

News From Your County Agent
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Frost was easy to see early Sunday morning as temperatures were cold enough in the north part of the county for this to occur. Of course these cold temperatures were short lived and by mid afternoon it was back to mild and warmer conditions requiring some of us driving around the area to switch from heater to air conditioning in our vehicles. Unfortunately the recent weather patterns have excluded much needed rainfall, especially for our dryland small grain producers. The year is well underway and hard to believe that January 2017 will long be gone by mid week and we will march into February as we speed along the new year. Greetings to all of you, thank you for reading this week and enjoy Super Bowl Weekend.

First Case of CWD in Free Range Deer Confirmed

Last week on Wednesday January 25th it became public information that the first free-ranging white-tailed deer in Texas tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease(CWD). This animal, a 1.5 year-old buck, was harvested in the Medina County surveillance zone. No information has been released yet as to specifically where this animal was taken—including proximity to the original, positive facility. The implications of a free-ranging (low-fence, not breeder) white-tailed deer testing positive cannot be understated.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) enacted emergency regulations with regard to this positive case that affect Medina, Uvalde, and Bandera counties. The rules essentially limit the movements of live deer and carcass parts in the same way that similar situations which have occurred in portions of the Panhandle and Trans-Pecos regions. Although regular deer season is over, we can expect the Texas Animal Health Commission to likely follow the same rules with regard to exotic game susceptible to CWD. The full details can be found here:

<http://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20170125a&nrtype=all&nrspan=2017&nrsearch=>

Already this information is spreading among stakeholder groups, and no doubt many questions will arise from the public. As before, AgriLife Extension will be called upon to provide factual information in the midst of this debate. Remember, resources exist already (publications, etc) from the Wildlife and Fisheries Unit for this matter without causing panic among deer managers, private landowners and the hunting community. While we have had other CWD-positive animals tested this year (2 mule deer and an elk from the Panhandle, a few from the Trans-Pecos, and 2 from a breeding facility in Medina County), this is a new chapter in the story and will present new challenges. I encourage all of you with a specific interest in staying on top of developing issues with this detrimental disease in deer to go to

<http://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20170125a&nrtype=all&nrspan=2017&nrsearch=> and obtain the latest news regarding this disease in Texas.

Mosquito Workshops Planned by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Soon mosquito populations will again begin to climb as weather conditions become favorable for mosquito breeding and egg hatching to begin. Mosquitos have always been an issue in our area and across many parts of Texas, however, the threat of the Zika virus in some mosquito populations is an even greater risk to the general public. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control(CDC) will sponsor mosquito workshops across Texas beginning in February. This year due to CDC funding of the Western Gulf Center of Excellence for Vector Borne Diseases, all workshops conducted by AgriLife Extension will be held **free of charge**. Joint workshops might still require a fee. Each participant will receive an updated copy of the Texas Mosquito Manual, all current AgriLife and CDC mosquito and

Zika publications and meals will be provided. All participants must register ahead of time! This can be done at <http://livestockvetento.tamu.edu/2017-workshop/> or by contacting Heidi Nivens at 254-968-4144.

These Workshops are designed to train Personnel in cities and municipalities that are in the field of mosquito abatement or are working on setting up a mosquito control program. The workshop will educate personnel on mosquito identification, biology, ecology, control tactics, trap use, surveillance, virus testing, Zika and mosquito control. For additional information contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. The closest mosquito workshop in our area will be the one held in San Antonio on April 20, 2017.

Tip of the Week: Tips on Dealing With Tawny Crazy Ants: A Texas-Sized Problem

A newly invasive species of pest ant is spreading across the southeastern United States. Since discovery in Texas in 2002, tawny crazy ants (formerly Raspberry crazy ant) *Nylanderia fulva* (Mayr) have expanded their range to include several Texas counties, as well as parishes and counties in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The Texas counties where infestations of this pest have been confirmed include; Bexar, Brazoria, Brazos, Comal, Cameron, Fayette, Fort Bend, Chambers, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Hays, Hidalgo, Jefferson, Jim Hogg, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Nueces, Polk, Orange, San Augustine, Travis, Victoria, Walker, Wharton and Williamson counties. New infestations are suspected beyond these areas of infestation. However, sample identifications have not been confirmed. This ant has the potential to spread well beyond the current range in coastal Texas. However, it is a semi-tropical ant and potential northern distribution will be limited by cooler weather conditions but Bexar county is to close for comfort. This rapid range expansion has presumably been assisted by the movement of infested materials. These ants invade new areas very rapidly and population densities have been observed to reach extraordinary levels. In urban habitats, tawny crazy ants become an extreme nuisance as they forage around, on, and inside structures. Additionally, they have been implicated in the damage and destruction of a wide variety of electrical components and equipment.

Tawny crazy ants are known to decrease arthropod density in the systems they invade, and they are becoming a serious pest of agricultural systems as well through infestation of hay bales, direct impacts on commercial honeybee colonies, by influencing increases in population densities of insect pests of plants (including ornamental and agriculturally important plant species), and recently this invasive ant has been implicated as the cause of calf blindness in one incident in Southeast Texas.

So what can we do about them? Effective products involved with the treatments are not readily available to the consumer. If you suspect your house or property is infested with these ants, call a professional pest control provider. After treatment, or when making multiple applications over time, piles of dead ants must be swept or moved out of the area in order to treat the surface(s) underneath. Tawny crazy ant workers are not attracted to most bait products but the most attractive product which they are attracted to is Whitmire Advance Carpenter Ant Bait formulation containing abamectin but it does not offer enough control as a standalone treatment, and should be used in conjunction with contact insecticides such as Maxforce® Granular Insect Bait which seems to also be highly attractive to crazy ants but has yet to be tested in the field.

A good way to keep this ant OUT of our area is to avoid spreading this species to new locations. Anything being moved from an infested area should be inspected for ants and treated before transferring it to a new site. So if you buy equipment(hay balers, shredders, cattle chutes etc.) from any of the counties which have confirmed the presence of this ant be sure to inspect the equipment before bringing it into our area. For more detailed information about this pest contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 and ask for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Publication titled "Control of Raspberry Crazy Ants In and Around Homes and Structures". If you suspect or do not know what

kind of ants you have in or around the home also contact our office and we can provide you with an insect submission form and you can submit samples to our urban entomology lab for identification. Note: Information provided in this week's tip of the week is for informational and educational purposes only. Reference made to any commercial products or names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended to other similar products and No endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service or by this newspaper is implied. Have a great week. M.V.

January 30-February 3, 2017.

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