

Pecos County Agriculture/Natural Resources Newsletter

April 2010

NATIONAL ID CHANGES

The Secretary of Agriculture announced on February 5 some changes in the National Animal Identification System. A new framework will be developed by a partnership of Federal, State, and Tribal Nation representatives. It is intended that the new program:

- apply ONLY to animals moving interstate
- achieve basic animal disease traceability without overburdening producers
- be led by States and Tribal Nations with federal support
- allow maximum flexibility to meet local needs
- encourage use of low-cost technology
- insure data are owned and maintained under control of States and Tribal Nations
- reduce Federal role and operate on principles of personal accountability
- reduce concern expressed to this point in NAIS.

The program will be mandatory only in traceability of animals shipped interstate. However, each State and Tribal Nation will determine specific approaches to accomplish this traceability. (USDA - APHIS Veterinary Services Fact Sheet, Feb, 2010)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCROTAL CIRCUMFERENCE AND OTHER TRAITS

Genetic relationships were calculated among body weight (BW), scrotal circumference (SC), and various carcass traits in a group of 2,590 Nelore cattle. Data were collected over seven years, resulting in almost 23,000 weights and almost 5,700 scrotal measurements. Weights were taken and adjusted to 120, 210, 365, 450, and 550 days of age. Scrotal circumference was measured and adjusted to 365, 450, and 550 days. Body weight, hip height (HH), and ultrasound measurements for ribeye area (REA), fat thickness at the 12th-13th rib (FT), and fat thickness over the rump (RF) were taken from 450 to 599 days of age.

REA was very lowly correlated with FT and HH, moderately to highly positively correlated with BW, and not correlated with SC. FT was highly positively correlated with RF. Both FT and RF were lowly correlated with BW and SC and moderately negatively correlated with HH. The authors concluded that selection by ultrasound for carcass traits should not interfere with selection to increase body weight and scrotal circumference. (Sao Paulo State Univ., Univ. of Sao Paulo, and Univ. of Calif. at Davis; J. Animal Sci. 88:52)

Prescribed burn tour set for April 30

A prescribed burning field day will be held from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. April 30 at the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch located 11 miles west of Roby on U.S. Hwy. 180.

Two Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be available for those with a private applicators license.

Dr. Dale Rollins, Texas AgriLife Extension Service wildlife specialist at San Angelo, said the field day will showcase a number of burns conducted at the research ranch over the past year and should be of interest to range and wildlife managers as well as ranchers.

Rollins said prescribed burning has received increased scrutiny lately, especially given the damage caused by large wildfires in the Texas Panhandle and elsewhere in recent years. He is quick to point out that those wildfires were not caused by prescribed burning.

Rollins said the program's formal talks will be kept to a minimum to promote comments and insights from attendees. Fire weather forecasters will be on hand to discuss their forecasting tools, since an accurate, real-time weather forecast is critical when conducting a burn.

Cost of the tour is \$10 for those who preregister by April 23, or \$20 at the door. Registration includes lunch and refreshments. Participants are encouraged to preregister to assist with meal planning.

In the event of inclement weather, the program will be moved to the Roby Community Center.

The tour is sponsored by the research ranch, Texas AgriLife Research, and AgriLife Extension's Quail Decline Initiative. For more information or to pre-register, contact Rollins at 325-653-4576 or e-mail: d-rollins@tamu.edu.

Annual Ram Performance Test

Renewed confidence in the Rambouillet sheep industry was reflected in the prices paid for rams sold at auction following the completion of this year's Annual Ram Performance Test held at the Texas AgriLife Research Station at Sonora on March 19.

Twenty-five rams sold for an average of \$802 per head, surpassing last year's average of \$734.52 by a respectable margin. The high-selling ram was T. Jones 119, from Texas Sheep Company (Travis Jones) of Fredericksburg. He sold to Hageman Sisters of Douglas, Wyo. for \$2,700. The ram was a son of T. Jones 448 who was the high indexing ram of the 2006-2007 test. T. Jones 448 also sired this year's high indexing ram that sold for \$2,000 to Bill Karnes of Sonora.

Volume buyers included the Sawyer Ranch of Sonora, which purchased five head totaling \$5,300 and Maggie Davis of Sonora, who bought seven head for \$3,100.

The annual test has been conducted by the AgriLife Research Station at Sonora since 1947. Animals in the test represent some of the world's top flocks in terms of rate of gain and desirable fleece characteristics. The test lasts for 140 days and is traditionally followed by an educational field day and sale conducted in cooperation with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

For more information on the Annual Ram Performance Test, pictures of the top indexing and selling animals, and a complete listing of test and sale results go to: <http://safiles.tamu.edu/genetics/ramtest.htm>.

