

# Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

December 2015

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

21.5 CEUs  
offered  
inside

## Parasitic Plant Makes a Comeback in Texas

By Stephen Janak - County Extension Agent, Ag/NR, Colorado County

Branched broomrape is an invasive, parasitic plant that is not a native of Texas. It was first discovered in 1981 in Karnes County. It is believed to have been brought over in packages of marijuana that were hidden under highway bridges and behind statues in a cemetery. From there, mowers and shredders spread it down right-of-ways and pastures. At one point it was documented covering over 1000 acres in Karnes County, and by 2001 had been found in 22 counties including: Brazos, Fayette, Harris, Lee, Montgomery, Waller, and Washington. In the '80s a task force was created and a group was funded to conduct research and eradication work on broomrape. Budget cuts in 2008 discontinued funding to the task force and their work.

The parasite produces no chlorophyll, so it survives by attaching to the roots of other plants and robbing water and nutrients. Broomrape likes to attach to legumes, meaning pastures with volunteer bur clover or other desirable legumes (clover, vetch, soybeans) are susceptible. It is also known for attacking vegetable gardens and sunflowers, which threatens the winter garden region of Texas. The plant sprouts from December to February, and emerges February to April. Plants can produce 50,000 tiny seeds within 18 days of emergence. Control is achieved through the use of glyphosate, but translocation of herbicides will also kill the host plant. Digging can be successful if done before seed maturity. Seeds can survive 10+ years in the soil, so sanitation is critical. For more information, contact me at the office: 979-732-2082



Broomrape seeds



Small emerged plant with flowers

### **Comment Period Extended for EPA Pesticide Applicator Certification Proposed Changes**

The public comment period has been extended until **January 23, 2016**. Producers and industry/agency personnel are encouraged to voice their opinion about EPA's proposed changes to the pesticide applicator licensing and recertification process. To comment, you can visit: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0183>. Explanation of the ordeal and a direct link to the comment page can also be found on the front page of the county website: [colorado.agrilife.org](http://colorado.agrilife.org).

If the proposal passes, license holders can expect to see changes like licenses expiring in three years (currently five years), significant changes in CEU requirements (possibly more), establishing minimum age requirements for license holders and workers under supervision (18 years), increased training for workers under supervision, and more. To-date there have been 675 comments received. Tips for commenting effectively:

- Organize your comments by topic area, e.g., private applicator competency, recertification, state plans, aerial applicator, commercial application
- Identify credentials and experience that may distinguish your comments from others. Highlight any relevant personal or professional experience
- When possible, support your comment with substantive data, facts, and/or expert opinions
- A single, well-supported comment will carry more weight than a thousand form, angry letters. The Agency reviews form letters submitted during the public comment period, but the number received has less impact than the content.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS/PROGRAMS & NEWS YOU CAN USE

## 2016 Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain & Cotton Production Conference - **January 14, 2016**

The Conference is scheduled for **January 14, 2016** at the El Campo Civic Center. Registration will begin at 8:30am. The feed grain conference will run from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Cotton Conference will begin at 1:00 and will end at 3:30 p.m. A total of **4 TDA CEUs** will be offered and **7 CCA hours**. For more information call 979-732-2082.

## 23rd Annual Upper Gulf Coast Grain Handlers Conference - **January 19, 2016**

The Conference will be held on **Tuesday, January 19, 2016** at the El Campo Civic Center. Registration will begin at 8:00 am, the program will begin at 8:25 am and should conclude around 3:30 pm. A catered lunch will be provided. **Five CEUs (2 IPM; 2 L&R; 1 General)** will be offered to all TDA pesticide applicators that sign in at the beginning of the meeting and remain through the closing of the program. No structural credits offered.



The cost of the program is \$20.00 per person preregistered by January 13th or \$25.00 per person at the door. To preregister, please contact the Colorado County Extension Office and we will send a form to you. Program Topics: TDA Pesticide Laws and Regulations Update, Pesticide and Container Disposal, Federal Laws and Regs, Fumigation and Protectants for Use with Stored Grain, Understanding Grain Aeration, Insect ID for Stored Grains, Pesticide Modes of Action and Pesticide Resistance, Rodent Control in Stored Grain Facilities, and Preparing for an OSHA Inspection. For more information, call 979-732-2082.

## Western Rice Belt Production Conference - **January 20, 2016**

The Conference is scheduled for **January 20, 2016** at the El Campo Civic Center. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. Program will be from 8:15 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. **2.5 TDA CEUs** will be offered. Topics include LCRA Update, Disease Management Update, Laws and Regs, Groundwater Update, Weed Control, Insect Management, New Insurance Revenue Policy, Price Risk Management Tools, and a Market Outlook. For more information call 979-532-3310.

