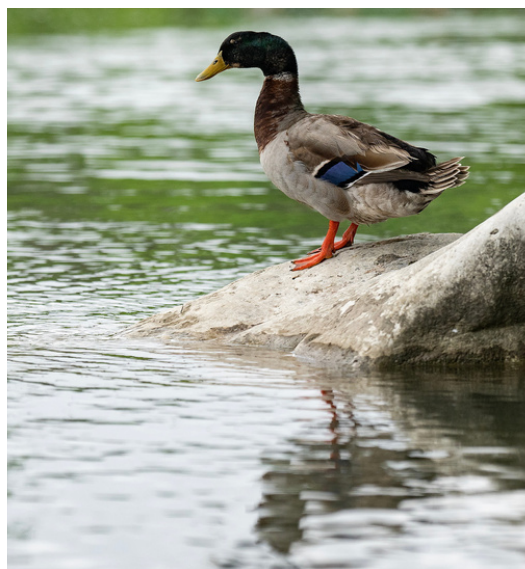


November 2023

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

A Monthly Newsletter by the Panola County AgriLife Extension office



Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 11/2: Agricultural Industry Breakfast, 7:00am, Expo
- 11/3: Master Gardeners Meeting, Noon, Sammy Brown Library
- 11/6: 4-H Council 5:30pm, ALPA 6:00pm, both meetings at the Extension Office
- 11/8: Major Livestock Show Entries due into the Extension Office
- 11/10: Office Closed for Veterans Day
- 11/11-12: East Texas Show Star Series Clinic and Show, Henderson
- 11/16: Registration deadline for the Panola County Food Show
- 11/19: Major Show Swine Validation, 3:00-4:00, Expo
- 11/19: Market Lambs, Goats and Barrows Validation at the Expo Hall, 3:00-4:00
- 11/22-24: Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- 11/26: Pen of Heifer validation, 2:00-4:00pm, Location TBD
- 11/30: Registered Breeding Heifer entry forms due into Extension Office
- 11/30: Panola County Food Show, 3:30-6:30pm, at the Extension Office
- 11/30: Panola County Jr. Livestock Show entry forms due into Extension Office
- 12/1: Panola Rural Land Summit, 8:30-2:00, Texas Country Music Hall of Fame
- 12/7: 4-H Record Book Training, 6:00pm, Extension Office
- 12/12: Chicken order forms due in the Extension Office

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- Electric Fence Training: Best Ways to Teach Livestock How to Respect a Hot Wire

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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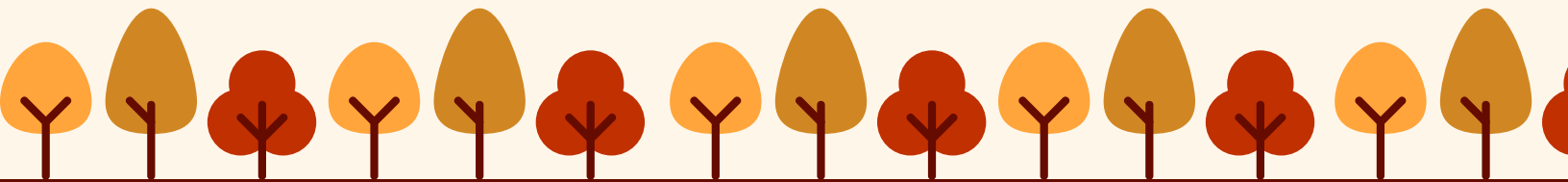


HAPPY THANKSGIVING

from

Panola County AgriLife Extension

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED NOVEMBER 22-24



NO-BAKE PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE

CRUST

1 cup graham cracker crumbs Plain
2 Tablespoons butter Unsalted, Melted

CHEESECAKE

8 ounces whipped topping Fat Free, Thawed
8 ounces cream cheese Fat Free
1 cup vanilla greek yogurt Nonfat
1 ounce Cheesecake Instant Pudding Mix Fat Free, Sugar Free
3/4 cup pumpkin puree
1/2 teaspoon Pumpkin Pie Spice Blend
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract



