

# Potter County Ag Talk

## January 2017



**Austin Voyles**

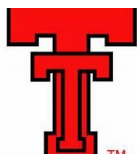
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### A YEAR TO REMEMBER

I want to start off 2017 by saying a HUGE "Thank You" to all of our supporters and the individuals in and around the Potter County for allowing us to serve you! 2016 was certainly a great year!

The year started off with an awesome Ornamental and Turf Conference serving over 120 private and commercial applicators, allowing them to fulfill the requirements with of their TDA Applicator Licenses!

We held a total of 10 Face to Face programs in horticulture, beef and range, row crop, and youth development, reaching over 500 people! Not to mention 6 horticulture and agriculture newsletters!

Our biggest success this year has come in the way of a newly developed social media presence! With a growing world of technology, we have tried to reach as many people as possible to help spread research based, relevant information to the masses! This has been a great success! We reached over 25,000 people with 14 Facebook posts!

Again, thank you for a GREAT year! And here's to and even better 2017!

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.*

*The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

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### **Wildfire dangers increase with high winds despite recent moisture**

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)  
Contact: Dr. Ted McCollum, 806-677-5600, [ft-mccollum@tamu.edu](mailto:ft-mccollum@tamu.edu)

AMARILLO – High winds and drying grass and brush should prompt homeowners and landowners alike to take time to prepare before wildfires spark across the state, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist. Conditions are right for wildfires across much of the state. “Folks might think the recent rains will keep things from burning, but these winds will dry things out very quickly,” said Dr. Ted McCollum, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist in Amarillo.

“It might even be time to get the mower out to knock down any dry grass around homes and outbuildings, and ranchers will need to be checking their water supplies and fire suppression equipment,” McCollum said. The National Weather Service has issued a number of fire danger warnings for regions of the state due to high winds and low humidity, stating “outdoor burning and activities that cause open sparks or flames are discouraged....weather conditions will be favorable for the development of large grass fires.”

McCollum said conditions are right for wildfires to start with any ignition source if the available fuel is dry and the winds are high in the coming weeks. Primary ignition sources include motorists who throw cigarettes out along the highway or drag chains that cause sparks, and swinging electrical lines. Ranchers and landowners bordering any roadway, particularly, need to tend to fire breaks along fence lines and check water tanks and other firefighting equipment to make sure they are in working order, he said.

Some other specific precautions homeowners and landowners can take now are:

- Develop an escape or evacuation plan. The evacuation plan should include how to transport animals and livestock that may be in danger.
- Place fire extinguishers in all barns, vehicles and tractors. Check extinguishers periodically for charge. Discard damaged or used fire extinguishers.
- Keep barns and buildings clean of trash and other combustible materials such as hay, lumber and empty feed sacks. Keep outside areas clear of high grass, weeds and other debris.
- Make sure your farm has an adequate water supply, such as an irrigation ditch, water tank or pond.
- Park tractors and implements away from combustible materials such as hay stacks and fuel storage containers.
- Keep aboveground fuel storage tanks at least 40 feet from buildings.

McCollum said when the higher winds start whipping power lines and electrical sources above heavy growths of grass and brush, conditions are such that any spark could start a wildfire. Any locations where an electrical source is present, such as oil and gas well pumps, should be checked to ensure the lines cannot swing into contact with one another and create a spark, he said.

For a complete list of wildfire-related documents concerning preparation, mitigation and recovery, go to: <http://texashelp.tamu.edu/004-natural/fires.php>.

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### Grain elevator workshop scheduled for Feb.2 in Amarillo

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)

Contact: Ronda Fisher, 806-677-5600, [rkfisher@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:rkfisher@ag.tamu.edu)

AMARILLO – The Texas High Plains Grain Elevator Workshop will be held Feb. 2 at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 6500 W. Amarillo Blvd. in Amarillo. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m. and the program will end by 4 p.m. The program is jointly sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Tri-State Chapter of Grain Elevator and Processing Society.

Registration is \$40 and an RSVP is requested by Jan. 27 to Ronda Fisher at 806-677-5600 or [rkfisher@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:rkfisher@ag.tamu.edu) for planning purposes. Payment will be due on the day of the event.

