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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

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Small Acreage Landowner Webcourses Available

The small acreage landowner is a growing segment in Texas agriculture. According to the Ag Census statistics, 33% of all farms and ranches in Texas are ranked under 50 acres in size. The small acreage farm or ranch owner may have purchased their small acreage operation for many reasons – retirement, a source of alternate income, or to impart a life-style change. Small scale farmers/ranchers many times have arrived in the enterprise with the need for education concerning enterprise choices, basic production guidelines, as well as advice on marketing strategies. One characteristic also typical of small scale farmers/ranchers is that they have busy schedules in many cases but are considered very technically astute.

With the growing success of University level distance learning opportunities, the same webcourse access is now provided for adult learners in non-degree seeking courses. The Small Scale Web-Based Program is targeted for small scale farmer/ranchers in need of agricultural courses to address some of the most common small acreage enterprises and problems. The courses are interactive and can be completed in time available. The courses will be conducted using the Moodle course management system. The fee for taking the webcourses is \$50 per course for the introductory courses. Interested small acreage landowners may visit the Small Acreage Landowner Webcourse website at <http://grovesite.com/tamu/RI> for more information on the courses currently available and the course schedules. This educational opportunity is being offered through Texas AgriLife Extension of the Texas A&M University System. Courses will be added during the 2008 year, so save the link and check back frequently.

The first three courses to be offered are:

Resource Inventory Course: This course will assist small landowners in answering the question, “I bought some land...now what do I do with it?”

Beef Cattle Management Course: This course will cover all of the important components of beef cattle management including nutrition, cattle selection, waste management, cattle breeds, marketing, health and others.

Pasture Management Course: This course will be appropriate for small landowners seeking to establish forage/hay operations as well as preparing pastureland for a livestock enterprise.

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.