1. Clean and prep baking area.
2. Add melted butter to graham cracker crumbs and mix until well combined.
3. Transfer buttered graham cracker crumbs into a pie dish or Springform baking pan and press them tightly into the bottom of the pan. Place pan into the refrigerator for 10-15 minutes to chill.
4. In a large bowl, add whipped topping, cream cheese, and Greek yogurt and mix until well-combined using a handheld mixer.
5. Add the instant pudding mix to the bowl and mix until smooth. Add in pumpkin puree, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and vanilla extract, and continue to mix until well-combined.
6. Remove pie pan from refrigerator and place mixture on top of crust. Ensure the mixture is evenly distributed.
7. Place pie in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours or freezer for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
8. *Consistency of pie mixture will depend on time refrigerated or frozen*
9. Serve and enjoy!

Maintain No Gain

Turkey and stuffing. Cakes and pies. We both crave and dread the holidays because of all the treats we encounter at our celebrations, and it's common to gain extra pounds during this time. AgriLife Extension can help you prevent holiday-related weight gain so you won't be afraid to hop on the scale.

We saw a need for a program that promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and stress reduction, because most of us do gain weight over the holiday season and very few of us ever lose that weight. A few pounds here and there may not seem like a big deal, but those pounds add up over time and put us at higher risk for chronic disease.

This [online course](#) used to be \$25 but is now free, so be sure and sign up while the deal lasts! Registration is open now until November 3 and the course runs November 6-January 5. Once you register online, you will receive an email with a link to the course. Weekly lessons will then be posted online every Monday.

Maintain No Gain participants are encouraged to weigh in at the extension office three times over the holiday season, but these in-person weigh-ins are optional. Ideally, everyone would weigh in (or self-weigh) during the first week of November, mid-December, and early January.

AgriLife Extension has these tips to follow during the holidays:

- Eat slowly, because your body needs time to realize you are full.
- Eat mindfully, and really think about the color, smell, taste and texture of what you're eating so that you can truly savor your food.
- Stop eating when you feel slightly full. You don't have to eat everything on your plate.
- Don't skip meals on the day of a big party, where you know you'll eat more. Just eat a smaller portion.
- Watch your alcohol intake and follow the recommended guideline of one drink per day for women and two per day for men. Drink water or sparkling water with a splash of juice.
- Keep track of what you're eating with a food journal. Research shows that those who keep a record of meals between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day lose weight instead of gaining.
- Modify your recipes where possible to reduce extra fat, sugar and calories where possible.

[Click here to sign up!](#)

COST IS FREE

Register now through November 3!

Course dates: November 6-January 5





Focus on the 'Stars'

Cooking Healthy for the Holidays

By Barbara Ames, County Extension Agent, K-State Research & Extension- Wildcat District

Healthy Holiday Cooking

"Healthy" and "holiday" don't usually find themselves in the same sentence, especially when it comes to food. But that doesn't have to be the case. Holiday celebrations and traditions are an important part of life to be enjoyed. You can learn to reduce the large amounts of fats and sugar usually found in holiday recipes and focus more on the "star" ingredients — fruits and vegetables. With a little planning and a few simple changes, it is possible to enjoy great tasting holiday foods while still maintaining a healthy lifestyle and avoiding the weight gain often associated with the holiday season.

Focusing on Star Ingredients

Many favorite holiday dishes — such as candied sweet potatoes, green bean casserole, and pumpkin pie — begin with a healthy main ingredient. Foods such as apples, sweet potatoes, and green beans have great flavors of their own and are members of the healthful fruit and vegetable food groups. The large amounts of fats and sugars added to those fruits and vegetables cause the dishes to become less healthful. Each gram of added sugar adds 4 calories to a recipe, and each additional gram of fat brings with it another 9 calories. The dietary guidelines at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) encourage consumers to cut back on foods high in saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium to help manage weight and lower risk of chronic disease. By focusing on whole fruits and vegetables and making some simple changes to added ingredients — such as reducing fats and added sugars — it is possible to create more healthful dishes while still maintaining great flavor.