TPWD Finalizes Short List of Hunting and Fishing Regulation Changes for 2010-2011

Expansion of mule deer hunting opportunities tops a short list of regulatory changes adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission as part of the 2010-2011 Statewide Hunting and Fishing Proclamation.

The commission approved an open general hunting season for mule deer in Dawson and Wheeler counties, and added a day to the mule deer season across the Trans Pecos region. The change addresses a priority goal in Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Land and Water Resource Conservation and Recreation Plan to increase access to and participation in the outdoors.

The commission finalized a nine-day, buck-only season in Dawson County and a 16-day, buck-only firearm season in Wheeler County and a 35-day archery-only season to offer increased hunter opportunity without adversely impacting mule deer reproduction or distribution.

The extra day of hunting for mule deer in the Trans Pecos region is being tacked onto the front end where the season will now begin the Friday immediately following Thanksgiving and continue for 17 days.

According to TPWD wildlife biologists, mule deer populations in these counties are limited, but are present in some areas having suitable habitat and implementation of a buck-only season will not have any measurable impact on herd productivity or expansion.

The Commission also adopted changes strengthening commercial fishing reporting requirements and administrative reorganization to split the commercial and recreational hunting and fishing regulations apart, as well as a clarification of rules regarding catching and possessing fish within protected length limits or in excess of bag limits.

The Texas Outdoor Annual, a complete digest of all Texas hunting and fishing regulations, including seasons and bag limits, will be available Aug. 15, 2010 wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold and on the TPWD Web site <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>.

Pastora cleared for grassbur control

Pastora herbicide (nicosulfuron + metsulfuron) has received a Section 18 Emergency Exemption label for use in bermudagrass pastures and hay meadows for control of sandbur (grassbur) through June 30, 2010. At this point, the product can only be applied to control grassbur, so this weed must be present at the site. Numerous efficacy and crop tolerance studies have been conducted over the past several years with this product and found it to provide excellent grassbur

control and acceptable Bermudagrass tolerance when applied according to the parameters of the attached label. I would highly encourage you to read the entire attached label from DuPont to avoid any false assumptions regarding product performance or crop tolerance. Of particular importance is the following;

- A letter from the Environmental Protection Agency must be in the possession of the applicator.
- Pastora is effective for controlling grassbur up to 1.5 inches tall, so timeliness of the application is very important, requiring a conscious scouting of the field for emergence.
- Pastora must be applied to bermudagrass that is less than 4 inches tall to insure adequate interception of the herbicide by the grassbur plants.
- Carrier volumes for ground application should be at least 10 gallons per acre, applied through a properly calibrated sprayer capable of delivering a uniform spray pattern with minimal drift potential. Employing the use of flat-fan or low volume flood nozzles will help to achieve this.

There are many more specifics in the attached label which address a multitude of questions concerning this application. In addition, the EPA is also working on a Section 3 label which will allow for Pastora to be used for controlling a number of other annual grass weeds.

Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Program

On April 1, 2009 breeding bulls entering Texas from any other state must be either 24 months of age or younger and certified as a virgin, or be tested negative for cattle trichomoniasis within 30 days prior to entry. The entry requirements are part of a regulatory package adopted by the commissioners for the Texas Animal Health Commission to address trichomoniasis, a venereal disease of cattle that causes infertility and abortions, and results in extended breeding seasons and diminished calf crops, which costs livestock producer's valuable income. Cattle trichomoniasis is not a human health issue. The second phase of the program, which addresses in-state movement of Texas breeding bulls, went into effect Jan. 1, 2010.

Non-virgin breeding bulls or bulls older than 24 months of age entering Texas on and after April 1, 2009 must test negative for trichomoniasis within 30 days prior to entry. During the test period and prior to shipment, the bulls must have no contact with female cattle. Like virgin bulls, the non-virgin bulls must be officially identified with a breed registry tattoo or brand, a USDA metal ear tag, official RFID tag, official trichomoniasis ear tag from the state of origin, or other official identification. The animal must be accompanied by a completed trichomoniasis test document, certificate of veterinary inspection and other routine health documents.

The second phase of the Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Program began Jan. 1, 2010, and requires that Texas breeding bulls offered for sale, lease, exchange or otherwise change possession for breeding within the state be certified as virgin bulls or be tested negative prior to selling, loaning, exchanging, giving or otherwise changing the possession of a breeding bull. (No test or certification is required for bulls shipped or sold directly to slaughter.)

Texas breeding bulls undergoing change of possession must be officially identified with a USDA ear tag, official RFID tag, or breed registry tattoo or brand. The animals may be certified by the breeder to be virgins until the age of 24 months, as indicated by the presence of the animal's two permanent central incisors in wear, or more simply, by the birth date recorded on the animals' breed registry papers. The bull's virgin status can be extended to 30 months provided the breeder and the herd's accredited veterinarian certify on a breeder's certificate that the bull facility is sufficient to prevent contact with female cattle.

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