

The Floyd County AG NEWSLETTER

August, 2011

August 8, 2011

TEXAS CROP AND WEATHER REPORT

COLLEGE STATION – Though most dryland crops have failed due to the drought, there were scattered pockets of production, according to a Texas AgriLife Extension Service expert.

"There will be some dryland crops harvested in Texas," said Dr. Travis Miller, AgriLife Extension program leader and associate department head of the Texas A&M University soil and crop sciences department, College Station. "The best areas are going to be from Corpus (Christi) north to Victoria and along the coast a little ways; and then from Hill County north and east."

Miller predicted cotton yields in the area from Corpus Christi to Victoria will be in the 350- to 400-pound-per-acre range. Sorghum yields were reported as being in the 3,000- to 3,700-pound range, while corn yields were about 35- to 40-bushels per acre.

But the situation varied widely not just from one region to another, but county to county, he said.

"If you get a little farther north, say to Matagorda County, they just missed those rains, and there's some 25- to 30-bushel corn," Miller said. "Then Hill County and to the north had some pretty good rains. I think there was some 75-bushel corn, and I believe there will be 3,800- to 4,000-pound sorghum. With the current price scenario, they can probably do a little better than break even on that."

But for most of the state, the dryland situation was just plain dismal, he said.

From Uvalde (South Central Texas) north to Spearman (the upper Panhandle), nearly all dryland crops have

failed, he said. There is not going to be much of anything harvested on dryland fields in the southwest Texas area, the Edwards Plateau, the Rolling Plains and the High Plains.

It almost looks desert-like, he said. "You can't even tell they planted anything," Miller said.

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries from the South Plains and Panhandle regions.

Panhandle: Hot, dry and windy weather continued. A few southeastern counties received some moisture in isolated areas, but accumulations weren't significant. Soil-moisture levels in most counties were very poor. Water-demand by crops was very high, and irrigators continued to divert water to other crops and fewer acres. Corn was in poor to very poor condition. Mite populations in corn were rising because of the hot, windy conditions. Cotton was in poor to very poor condition in most counties. Rangeland and pastures further declined. Reduction of herds by producers was ongoing.

South Plains: Parts of the district received as much as 5 inches of rain. However, most of the region remained dry with only spotty showers and temperatures in the upper 90s to 100s. Winds were moderate. Some corn was being harvested early for silage because irrigation systems could not meet the crop's water demands. Some cotton growers opted to abandon half of pivot circles to concentrate the available water on the other half in hopes of making some crop rather than none. Cattle were still being sold off due to lack of forage availability and empty stock-water tanks. Most cotton still under irrigation was blooming.

DROUGHT DECISION AID FOR RANCHING NOW AVAILABLE

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Oklahoma State University have developed a decision aid to help cattle producers make culling decisions due to extreme drought.

The Cow Bid Price Estimate Calculator, a spreadsheet program, is available at <http://agfacts.tamu.edu/~lfalcone/newweb/droughtmtg mt.htm>.

“This is the latest in a string of these types of problems due to drought, much like what we saw in the spring and summer of 1996, again in 1998 as well as 2006, 2008 and 2009,” said Dr. David Anderson, AgriLife Extension livestock economist. “However, market conditions and expectations of future prices were much different than today.”

Anderson said in the spring of 1996 producers were faced with the lowest cattle prices since the mid-1970s, along with grain and forage prices “that were historically very high, and set to move higher.”

“Today, cull cow and calf prices are much stronger even though we face higher grain and forage prices,” Anderson said. “What is the same now as in 1996 are the economic and financial analysis tools and how they should be used to make a sound disinvestment or investment decision for breeding cattle.”

Dr. Larry Falconer, AgriLife Extension economist in Corpus Christi, said beef cattle producers are facing the following decisions:

- Keeping or selling a cow.

- How much feed one can afford to buy to keep a cow or heifer in the herd.

“These decisions hinge on the expected value of each animal in a herd when compared to what the market is offering for that animal,” Falconer said.

“These decisions can be analyzed with this tool. Deciding on what a cow is worth in a herd is not always simple when comparing what you have to pay for the same age and quality cow over the scale at your local auction barn.”

The decision aid uses data on calf crop percentage, weaning weight, steer, heifer and cull cow price, annual operating costs per per cow as well as financing information. By entering this data, a rancher can determine the expected net present value of the cow to

use in making a culling decision.

“The use of these tools can provide benchmarks to calculate what might be best to do with the hand that you as a cattle producer have been dealt,” Falconer said. “This analysis should be carried out for your particular situation, because the ‘right’ answer depends on the cost structure for your ranch and what you expect future prices to be.”

RAINFALL TOTALS

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Jan | .13 | .77 | .1 |
| Feb | .45 | 1.89 | .37 |
| March | .44 | 2.61 | .22 |
| April | .94 | 7.42 | 0 |
| May | .41 | 3.31 | .42 |
| June | 2.9 | 4.7 | .44 |
| July | 3.26 | 7.3 | .53 |
| Aug | 2.35 | 1.01 | N/A |
| Sept | 2.82 | 2.09 | N/A |
| Oct | .75 | 1.06 | N/A |
| Nov | .22 | .23 | N/A |
| Dec | 1.41 | 0 | N/A |
| Total | 16.08 | 32.39 | 1.68 |



FLOYD/CROSBY COUNTY 2011 AG TOUR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

REGISTRATION: 7:15 A.M.

Floyd County Unity Center, Muncy

(US Hwy 70 Approximately 6 miles West of Floydada & 4 Miles East of Lockney)

TOUR AGENDA

7:00 - 7:15 Meet for Registration at Unity Center, Coffee

7:30: Load Buses & Leave For Tour

8:00 - 9:00 **TOUR STOP 1:** Triumph Seed, Ralls

Breakfast Burritos at Triumph Seed Tour

Located on Hwy 62 in Ralls

9:15 -10:00 **TOUR STOP 2:** Lloyd Arthur, Farm

4 miles west of Ralls on Hwy 82 (turn north on CR 135)

Topic: Smartfield/Aquaspy - Soil Moisture Monitoring Equipment

10:30-11:00 **TOUR STOP 3:** EZ Farms/Zach Nutt

1 mile east of Sandhill on Hwy 784

Presentation by: Mark Kelly, Texas AgriLife Extension Agronomist, Cotton Specialist

11:30 **LUNCH:** Presentation by: Calvin Trostle, Associate Professor & Extension Specialist

Topic: Update on Wheat Production

3 CEU'S PROVIDED

**PLEASE RSVP TO THE FLOYD COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE AT
983-4912 BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 26**

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in Floyd County.
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