



# Lubbock County Agriculture News

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## 2010 In the Rear View Mirror

As 2010 draws to a close, estimates on the 2010 cotton crop are very favorable for Texas, the High Plains area, and Lubbock County. According to the December 10, 2010 USDA cotton production estimates, Texas cotton production is estimated at 8.05 million bales (74% more than in 2009). The High Plains crop (Districts 1-N and 1-S) is estimated at 5.54 million bales. This projection is very near the 2005 record of 5.677 million bales, and it surpasses 2007 production of 5.41 million bales.

The record year for Lubbock County was in 2007, with 482,000 bales produced. At the close of December, several Lubbock County gins have completed their 2010 season. Most of the others should complete their operations by mid- to late-January. Based on their bale counts, it appears that we will not surpass our record. We have also heard reports from many producers that per acre yields are lower than in previous years. Most of that reduction is blamed on the July flooding rains from which cotton fields had difficulty recovering. Many Lubbock County fields remained a yellow tint for weeks thereafter. Lubbock County received much above normal precipitation during the 2010 growing season (26.39 inches from Jan to Oct), but the rains were far from timely for the crops. We received more than one heavy rainfall event during the season, with 30 to 45 days passing before the next hint of rain. However, one thing that is certainly unique for 2010 is the incredibly low number of abandoned or failed

acres reported to the Farm Services Agency in Lubbock County (less than 550 failed cotton acres reported). Lubbock County will experience a very good cotton year based on low abandonment, high quality and high prices.

Likewise, the High Plains will experience an exceptional cotton year because of the manner in which several factors aligned, including: high production, high cotton prices, and high quality. Based on the estimate of 5.54 million bales of High Plains cotton, this crop has an estimated value in excess of **\$ 2 billion** at the farm gate, and an economic impact of at least \$ 6 billion for the High Plains economy. The 2010 cotton crop will be one that is talked about for years to come.

## TCEQ National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Draft

The following information was forwarded to County Extension agents on December 22 by Dr. Don Renchie, Extension program leader for Agricultural and Environmental Safety:

In 2009, the EPA was required to begin promulgating new regulations to control pesticide applications to and on (including near) water from applications being made for \* **Mosquito and Other Nuisance Insect Pest Control**; \* **Vegetation and Algae Control**; \* **Nuisance Animal Control**; \* **Forestry Canopy Pest Control** and \* **Area-Wide Pest Control** (an

### **additional site under the Texas draft).**

This regulation was a result of a federal lawsuit filed by concerned citizens and wound up ultimately being settled by the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case in 2009. The rule will become effective nationwide on April 9, 2011. Consequently, EPA distributed a "National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Draft (NPDES)" for states to either adopt in full or modify within EPA sanctioned boundaries. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) will implement and enforce this set of regulations in Texas. The TCEQ has published their final set of "Draft Regulations" with modifications as allowed by the "Texas Water Code" and permitted by EPA.

Agricultural producers, municipal and governmental employees, and pest management business owners are encouraged to thoroughly review the entire draft document and make any observations, comments, or inquiries as they see fit to the TCEQ on or before **January 17, 2011**. In addition, they will have an opportunity to make their observations and comments known at a public hearing in Austin at the TCEQ on **January 12, 2011**. Questions, may be referred to the TCEQ at (512) 239-4671.

### **Agricultural Demonstration Update:** **Results of 2010 Deep N Soil** **Sampling Survey**

For the last two growing seasons, the Lubbock County Extension Staff have been involved in deep nitrate sampling to determine levels of residual nitrate nitrogen in the soil profile that can be credited back toward crop production for savings to producers. During 2010, an area survey of 113 fields in 13 counties (including 10 fields from Lubbock County) were sampled to a depth of 24 inches. The results of the survey indicated an average of 43 lbs of residual nitrogen in dryland fields, and 52 lbs of residual nitrogen in irrigated fields. All ten Lubbock County fields were irrigated (LEPA or sub-surface drip), and averaged 35 lbs of residual nitrogen in the top two feet of soil profile. These Lubbock County fields ranged from 26 to 78 lbs residual N.

