

Eastland County

Agriculture & Natural Resources Newsletter

February 2023

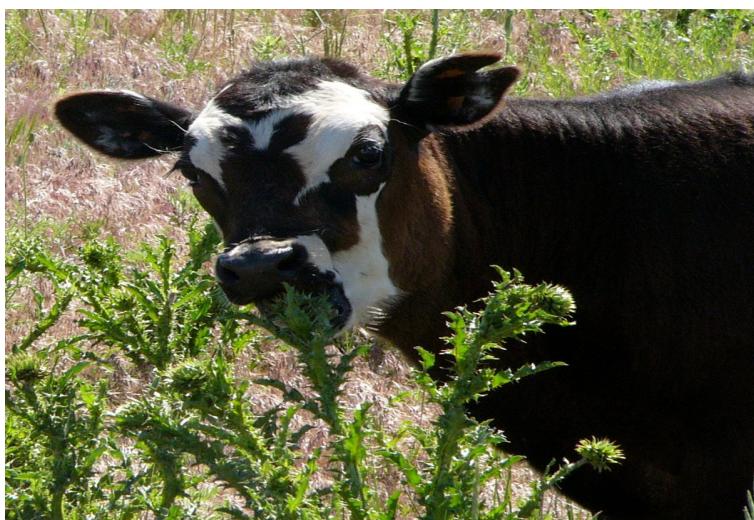


Watch Those Weeds This Year

There are not many things we have any real control over in agriculture, but one practice we can control to some extent is weed populations in the crops we grow. By eliminating unwanted plant competition for both water, soil nutrients, and sunlight, we can grow 3-7 pounds of grass for every 1 pound of weeds removed. Weeds are by design, simply thieves. They normally germinate early to send roots deep to steal water and nutrients from crops and their stems and leaves shoot above those crops to steal the sunlight. Weeds will find a way to survive conditions most of our crops can't.

Donated hay came into the county from all across the country due to the fires last March and was very much appreciated at the time. Again, beyond our control was the quality and purity of that hay. Expect a repeat of the 2006 fires where we saw new weed seeds brought in by hay that had not been a problem locally before. Keep a close eye on the areas that hay was fed in for weeds and spray as needed there to avoid them spreading to other areas.

Nearly any long-range forecast available is calling for dry conditions to continue this summer. Right now, herbicide and application is about \$17 per acre. Knowing what we do about weeds and expected rainfall, that just might be some affordable insurance this year.



Spraying Brush In Winter?

Like there's not enough to do this time of year already, but late winter can be an excellent time to spray brush and briars growing up in fence rows and such. Any time snow or standing water won't prevent proper application will work for low-volume basal or cut-stump spraying with Remedy, Remedy Ultra, or PastureGard HL herbicides. Spraying a mix of 25% herbicide and 75% oil-based carrier (diesel) can achieve very good kill results on most woody plants including greenbriar. Using a high concentration rate of herbicide applied at a low volume and pressure, each sprayer load can cover a lot of plants. For basal treatments, spray the bottom 15 inches of the trunk on all sides including the root collar almost to the point of runoff. This method works best for woody plants with trunks less than 6 inches in diameter. On trees exceeding 6 inches trunk diameter or with mature rough bark, switch to the stump-cut method for better results. Simply cut the tree down at an acceptable height and spray the top of the stump edges using the same 25% herbicide:75% oil mix used in basal treatments.



Sprayer Size	25% Herbicide	75% Oil Carrier
1 gallon	1 quart	3 quarts
3 gallons	3 quarts	9 quarts
20 gallons	5 gallons	15 gallons
50 gallons	12.5 gallons	37.5 gallons

Pre-Emergent Weed Control

It's still too early to apply now, but start considering using a preemergence herbicide for control of spring annual weeds in lawns and improved pastures. These herbicides work by interfering with seedling germination and plant emergence to provide a barrier of protection at critical times for the desired plants. We know applying postemergence herbicides to small, young plants is more economical than spraying large, mature ones, but using "weed preventers" can increase weed control savings by reducing the weed population before it even starts. Preemergence herbicides are significantly affected by soil temperature, soil moisture, and the targeted weed species. Most summer annual weeds germinate in the early spring when soils reach about 55 degrees for several days and winter annuals germinate in the fall as soils cool to about 70 degrees for several days. Waiting for application until soil temperatures and moisture are optimum for germination is critical to achieve the best results. Each herbicide will have mixing rates, controlled weed species, and application methods on their label. As always with herbicides, remember "the label is the law" when handling, mixing, and applying them.

We will be holding a Private Applicator Training on February 25 at 9:00 am in the AgriLife Extension Office located at 102 N. Lamar, Suite 307 in the County Annex Building. Cost will be \$40 per person including test study material and TDA application forms. Give us a call if interested for registration by February 17, 2023.

Soil Test For An Efficient Fertilizer Program

Right now is a good time to have soil analysis done if you have not already this year to beat the spring rush at the labs. There is not much we can do about the high cost of fertilizer or lack of rain, but there is a lot we can do regarding how efficiently our crops can use that fertilizer. A soil test is the first step, a road map if you will, in efficient fertilizer use and improved forage production. Samples should be collected annually for hay fields, every 2 to 3 years for grazing improved grass pastures, vegetable gardens and lawns. For soil forms and bags come by the County Extension Office or visit soiltesting.tamu.edu. Cost for the basic soil test, which is usually sufficient unless production drastically drops or other issues arise, is \$12 and could prove very cost effective this year.

Keep up to date with program announcements and follow Eastland County AgriLife Extension on Facebook @AgriLife Extension-Eastland County or check our website at eastland.agrilife.org

If you are not on our email list and would like to be, give me a call at (254) 629-2222 or email tj.cummings@ag.tamu.edu

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