As a simple example, consider apples. Apples are sweet and tasty with a variety of flavors, depending on the type of apple. If you make apples into applesauce with no added ingredients, a cup of applesauce contains approximately 100 calories. However, when you compare packaged applesauce

at a grocery store, you find that most varieties have added sugar, which increases the calorie content to around 180 calories per cup.

Almost everyone loves the sweet taste of sweetened applesauce. But is it really necessary to add 80 additional calories to create more sweetness in a food that already offers a sweet taste? A 160-pound person would need to walk about a mile to work off the additional 80 calories added to the cup of applesauce (<https://www.verywellfit.com/walking-calories-burnedby-miles-3887154>). As an alternative, consider choosing to make small changes over time to create a more healthful eating style. Your taste buds can learn to enjoy foods with little or no added sugars as well as lower fat and fat free foods. Practical changes to food you commonly eat, can improve your diet and add up to big wins over time. To create a healthier dish, try concentrating on the "star" ingredient. It is possible to enhance the flavors with herbs and spices or smaller amounts of added fats and sugars to make tasty, yet much healthier, recipes.

Tasty, Healthier Foods are Possible

Holiday celebrations and traditions are an important part of life to be enjoyed. And choosing to modify some of your favorite recipes can significantly reduce the calories, fat and sugar in favorite holiday recipes while maintaining the taste you love. Sometimes even a modified recipe may still have more calories, fat, carbohydrates, or sodium than the average person should eat for everyday meals. However, modified recipes do save calories compared to the traditional recipes, and they are healthier alternatives. The point is, saving a few calories here and there (along with being a little more physically active for good measure) can add up to little or no holiday weight gain and a more healthful lifestyle for you. Practice focusing on the "star" ingredients — the fruits and vegetables. With a little planning and creativity, you can enjoy great tasting holiday foods and still maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Fall Apple Crisp



Ingredients

- 7 cups cored, sliced apples, about 2 pounds or about 5 large apples (Granny Smith, Jonathan, or Jonagold work well)
- 1/3 cup apple juice
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 5 tablespoons soft tub margarine, cut into small pieces
- 3 tablespoons slivered almonds

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Peel apples, if desired, slice, and toss in a mixing bowl with apple juice to coat.
3. Combine flour, both kinds of sugar, and oats in another mixing bowl. Cut in margarine using two knives until mixture is crumbly. Stir in almonds.
4. Spray a square 8-inch by 2-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Pour apples into baking dish and sprinkle with crumb mixture. Bake 45 minutes or until topping turns golden brown.

Makes 9 Servings Source: *North Carolina Eat Smart, Move More.*

Nutrition per 1/9 of recipe: 200 calories, 8 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 60 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 22 g sugars, 2 g protein.

Ag Industry Breakfast

November 2
7:00am | Expo

Topic:
Feral Hogs



Panola Rural Land Summit

December 1, 2023

TX Country Music Hall of Fame, Carthage

8:30am - 2:00pm

Sponsored by: Carthage Title Company

Topics:

Ins and Outs of the
Residence Homestead Exemptions

Ag/Wildlife/Timber Valuations

Current Availability
and Use of Water in Texas.

What can I do With My Small Farm

Soil Management



Panola County

4-H CLUBS

*Some meetings have been changed due to Thanksgiving, they are noted below.

Club Name	Club Manager	Meeting Date & Time
ALPA Adult Leaders & Parents Association	Corie Young 903-692-7737	1st Monday, 6:00pm Extension Office
BECKVILLE 4-H	Brandy Dudley 903-690-1108	2nd Sunday, 2:30pm, Beckville Sunset Elementary
CARTHAGE 4-H	Lee Dudley & Clarissa Moon 903-693-0380	4th Tuesday, 6:00pm Expo Hall
DEBERRY 4-H	Shawntel Wells 903-690-6552	November 30, 7:00pm 332 CR 310 DeBerry
FAIRPLAY 4-H	Eric Pellham 903-754-2582	2nd Monday, 6:00pm Allison Chapel UMC in Fairplay
GARY 4-H	Jennifer Whitby 903-692-1729	November 13, 6:00pm Gary ISD Cafeteria
SHOOTING SPORTS 4-H	Lee Dudley & Clarissa Moon 903-693-0380	4th Sunday, 3:00pm Expo Hall
STILL WATERS 4-H	Corie Young 903-692-7737	3rd Monday, 6:30pm Still Waters Cowboy Church