## “The Value of Land” Conference

The focus of this conference is to make landowners aware of issues that could affect them in the near future regarding landowner liability, family legacy and estate planning, conservation easements, and the science behind fracturing and groundwater. The Conference is scheduled for **Friday, January 22, 2016** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The conference will be held at UHV University North, Kay and Ron Walker Auditorium, 3007 N. Ben Wilson St. in Victoria. Register by emailing [txrcd@yahoo.com](mailto:txrcd@yahoo.com). For more information call 361-703-5225.

## Wharton County **5 CEU** Re-Certification Program

Wharton County has scheduled this program for **February 4th** at the Wharton County Fairgrounds in Crescent. **5 CEUs** will be offered. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. and program at 9:00 a.m. Cost is \$35, lunch is included. Topics include Key Destructive Insects, Pesticide Drift Management, Right-of-Way Vegetation Management, and Pesticide Labels and Labeling. For more information and to pre-register call 979-532-3310.

### Beef and Forage **5 CEU Seminar - February 12, 2016**

The Beef and Forage Committee of Colorado County is hosting an educational seminar on Friday, **February 12, 2016** at the H.E. Building within the Colorado County Fairgrounds. The program will offer **5 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs)** for those producers who possess a private pesticide applicator's license. There will be a live demonstration of sprayer calibration, discussion on antibiotic use in livestock, a law and regulations update, discussion on establishment or renovation of forage fields, and more. Those interested may pre-register for \$25 per person and \$30 for couples. Registration at the event will be \$30 per person and \$35 for couples. To pre-register or for more information, call the Colorado County Extension Office at 979-732-2082.

### Multi-County New Landowner Program - Starts **January 15, 2016**

The Extension Service of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington Counties have developed a series of educational events to assist new landowners with common concepts of agriculture and natural resource management. You don't have to be a new landowner to attend. The program is held the **third Friday of every month** from 1-5pm. We will hear from university and industry experts on wildlife management, pond management, forage production, weed & brush control, gardening, honey bees, livestock production, and rural laws and codes. Cost is \$20.00 per session or \$125 for 9 programs (no programs June, July, December). For more info: 732-2082

### Texas Master Naturalist Training Course To Begin

The Texas Master Naturalist program teaches natural resource stewardship. Training includes watershed protection, ecology, native plants and wildlife, soils, trees, and much more. Once trained, Master Naturalists provide youth education programs, volunteer at parks, nature centers, and natural areas. They also provide leadership in natural resource conservation efforts. The Gideon Lincoff Chapter, covering Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee, and Washington Counties, will begin its 2016 certification training course on **January 25th** at the Windeale Heritage Center near Round Top. Classes will be held **every Monday evening** from 6:00 to 9:00pm through April 25, 2016. Most classes are held at the Windeale Heritage Center near Round Top. In addition to the classroom training, hands-on field trips are held throughout the 5 county areas on four separate Saturdays. Registration for the course is \$175.00 per person or \$325.00 per couple sharing class materials. You will learn from expert and talented specialists and educators about Texas eco-regions; native fauna and flora identification; preservation and conservation techniques; and natural resources management in our region of Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties. Have fun and learn about this diverse and intriguing Central Texas region. For more information and to view the class schedule please visit our website at <http://txmn.org/glc> or call Jerry Gips (979.378.2938), or Cindy Hobbs (979.338.9374).

### Colorado Valley Independent Cattlemens Association Annual Fundraiser and Trade Show

The annual fundraiser barbecue and trade show will take place at the La Grange K. C. Hall on **Saturday, February 20, 2016**. Trade show and social hour begins at 4:00pm and the meal will be served at 6:00pm. There will be an auction after the meal, cash door prizes, and great opportunities to network with other ranchers and industry personnel. For more information: contact@coloradovalleyica.org or 512-620-0162

### Master Gardener Open House

For anyone interested in participating in the Master Gardener training program, an open house will be held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Bellville on **Thursday, January 14, 2016**, from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The open house is a way anyone interested in the program to come and learn more about the organization and the work that this dedicated group of volunteers is doing in their community. The deadline for signing up is Thursday, January 14th. Participants need only come by the Extension Office to register. There is a fee of \$175.00 per participant, which will cover the cost of materials, and defray speaker expenses. The classes will be held on **Tuesdays mornings** beginning on January 21, 2016.

Master Gardeners are trained in all facets of horticulture such as plant & soil science, entomology, plant pathology, landscape design, gardening, and much more. Upon completion of their training, Master Gardeners will be required to give at least 50 hours of volunteer service time in their local community in order to receive the title of "Master Gardener". For more information on the Master Gardener program, contact the Extension office at (979) 865-2072.