Knowing the amount of deep profile N available on a field by field basis could provide considerable cost savings for fertilizer inputs. There are methods available to sample fields to a depth of 2 feet either by hand sampling using the "OSU sweatless soil sampler" ( an auger bit and cordless drill) or a hydraulic probe mounted on a tractor or pickup. There are also independent crop consultants in our area who have begun offering deep profile soil

sampling as a service for their customers. For more information, contact Mark Brown, agricultural Extension agent, at the Lubbock County office at 806/775-1680.

### **Services Available Through Lubbock County Dispute Resolution Office**

submitted by: Sharon Gillett

Disputes are often unavoidable and can be very costly in time and money. Fortunately, for those who find themselves in these difficult situations, the Lubbock County Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR) offers a range of problem-solving and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services, such as mediation and binding and non-binding arbitration, to give individuals options other than litigation.

Since 1985 the ODR's successful track record and innovative services have allowed for the most comprehensive delivery system of any Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system in Texas, with over 3,000 inquiries and referrals last year alone. In 2000, the Lubbock-based office was appointed by the Governor as the certified state administrator for the USDA Agricultural Mediation Program for Texas. Texas Rural Mediation Services (tm) (TRMS) was established within the ODR for this statewide service to address disputes among and between consumers, peers, businesses, agriculture producers, ranchers, creditors and various USDA agencies. TRMS also affords residents access to mediation services for a variety of agricultural related issues including divorces, disputes between neighbors, boundary issues, and non-ag lender disagreements.

System mediators receive additional specialized training to handle issues related to rural living and agriculture located throughout the state and are located across the state, allowing us to keep the distance our participants might travel to mediation reasonable. Anyone can request mediation through the program, regardless of the county in which they live.

Our ADR services are not limited to the USDA program or agricultural issues and are available to residents across Texas. For more information about the program or to request services, please contact the Dispute Resolution office at (806) 775-1720.

*Sharon Gillett, Outreach Field Representative, Texas Dispute Resolution Office, Lubbock County*

## Mark Your Calendar.....

### Major Events Scheduled in 2011

#### Lubbock County Extension Educational Programs

Jan. 19 - Commercial Turf and Ornamental Workshop For TDA-licensed applicators. Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock (5 CEU's pending) \$20 registration fee.

Jan. 25 - Regional meeting: "Excel with Ag Applications". Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock. Contact Dr. Jackie Smith, Extension economist, at 746-6101.

Feb. 9 - Extension Educational Programs at Southwest Farm and Ranch Classic Farm Show in Lubbock. Lubbock Memorial Civic Center (5 CEU's pending).

Feb. 15 - Regional meeting: "Ag Profitability Workshop" Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock. Contact Dr. Jackie Smith, Extension economist, at 746-6101.

March 3 - Hale/Lubbock Counties - Wheat Production Meeting. Location to be announced.

April - Stored Grain Workshop in cooperation with Great Plains Chemicals

Dec. 1 - High Plains Ag Conference for Lubbock and surrounding counties.

Dec. 4 - "Quality Counts" training at Lubbock.

#### Other 2011 Events:

Lubbock County Marketing Club/Ag Market Network Teleconferences at 7:30 a.m.: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, March 11, April 12, May 12, June 10, Aug. 12, Sept. 13, Oct. 13, Nov. 10 and Dec. 13.

Jan. 13 - 17 Lubbock County Junior Livestock Show

Jan. 18 & 19- Southwest Beef Symposium - Amarillo

Jan. 19 - High Plains Irrigation Conference - Amarillo

Feb. 8-10 Southwest Farm & Ranch Classic Indoor Farm Show in Lubbock

April 16 - Lubbock Master Gardeners Educational Program for Lubbock County residents

June 13 - 17 State 4-H Roundup

Aug. 14 - Lubbock County 4-H Achievement Banquet

Sept. 23 - Oct. 1 - Panhandle South Plains Fair

Nov. 29 - Dec. 1 Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show



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County Extension Agent - Agriculture

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