Major Livestock Show Entries Due

NOVEMBER 8

Entries and payment should be turned into the Extension Office

Entry Forms can be found on our website!



Panola County JR. Livestock Show

February 26 - March 1, 2024

Entry Forms Due NOVEMBER 30

(except for chickens and rabbits)



<https://pcjls.net>



Validation Dates

PANOLA COUNTY JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW

September 26, 6:00-7:00pm: Steer validation and entry at Dr. Yates office

November 19: Market Lambs, Goats, and Barrows validation and entry at Panola County Expo

November 26, 2:00-4:00pm: Pen of Heifer validation and entry, location TBD

November 30: Registered Breeding Heifer entry forms due in the Extension Office

December 12: Chicken forms due in Extension Office

February 1, 6:00-7:00: Rabbit validation and entry at Panola County Expo



4-H COOKIN' NIGHT

Topic: Practicing Knowledge and Skills for the Food Show - stations about food safety, knife safety, my plate, measuring, etc.

**November 9
5:30pm
Extension Office**

4-H Record Book Training



**December 7
5:30pm**

at the Extension Office

Limited to 12 parents due to space

PANOLA COUNTY FOOD SHOW

November 30 • 3:30-6:30pm • Panola County Extension Office

4-H Food Show is an individual contest where 4-H members submit a recipe, prepare the recipe, and give a short presentation about the nutritional value, cost, and other general information about the recipe. You can choose one of four categories for your recipe: Main Dish, Side Dish, Appetizer, Healthy Dessert.



REGISTER BY NOVEMBER 16!

OPEN TO CLOVER KIDS!

***Must be enrolled in 4HOnline by registration deadline





WILD GAME

by Julie Prouse, Food Safety Specialist

Did you know wild game meat is a local, natural food source that is nutritious, delicious and possibly a less expensive alternative to meat products sold in the grocery store?

Wild game has been enjoyed for generations in Texas. Harvesting wild game, wild birds, and fish not only benefits humans for food consumption but the game species themselves by reducing populations to healthy, sustainable levels.

However, safe handling and processing in the field, and proper storage, is critical to preventing spoilage and foodborne illness. Properly handled, prepared, and packaged game meat, birds, or fish stored in a freezer at 0°F (-18°C) should be consumed within 8-12 months for best quality. Freezing prevents bacterial growth, but it does not kill pathogens that may be present on wild game meat. Deer are known to carry E. Coli and game birds could carry Salmonella. If storing in the refrigerator at 40°F or below, consume or freeze meats within 2-3 days.

USDA recommends cooking venison, rabbit, and wild hog products to 160°F and game birds to 165°F. Game meats can be cooked in a variety of ways, depending on the cut of meat or age of the animal. They can be roasted, braised, stewed, pan fried, and of course marinated to tenderize or enhance the flavor.

Wild Game	Calories	Protein (grams)	Fat (grams)
Turkey	163	25.7	1.1
Duck (Mallard)	152	23.1	2.0
White-tailed Deer	149	23.6	1.4
Dove	145	22.9	1.8

HUNTING SEASONS FOR PANOLA COUNTY

Dove

- Sept. 1 – Oct. 29; Dec. 15, 2023- Jan. 14, 2024

White-tailed Deer

- Archery: Sept. 30- Nov. 3, 2023
- General: Nov. 4, 2023- Jan. 7, 2024
- YOUTH: Oct. 28-29, 2023; Jan. 8-21, 2024
- Muzzleloader: Jan. 8-21, 2024