### TDA License Fees

The TDA announced increases in all license fees that will take effect in January 2016. New license fees are as follows:

Private - \$100      Certified Private - \$0      Commercial AG - \$200

Non-Commercial Ag - \$75      Structural Applicator (all) - \$125

Structural Business License - \$300

### Regulated Herbicide Rule Amendment

**Unofficially**, according to sources at TDA, there will be an amendment made to the Regulated Herbicide Rule regarding application of 2,4-D and/or dicamba in regulated counties. The use of 2,4-D and/or dicamba on transgenic tolerant crops (ie. Enlist™, Bollgard® II XtendFlex®, etc) will be exempt from regulation in regulated counties - there will be no permit needed. This applies only to ground application with winds less than 10mph. Use of 2,4-D or dicamba in pastures adjacent to transgenic crops will still be regulated, pre-plant burndown will still be regulated. When using these products in a transgenic crop, be sure to follow manufacturer recommendations for specific nozzles to use. To ignore this fact on the herbicide label is to break the law. Before making applications and for more info, call TDA: 1-800-835-5832.

### Sulfoxaflor (Transform insecticide) EPA Registration Cancelled

On November 12, the US EPA issued a cancellation order for all products containing the active ingredient *sulfoxaflor*, such as Transform insecticide from Dow AgroSciences. Sulfoxaflor now will be under more regulatory pressure that has the potential to limit its use to farmers for now. Transform is an important part of the integrated management approach for controlling Sugarcane Aphid in grain sorghum. Beekeepers and environmental groups in California helped the court decide that there was not enough information regarding the potential impact on honeybees and pollinators. Dow has submitted for a Section 18 exemption for Transform use on grain sorghum. Letters of support for this product and for the Section 18 request should be sent to:

Dale R. Scott

Texas Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 12847

Austin, TX 78711

or by email: [dale.scott@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:dale.scott@TexasAgriculture.gov)

### EPA Proposes to Revoke Tolerances for Chlorpyrifos Insecticide

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in California is at it again. The court ordered the EPA to respond to a petition to revoke all tolerances for chlorpyrifos (the active ingredient in Lorsban), and the agency did remove all tolerances. The chlorpyrifos products are still available for use through 2016, but will be banned for agricultural use if EPA cannot conclude that tolerances meet safety standards. Public commentary is open until January 5, 2016. EPA needs to know how revocation of crop tolerances will impact your operation. To comment, visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and search "Chlorpyrifos 0653." For more info or for help with commenting, contact our office: 979-732-2082.

### Manure Spreaders, Sprayers, Nurse Tanks No Longer Need Title & Registration

The last Legislative Session did bring about something good: changes to the Implement of Husbandry Bill. Effective September 1, 2015, "Implement of Husbandry" is redefined to include vehicles that transport to the field and spreads fertilizer or agriculture chemicals, or a vehicle designed and adapted to deliver feed to livestock. This adds implements like spreaders, sprayers, and nurse tanks to the items used in production of farm or ranch products, which are exempt from ad valorem taxation, registration, licensing, and requirements like trailer lights. For more info:

### Rice Delphacid (Planthopper) has impact on Colorado County Rice

979-968-5602

Dr. MO Way, Extension Entomologist, first saw this pest in ratoon fields in October 2015 in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Colorado, Wharton, Matagorda, Waller, and Jackson Counties. It is a native of Central America that was discovered in Louisiana in the 1950s. It has since mostly disappeared (until now). It is related to leafhoppers; both are piercing/sucking feeders. Feeding produces honeydew (leads to sooty mold) and plant drydown. They can also transmit a virus, but most of them do not. It is not understood what kind of impact they will have next year. Host plants include barnyardgrass, sprangletop, crabgrass, rescue grass, wheat, and possibly ryegrass. If you think you have this pest, please contact our office for more information: 979-732-2082.



### Flag the Technology Program

"Flag the Technology" is a program started in Arkansas to prevent misapplication of pesticides and warn of crop tolerance technology that is sensitive to potential off-target drift. Colored flags in a field represent a particular herbicide technology crop has been planted. For example, red flags signify conventional varieties with no herbicide tolerance. This effort seeks to reduce errors when farmers or custom applicators may confuse neighboring fields (ie. applying 2,4-D in a Roundup Ready® cotton field). It can also foster good community relations, offering a subtle reminder as you pull in to spray your Liberty Link cotton that the neighbor's field downwind may not be glufosinate tolerant. For more info, contact us: 979-732-2082



A green flag indicates cotton with the Liberty Link® Technology (glufosinate tolerant)

**As always, please feel free to contact me about your individual issues, needs or concerns.**

I can be reached by phone at 979-732-2082

or email at [stephen.janak@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:stephen.janak@ag.tamu.edu).

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Janak

County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County

**[colorado.agrilife.org](http://colorado.agrilife.org)**

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082 ten (10) days prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.*

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