

News From Your County Agent
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Fall temperatures late last week made most of us dust off the light jackets as temperatures were in the low 50's for a couple of mornings, however, it was back to summer like weather by Sunday and Monday. According to weather experts the cooler weather is expected to return real soon and we will continue on this patter for a while, after all we are into mid fall. On another note I cannot believe that I actually saw a Christmas commercial on Television this past weekend, too much commercialization of our holidays nowadays, which takes away from the real reason we observe holidays and their real meaning. Just my point of view, greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Area Private Water Well Screening Set for Next Week

Dimmit, Zavala, Frio, Atascosa, and McMullen Counties -- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is hosting a water well screening on November 2 at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices for Dimmit County at 539 Industrial Boulevard, in Carrizo Springs, Zavala County at 221 N 1st Ave in Crystal City, Frio County at 200 S. Pecan Street, Pearsall, TX Atascosa County at 25 E. 5th Street Leming, TX, and McMullen County, County Courthouse, HWYS 72 & 16 Tilden TX to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water screened. Results will be available on November 7th, at your Local County Extension Office. If your samples come back positive then it is recommended that a detailed water test be conducted on your water well from an accredited water testing laboratory. If nothing is detected in this screening process then you do not have to do anything else with your water sampling and you will save time and money for a full blown water test and or water analysis.

The screening is presented by AgriLife Extension. "Private water wells should be screened annually," said John W. Smith, AgriLife Extension Program Specialist. "It is very important that only sampling bags from the Dimmit, Frio, McMullen, La Salle, or Zavala County AgriLife Extension office be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results." Smith said for area residents to have their well water screened, they need to pick up a sample bag and sampling instructions from the Dimmit County AgriLife Extension office (call 830-876-4216 for more information), Frio County Agrilife Extension office (830-334-0099), or Zavala County AgriLife Extension office (830-374-2883). McMullen County AgriLife Extension office (361-274-3323) or Atascosa County AgriLife Extension office (830-596-8997)

The cost is \$10 per sample and samples must be turned in by 5 p.m. on November 2. Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates and high salinity. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with fecal coliform bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms. "Water with nitrates at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption," Smith said. "Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible."

Salinity as measured by total dissolved solids will also be determined for each sample. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste, and using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants. Smith said it is extremely important for those submitting samples to be at the meeting to receive results, learn corrective measures for identified problems and to improve understanding of private well management. For more information, please contact your local County Extension Office . To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, please visit <http://twon.tamu.edu>. Support for the Texas Well Owner Network program is provided through Clean Water Act nonpoint source funding from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

4-H Enrollment and Participation Fees Due By Monday

The annual 4-H enrollment process continues for all youth interested in participating in a 4-H club in Zavala County. As per state 4-H guidelines the regular 4-H enrollment period will continue through October 31, 2016 which includes the enrollment application to be completed online through 4-H connect and payment of a \$20.00 4-H participation fee. The Texas 4-H connect system will still be accepting 4-H applications online after the October 31st deadline however the cost of the participation fee goes up to \$25.00 per 4-H member. Please get this done online as soon as possible and if you need assistance please contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Tip of the Week: Halloween Is Monday-Tips To Enjoy it Safely

Halloween means children getting outdoors to enjoy treats, fun, and games. Although Halloween comes before the change back to Standard Time this year, the days are getting shorter, and the nights are getting longer. With shorter days comes more night driving. Because nighttime driving is more dangerous, it requires extra attention from motorists, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that nearly two-thirds of all fatal pedestrian crashes and almost one-fourth of fatal bicycle crashes occur in low-light or dark conditions. According to Safe Kids, on average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year. That's why the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service reminds you of the following safety tips to keep in mind during Halloween and all year long.

Tips for Motorists

- Slow down. Watch for children walking on roads, medians, and curbs. Enter and exit driveways carefully. •

Be especially alert for children darting out from between parked vehicles and from behind bushes and shrubs. They're excited - and they are not paying attention. •

Never drink and drive – tonight or any night. If you are partying, designate a driver.

Tips for Parents

- Adults should accompany children at all times and supervise their “trick or treat” activities.
- Teach children to “stop, look left-right-left, and listen” before they cross the street.
- Use a flashlight, and wear retro-reflective strips or patches on your clothing or costume to be more visible to motorists.

- Be certain that the mask does not obstruct vision or hearing.
- Ensure that costumes do not impede walking or driving ability.

Tips for Pedestrians (children and adults)

- Before crossing a street, stop at the curb or edge of the road and look left, right, and left again to be sure no cars are coming. Continue to check for traffic while on the street.
- Walk – never run – from house to house or across the road.
- Cross the street only at intersections and crosswalks.
- When crossing at an intersection with a traffic light, be sure to watch for turning cars. Obey all pedestrian signals.
- Walk on sidewalks whenever possible. If there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the street facing traffic.

Remember to check the Halloween treats. Most of us in Zavala County pretty much know our neighbors but I have heard of some families actually going out of town to take their children trick or treating, which brings us to the issue of checking and inspecting all the treat children get especially if you do not know the person giving out the treats. Eating sweet treats is a big part of the fun on Halloween. Trick-or-treating can be a safer experience for children if you remember to follow a few safety tips.

- Snacking: Children shouldn't snack on treats from their goody bags while they're out trick-or-treating. Give them a light meal or snack before they head out - don't send them out on an empty stomach. Urge them to wait until they get home and let you inspect their loot before they eat any of it.
- Safe treats: Tell children not to accept - and especially not to eat - anything that isn't commercially wrapped. Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.
- Food Allergies: If your child has a food allergy, check the label to make sure that the allergen isn't present. Do not allow the child to eat any home-baked goods he or she may have received because they might contain ingredients that your child may be allergic to.
- Choking hazards: If you have very young children, be sure to remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.

By taking some extra time to make sure drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists obey the rules and all Halloween treats are safe to eat by everyone thus making Halloween a safe time for all. Happy Halloween and a great week for everyone. M.V.

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