Duck

- YOUTH, Veterans & Active Duty: Nov. 4-5, 2023
- Regular Season: Nov. 11-26, 2023; Dec. 2, 2023- Jan. 28, 2024
- “Dusky” Duck: Nov. 16-26, 2023; Dec. 2, 2023- Jan. 28, 2024

Quail

- Oct. 28, 2023- Feb. 25, 2024

For more dates and regulations, including bag/possession limits, visit: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/>

Going Native in the Landscape



January 26 • 8:30am-12:00
Carthage Civic Center • \$10 per person
Register: 903-693-0380

Landscaping for wildlife • Native plants bringing the year round bloom
Keystone plants for East Texas Yards • Planning your homegrown national park

Presenters: Dr. Andrew King: Owner Operator King Nursey and SFA Gardens Assistant Director
Greg Grant: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Horticulture Agent Smith County



EAST TEXAS BEEF & FORAGE CLINIC

Friday, November 17, 2023

Presented by: Cherokee, Smith, Rusk, & Panola Counties

5 CEU Credits - 2 General, 2 IPM, & 1 L&R

RSVP by Nov. 13 903-657-0376 | **Registration fee** \$25 | **8am-3pm**

Rusk County Expo: **3303 FM 13 W | Henderson, TX 75654**

Herbicide Update | Fire Ant Control Methods
Laws and Regulations Update | Sprayer Calibration Demo | Forage Insect Pest Control

Falling for Colorful Foliage

By Greg Grant
Smith County Horticulturist,
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

As our blistering, dry summer says goodbye and the air takes on a crisp, invigorating quality, we look forward to the gradual transformation of our trees in East Texas. Each year can be very different in the quality and the timing, but the transition from the lush green of summer to the often-vibrant hues of autumn is an anticipated delight. Have you ever wondered how trees develop their stunning fall colors?

The hopefully vivid annual display is primarily the result of a remarkable natural process that takes place within the leaves of deciduous trees. During the growing season, leaves are green due to chlorophyll, the amazing pigment responsible for the magic of photosynthesis, the process that converts sunlight into energy and subsequently fuels our planet. As summer fades, several factors trigger the changes we associate with fall color.

Shorter Days: As the days grow shorter in the fall, trees receive signals to prepare for the winter. These signals interrupt the production of chlorophyll, allowing other pigments to become more visible.

Cooler Temperatures: Cooler temperatures slow down the breakdown of chlorophyll, allowing other pigments, such as carotenoids and anthocyanins, to shine through.

Carotenoids are present in leaves throughout the year, but they are masked by the dominant green chlorophyll during the growing season. As the chlorophyll breaks down, the yellow and orange hues produced by carotenoids become more apparent. Trees like elm, hickory, and southern sugar maple often take on these warm colors in East Texas.

Anthocyanins, responsible for red and purple colors, are a little more complex. They are produced in response to excess sugars trapped in the leaves as photosynthesis slows down. Cooler nights trigger the creation of anthocyanins, resulting in the brilliant reds, oranges, and purples seen in dogwoods, red maples, and sweetgums.



Genetically, different tree species have varying amounts of these pigments, which contribute to the diversity of fall colors in East Texas. For instance, while red maples often produce vibrant reds, hickories typically showcase golden yellows.

Weather and soil conditions also influence the intensity and duration of fall colors. A cool, dry autumn with sunny days and chilly nights typically yields the most vivid displays. A drought year, on the other hand, may lead to leaves dropping early without a spectacular show. Wind and rain can spoil the painted party as well.

If you want to add a touch of fall color to your garden, consider planting tree species known for their brilliant autumn hues. In East Texas, some options include baldcypress, black gum, Chinese pistache (males only recommended), flowering dogwood, ginkgo (males only recommended), Japanese maple, pear, red maple, red oaks, sassafras, sweetgum, and white oak.

The transformation of East Texas trees into a breathtaking palette of fall colors is an annual gift. Understanding the science behind this process can deepen our appreciation of the natural beauty around us. If you want to check out a nice assortment of fall color in East Texas, visit the "Aceretum" (maple collection) at the Tyler Botanical Garden located within the Tyler Rose Garden. The Smith County Master Gardeners continue to expand the maple collection there adding more color and diversity each year. Fall color there generally occurs from mid-November into early December but is very weather dependent.