Program topics and speakers include:

- Aeration Basics and Beyond, Dr. Carol Jones, Oklahoma State University agricultural engineer, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
- General Fumigation, Mike Morgan, M&M Specialty Services, Leavenworth, Kansas.
- Integrated Pest Management Advantages, Jones.
- Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Labels But Were Afraid to Ask, Levon Harman, Texas Department of Agriculture retired inspector, Tulia.
- Rodent Control, Morgan.
- Grain Elevator OSHA Regulations, William Canada, Triangle Insurance Co., Canyon.

Continuing education units by the Texas Department of Agriculture for commercial, non-commercial and private applicators are pending. For more information, contact Fisher or **David Hoffman, president of the Tri-State Chapter, 806-676-3418.**

### Pre-Plant Producer Update set for Feb. 9 in Canyon

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)

Contact: Dr. J. D. Ragland, 806-468-5543, [j-ragland@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ragland@tamu.edu)

CANYON – The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Randall County will conduct the annual Pre-Plant Producer Update Meeting from 9 a.m. to noon on Feb. 9 at the Kuhlman Extension Center, 200 North Brown Road, Canyon.

“We’ve tried to line up a program that will get all our producers updated on the best practices and products to use going into the next planting season,” said Dr. J. D. Ragland, AgriLife Extension agricultural and natural resources agent for Randall County.

Cost is \$10 per person, and lunch, sponsored by Texas Sorghum Producers, will be served to those who preregister by noon Feb. 7 to 806-468-5543.

Three Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be provided – one each in general, drift minimization, and laws and regulations – for pesticide applicators.

The program will include the following topics and speakers, all from Amarillo:

- “Strategies and Variety Selections for 2017 – Cotton and Forage Sorghum,” Dr. Jourdan Bell, AgriLife Extension agronomist.
- “Preparing for Sugarcane Aphid in 2017; What Did We Learn in 2016?” Dr. Ed Bynum, AgriLife Extension entomologist.
- “Grain Sorghum Perspective,” Dr. Brent Bean, Sorghum Checkoff director of agronomy.
- “Potential Diseases of Importance in Sorghum and Cotton Production,” Dr. Ron French, AgriLife Extension plant pathologist.
- “Laws and Regulations Presentation,” Texas Department of Agriculture representative.

For more information, contact the AgriLife Extension office in **Randall County at 806-468-5543 or Ragland at [j-ragland@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ragland@tamu.edu).**

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Sugarcane aphid research outlines economical control methods

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)

Contact: Dr. Ada Szczepaniec, 806-354-5806, [ada.szczepaniec@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ada.szczepaniec@ag.tamu.edu)

AMARILLO – Sorghum producers can reduce input costs and improve their bottom line in the battle against sugarcane aphids in the Texas High Plains through the use of selected varieties and early planting and scouting, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research study. Dr. Ada (ah da) Szczepaniec (Stra PA netz), AgriLife Research entomologist in Amarillo, has wrapped up her first year of assessing the impact of planting dates, insecticide seed treatments and resistant varieties of sorghum on the timing and severity of sugarcane aphid infestations in a study near Bushland.

“We demonstrated that use of a sorghum hybrid with tolerance to sugarcane aphids has significant economic benefits because it slows down the growth of the sugarcane aphid population and thus can decrease costs of managing these pests when only one well-timed application of insecticides is needed,” Szczepaniec said. She said this first year of study also suggests producers can decrease input costs by eliminating expenses on insecticide seed treatments to suppress sugarcane aphids if they plant sorghum early. But, she added, neither hybrid selection nor insecticide seed treatment eliminates the need for scouting early and often once reports of sugarcane aphid presence in the region emerge. Data collected suggests a focused effort to scout early will help in making well-timed foliar insecticide applications to provide control.

In her study, Szczepaniec evaluated the effect of planting date – early or traditional; sorghum varieties – susceptible or tolerant; and neonicotinoid seed treatments – treated and untreated, on the rate of increase and abundance of sugarcane aphids and sorghum yield.

The protocol included detailed counts of sugarcane aphids once plots were colonized and foliar insecticide applications when aphid numbers reached the 50-125 aphids-per-leaf threshold used in South Texas.

