The water is draining out of the Cadron and all the bayous that were backed up by the river and recent rain.

Row Crop

Corn: I think everyone that wants to plant corn is setting on go. If we miss the rain this weekend corn should start going in the ground on Monday. Some sweet corn was planted this week in Lollie on some sandier ground. Recommended seeding rates this time of year for me is 34,000 seed per acre with a final plant population of 32,000. In the next couple of weeks as the weather straightens out we can move down more to that 32,000 seeding rate.

Rice: Rice is ready to go. Hopefully we will get through this weekend and we can start planting next week. I have attached a couple of links to some good information especially if you are thinking about water seeding.

Dr. Jarrod Hardke's 3rd Arkansas Rice Update: <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/rice/Arkansas%20Rice%20Update%204-3-20.pdf>

2020 Managing Water-Seeded Rice for Arkansas: <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/rice/2020%20Managing%20Water-Seeded%20Rice%20in%20Arkansas.pdf>

Wheat: Wheat ranged from flowering to booting this week. About 10% of the wheat in the county is headed and starting to flower. These cool temperatures coming up shouldn't cause any kind of injury. I didn't see anything predicted below 34 and it needs to get down to 30 for two hours to damage heading wheat. Disease pressure remains low and these dry days finally has the wheat looking decent.

Table 1. Temperatures that cause freeze injury to wheat at spring growth stages and symptoms and yield effect of spring freeze injury.

Growth stage	Approximate injurious temperature (two hours)	Primary symptoms	Yield effect
Tillering	12 F (-11 C)	Leaf chlorosis; burning of leaf tips; silage odor; blue cast to fields	Slight to moderate
Jointing	24 F (-4 C)	Death of growing point; leaf yellowing or burning; lesions, splitting, or bending of lower stem; odor	Moderate to severe
Boot	28 F (-2 C)	Floret sterility; spike trapped in boot; damage to lower stem; leaf discoloration; odor	Moderate to severe
Heading	30 F (-1 C)	Floret sterility; white awns or white spikes; damage to lower stem; leaf discoloration	Severe
Flowering	30 F (-1 C)	Floret sterility; white awns or white spikes; damage to lower stem; leaf discoloration	Severe
Milk	28 F (-2 C)	White awns or white spikes; damage to lower stems; leaf discoloration; shrunken, roughened, or discolored kernels	Moderate to severe
Dough	28 F (-2 C)	Shriveled, discolored kernels; poor germination	Slight to moderate

Enlist Training: <https://courses.uaex.edu/course/index.php?categoryid=79>

Paraquat Training: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/paraquat-dichloride-training-certified-applicators>

Beef & Forage

Warm Season Forages: I have talked to a few producers that are ready to or already have fertilized their warm season forages. I still think it is a little early to fertilize bermuda or bahia grass, especially if you didn't take advantage of winter weed control. Any nitrogen applied right now will probably go to winter weeds or won't be totally taken up by bermudagrass that is just trying to get established. The cool temperatures that are predicted next week are going to slow down bermuda growth which is also going to hamper nitrogen uptake. Fertilizer is a big input cost when we talk about forages and you want to get the most for your money. Patience will pay off here, so we need to wait at least until after next week.

Breeding Heifers: Cattle producers who breed their cows in June so they will calve in March and April should breed heifers 20 to 30 days before the rest of the herd. Vaccinate heifers for IBR-BVD-PI3, BRSV, vibriosis, leptospirosis and blackleg 7-way 30 to 60 days before breeding. This ensures that heifers will be healthy during their pregnancy and reduce abortions due to preventable diseases.

Heifers should be in good condition before they are bred. If they are too thin, especially after a hard winter, they will be less likely to reach puberty or become pregnant. Separate heifers from mature cows because they cannot compete with mature cows at the feed trough or for the better quality forage in the pasture. Feed heifers to reach about 65 percent of their mature weight at breeding.

Avoid overfeeding heifers. Over conditioned ones deposit fat in the udder, which reduces milk production later. They also have more calving difficulty and are more difficult to breed back after calving.

Choose heifers carefully. Select heifers based on adjusted 205-day weaning weight, birth weight, structural correctness, frame size or hip height and good health history. High weaning weight/low birthweight heifers that are structurally sound, moderate sized and healthy are the ones to breed.

Heifers have more trouble calving than mature cows, so smaller, easier calves that still have good growth potential are what ranchers should plan to produce. Some producers use young bulls on heifers in an effort to reduce calf birth weights. But, young bulls do not produce smaller calves than mature bulls. Instead, choose a low birth weight epd bull or a calving ease bull to use on your heifers.

Breed heifers for 45 days, and then check them for pregnancy at 60 to 90 days. Cull open heifers. Feed heifers to gain about .8 to 1 pound per day until calving. Some ranchers underfeed pregnant heifers to reduce calf birth weights. Underfed, thin heifers have calving problems, poor milk production, weak calves and fail to breed back.

Heifers should be in good body condition next year when they calve (body condition score of 5 or 6 on a scale of 1=emaciated to 9=obese). Even when they calve in good condition, two year olds take 20 to 30 days longer than mature cows to breed back after their first calf.

Pesticide Applicator Training

Anyone that needs a private applicators license can use the online course as their required training to obtain a license. The online training is located at www.uaex.edu/pat. The Arkansas State Plant Board has made an exception and will allow producers that are certifying for the first time to be able to use the online training.

The office of Plant Industries Pesticide Section has received numerous requests from licensees regarding extensions for license renewals, which expire on March 31, 2020. Considering the State's COVID-19 response and the Governor's call for social distancing, pursuant to EO 20-06 all Private Applicator license expiring on March 31, 2020, will be extended until April 16, 2020. Private Applicators should continue submitting applications and payment to the Department of Agriculture during this time frame to ensure their license will be renewed on or before April 16, 2020.

Upcoming Events


Pesticide Applicator Training: Cost is \$20 for the training.

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

6:00 p.m. at Workforce Training Center (Timberwolf Drive UACCM Campus, Morrilton, AR)

Extension Service Voluntary Tax

Residents of Faulkner County have a chance this year to help the Faulkner County Extension Service. There will be a chance for residents to give to an Extension Service Voluntary tax on their tax statements. The money will be used to support the Faulkner County Extension Service which includes not only agriculture, but also family and consumer science and 4-H. We really appreciate the support of Faulkner County residents.



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