Tips to Keep You and Your Kids Safe on the Farm

By Lee Dudley



From the time I was able to walk, it seems I have been helping my dad or older brother around the place with tasks needing to be done. Growing up raising cattle, my earliest jobs were simple, helping with carry tools needed for mending fence or holding a light so my father could see what he was working on. In those long hours of tracking through creek bottoms or standing as still as possible with a flashlight so not to draw an unwanted aghast for not holding the light steady. Over time as I grew bigger, I became more involved, and my responsibilities grew. For the most part, Safety was not something my dad harped on too much, verbally at least, rather my father is the type of man you learn from by watching. Safety was taught to me and my brother through our vigilant eyes and when we had not learned the lesson, then a sterned voice was used. What seemed a normal thing to watch out for such as a PTO shaft being unsafe on a tractor had been reinforced to me by my father's simple methods. Safety was part of our everyday life; it was a mindset my dad learned from his dad along with the fact a job had to get done. Now that I have children who help me, I am constantly thinking about keeping them safe and passing that safety mindset on to them. Especially when you look up and see them using a bar top stock trailer as a jungle gym, looking below them, and only seeing a million ways of getting hurt. In recognition of all the fathers and soon to be fathers, I want to share with you some of the farm safety tips you can pass down in your family.

Always respect Livestock:

The size and weight of animals can pose a potential risk. It is crucial to maintain a respectful distance from animals, particularly when dealing with cows and their young. My father also emphasized the significance of "always having an escape plan". This is a valuable lesson I plan to pass on to my children as they grow older and become more involved in working with cattle.

Respect Equipment:

Understand the purpose of your equipment and its intended use, know its limitations. This principle applies to both adults and children. While it may be tempting for adults to have their kids join them in a tractor, it's important to ensure there's a proper buddy seat for passengers. Another commonly misused piece of equipment is the side-by-side utility ATV. I instill in my children the importance of recognizing that these vehicles are tools designed to assist with work, not playthings.

Stay away from equipment you're not using:

I tell my kids they should stay away from me if I'm using the lawnmower or weed eater. They know not to come up to me from behind. If they need to get my attention, they can get my attention from a distance. And to never approach me until I have stopped and turned off what ever equipment I am on.

Don't mess with something if you don't know what it is:

This knocks out a lot of hazards. If you haven't been told about something, it's not your business. Keep power tools and chemicals out of reach, when possible, but also teach your children they shouldn't touch things if they don't know what they are or if they were told not to touch them.

I can't see you if you can't see my eyes:

I watch for my kids constantly, but kids can come out from nowhere. If you're in a tractor, it would be very easy to not see or hear them come to the field. That's why I tell my kids to be sure I know if they're in the field and that I see them. If they can't see my eyes, then I can't see them either.

For more tips on staying safe on the farm, fill free to contact your Panola county AgriLife Extension Office by phone at (903)693-0380



Electric Fence Training

Best Ways to Teach Livestock How to Respect a Hot Wire

By: Noble Research Institute

Whether you're new to using temporary electric polywire fencing in adaptive grazing or you are introducing new livestock to your regenerative ranch, you'll likely find yourself in hot-wire training mode at some point.

The ranch managers at Noble Research Institute can relate. As Noble transitioned its seven research ranch operations to regenerative management, the ranch teams needed to train their cattle to respect the electric fences used to make temporary grazing paddocks. On top of that, when Noble increased livestock diversity by adding sheep and goats to their grazing rotations, the former "cowboys" learned how different small ruminants can be when it comes to hot wires.

Here are some of the hot-wire lessons three of Noble's ranch managers say they have learned along the way:

1. HOT WIRES ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL, NOT PHYSICAL, BARRIERS.

Joe Pokay, Noble Ranches general manager, says "An electric fence is just a psychological barrier, so animals have to be trained to respect it." And it's the rancher's job to do that with any new animals.

