

March 13, 2005

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

***DENNIS SMITH
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
GREGG COUNTY***

TEXAS BEEF QUALITY PRODUCER TRAINING PROGRAM

The Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas and Southwestern Cattleraisers Association and the Texas Beef Council will be hosting a Texas Beef Quality Producer training program in Longview at the Texas Cooperative Extension office in Gregg County. The program will be held on March 30th with registration beginning at 7:30 a.m and the program starting at 8:00 a.m. The program is offered in two parts. Level I will run from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Level II will be from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The Texas Beef Quality Producer program teaches the principles of "Beef Quality Assurance" (BQA) - a proven system of sensible management practices that help improve the quality and safety of the beef we raise. Also this program updates ranchers on industry changes, increasing demand for our cattle, and how both small and large producers have a huge impact on the final beef product.

Those planning to attend should RSVP to Mark Perrier, TSCRA at 800-242-7820 ext.118. or the Gregg County Extension office by March 23.

**PRIVATE APPLICATOR PESTICIDE LICENSING TRAINING
AND TESTING**

The Harrison, Gregg and Upshur County Extension Service will sponsor a private applicator training session on Wednesday, March 23, 2005, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Gregg County Extension Auditorium located at 405 East Marshall, Longview Texas. Successful completion of this course, a passing grade on the test and payment of a \$60.00 fee to the Texas Department of Agriculture will allow you to become a licensed private applicator.

Following the training session, a Texas Department of Agriculture representative will administer a test.

A Private Applicator Manual is available from the Gregg County Extension Office for \$20.00. It is highly recommended that all participants purchase this manual which includes a set of study questions prior to the course.

Please contact the Gregg County Extension Office to preregister for the course at 903/236-8429.

This program is for those producers who have never been certified or licensed as a private applicator.

Weed Control in Turf

Aggressive competitors for sunlight, moisture, and nutrients and prolific multipliers even under adverse conditions, weeds present a challenge for even the most experienced turfgrass managers. The color, texture, and growth rate of weeds often contrast markedly to those of the turfgrasses they may be associated with in a lawn or sports field. Consequently, weeds detract from the uniformity of a turf and add to its maintenance requirements.

The origins of weeds are as varied as those of our turfgrasses. Most are introduced species from Asia and Europe that were inadvertently brought to this country. Many were unintentional stowaways in animal fodder or ship ballasts, or simply contaminants in seed or food supplies brought to this country.

In lawns and sports fields, weeds are often the result of poor quality turf, rather than the cause of poor turf. The aggressive nature of weeds and their prolific reproductive capacity enable them to invade thin, weak turf areas. Cultural practices should always be viewed as the first step to effective weed control. Always determine why weeds established a foothold and correct those deficiencies. If the basic problem is not corrected, weeds will continue to occur. An effective weed-control program also requires identification of the undesirable species as to its classification as a grassy weed, a broadleaf weed, an annual, or a perennial. Most turf weeds belong to two principal categories - grasses and broadleaf plants. Chemical controls for these two categories of plants frequently differ.

Grassy weeds have jointed, hollow stems; leaf blades have veins parallel to leaf margins, and are several times longer than they are wide; roots are fibrous and multi-branching; and flowers are usually inconspicuous. In contrast, broadleaved plants often have showy flowers; leaves have a network of veins at diverse angles to one another; stems are often pithy; and a taproot is usually present.

Another group of turf weeds, sedges, have grasslike characteristics, but require a different group of chemicals for control. Sedges are characterized by three-sided stems (triangular cross-section) which bear leaves in three directions (in contrast to the two-ranked arrangement of grass leaves).

Weeds can be further grouped according to their life span - annual or perennial. From the standpoint of chemical control, the grouping is most important, because preemergent herbicides are only effective for control of annual weeds. Annual weeds germinate from seed each year, mature in one growing season, and die in less than 12 months. Crabgrass and henbit are examples of annual weeds - crabgrass being a summer annual and henbit being a winter annual. Preemergent herbicides must be applied according to the expected date of emergence for each targeted species.

Perennial weeds live more than one year, and recover or regrow from dormant stolons, rhizomes, or tubers as well as from seed. Control of perennial weeds requires a postemergent herbicide during its season of active growth. Effective chemical weed control requires identification of the weeds as to their classification (grass, broadleaf, sedge, etc.), life span (annual or perennial), and season of active growth (cool season or warm season). Effective chemical control also requires accurate timing of applications, proper rate of application, and uniformity of application. Always follow label directions for a product, and observe all warnings and precautions relative to safety of the application. Herbicide labels should be carefully reviewed for additional details on specific uses of each product.

Dennis Smith can be contacted at the Gregg County Extension Office by e-mail at dg-smith@tamu.edu or telephone at: 903-236-8429.

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