Because little research has been conducted on sugarcane aphid thresholds in the High Plains, she said the already established threshold guidelines from South Texas were used and were effective.

“We suppressed the aphids with an application of a foliar insecticide, and their numbers were very low for three to four weeks after treatments,” Szczepaniec said. However, she said, based on the first year of data it appears the population increase of sugarcane aphids in the High Plains is much quicker than in South Texas. Only two weeks after colonization, the susceptible hybrid reached or exceeded the threshold of 50-125 sugarcane aphids per leaf. The tolerant hybrids offered about an additional week of time before thresholds were exceeded, Szczepaniec said. The tolerant sorghum variety had significantly fewer aphids than the susceptible variety. She said even when the early planted tolerant variety plots were not treated with foliar insecticides, the yield was comparable to the insecticide-treated plots.

“Insecticide seed treatments, on the other hand, offered some protection against aphids, but only in sorghum planted at the traditional planting date, and not in early planted sorghum,” Szczepaniec said. Sugarcane aphids on the tolerant hybrid with insecticide seed treatments, particularly when it was planted at the traditional planting date, also did not reach the exponential population growth until approximately four weeks after colonization compared to three weeks on the susceptible hybrid.

“This is relevant because once the aphids reach this phase, it is extremely hard if not impossible to control them,” Szczepaniec said.

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She said during the study they noted infestations were very uniform across the plots – once the aphids arrived, almost 100 percent of the plants had one or more aphids. “We also did not note honeydew on plants before aphid numbers exceeded 150 per leaf. This means that looking at undersides of individual leaves to assess aphid numbers is likely to be key to spotting their densities before their populations explode.” In the study, the numbers and diversity of aphid predators were relatively high even in plots that received foliar insecticide applications. Szczepaniec said it is not possible to estimate if these predators play a large enough role in suppressing aphids until additional data are collected, but their presence is highly desirable, especially after foliar insecticides are applied. All plots were hand-harvested because using mechanical equipment to harvest the unsprayed plots would have resulted in harvesting issues and losses in yield, she said. “It is important to note this is only one year of field data, and additional work is necessary to validate these outcomes. However, the early conclusions based on this research would be to scout often, especially at the end of July based on the 2015 and 2016 sugarcane aphid reports, and apply insecticides when thresholds are reached; use tolerant varieties of sorghum if they are agronomically sound for the area; and if sugarcane aphids are the key pest of concern early in the season, omit insecticide seed treatments when planting sorghum early.”

Szczepaniec said there is too much variability in field research to rely solely on a single year of data. There is also a significant need to measure in a more precise manner the economic threshold of sugarcane aphids in sorghum colonized at flowering and beyond.

“If sorghum can tolerate higher sugarcane aphid numbers at later growth stages without impacting yield, it would improve our ability to properly time insecticides to control populations and ‘buy’ more time from initial colonization to insecticide application,” she said.

### **For More Information**

**Please visit our Website:**

**<http://potter.agrilife.org/>**

**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRILIFE**  
**EXTENSION**

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PLEASE RSVP BY MARCH 22nd



TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI**LIFE  
EXTENSION

## Sorghum Luncheon

**Tuesday, March 28th, 2017**

**FREE**

AgriLife Extension Center, Amarillo  
6500 W. Amarillo Blvd  
11AM - 2PM (LUNCH PROVIDED)

**FREE**

### Speakers Include

Dr. Ed Bynum  
Sugar Cane Aphid Management

Dr. Jourdan Bell  
Pre-Plant Considerations

Brent Bean  
Agronomic Discussion

Mr. Wayne Cleveland  
Industry Update

DeDe Jones  
Pricing Strategies

**LUNCH  
PROVIDED BY:**



**1- IPM CEU WILL BE OFFERED**

**YOU MUST RSVP BY MARCH 22**

Oldham County Extension - Amanda Spiva - 806-267-2692  
Potter County Extension - Austin Voyles - 806-373-0713  
Armstrong County Extension - Derek Williamson - 806-226-3021  
Carson County Extension - Jody Bradford - 806-537-3882