When he and the managers on Noble's Oswalt Ranch were learning how to work with the goats they brought in, they trained the first batch in a permanent pen with a three-polywire fence across it as a barrier. After that, the goats did well respecting the fences out in the pasture.

"But when we got more goats, we didn't take the time to train them exactly the same way, figuring the goats we already had would train them," Pokay says. Nope. They had to try several times to train them out in the pasture, and "once we got it right, it was fine."

The good news, says Red River Ranch manager Kevin Pierce, is that calves, kids and lambs born on the ranch learn on their own at a very early age not to go near the wire.

2. CATTLE ARE EASY TO TRAIN TO HOT WIRE. SHEEP AND GOATS ARE A DIFFERENT STORY.

Of the three species, cattle are the most respectful of hot wire and usually can be contained with just one wire. Goats need to be trained with more than one really hot wire, and usually take more time to learn their lesson; sheep are somewhere in between. The small ruminants don't seem to sense the electrical field until they're right at the wire unless it's really hot.

"When the cows are really trained, they won't walk over a downed wire," Pokay says. "I've had barbed wire lying on the ground while building new fence, and when I tried to move cows through a gate, they wouldn't even walk over a barbed wire."

Paul Luna, manager of the Noble headquarters ranch, recalls moving a group of bulls to fresh forage that "took right off at a dead sprint. I had a single hot wire as a cross fence, and I would have sworn they were going to run right through it. But every one of them just put on their brakes and stopped on a dime when they saw that fence."

When it comes to goats, though, "For some reason they don't respect hot wires as well," Luna says. Their horns keep them from being shocked at first, "then they'll get their head through there, and by the time they get shocked, they just keep going through it."

Pierce agrees about sheep and goats and hot wire. "For some reason, they think they need to test it more often than a cow does. But you can keep them in with hot wire. It just takes a little more effort."

3. USE A TRAINING PADDOCK AND HAVE THE WIRE PLENTY HOT.

“I would put it up just like the fence they’re going to be behind, and maybe tie some surveying ribbon to it so they can see there’s something there,” Pierce says. “They’re going to be curious, and they’re going to get shocked, and they’re going to tear it down a few times before they figure out that ‘Hey, that hurts. Now we can walk around it and go get a drink and everything’s fine.’”

Pokay agrees that it’s important to train with the same wire that will be used in the pastures, so the animals get used to seeing it. And he says using a permanent pen really helps so you don’t worry about them actually getting out during training.

All three managers agree that it’s essential to have the training wire in good working order and charged enough to be hot, especially hot enough to shock sheep and goats.

“You want the first experience to be an actual shock,” Pokay says. “You don’t want them to come up and think ‘oh, that kind of tickled. I don’t really need to respect this thing.’”

4. DON’T SKIMP ON CHARGER OR POLYWIRE QUALITY, ESPECIALLY FOR TRAINING.

Pokay likes dual-purpose chargers that can be plugged into AC power at the training pen and then put on a solar panel and moved to the pasture. “They’re efficient, and you don’t have to buy two.”

Using quality polywire that carries adequate current is important, too, as is being sure fences are built tight, kept clear of weeds and other power-draining problems, and maintained well. You may want to mow in the path of an electric fence, or route temporary cross-fences around the taller forage, especially for small ruminants.

“You can’t just treat it like a barbed wire fence, like there’s no maintenance to it,” Pierce says. Even animals well-trained to hot wire will eventually figure out a fence isn’t hot.

5. BE PATIENT AND CONSISTENT.

When training, in addition to using the same materials the livestock will encounter in the pasture, it pays to be patient and consistent in your approach. Expect it to take a day or two in the training paddock for the animals to get used to the hot wire.

Through trial and error as you train, you’ll learn what works best for you and your animals – if feed or water encourages them to walk about the fence; if they need to be guided in the first time or two; how much time they need to just navigate and learn on their own.

When you do turn them out into the bigger pasture, try flagging the fence with surveyor’s tape so they can see the wire, and consider heading off a run-away break-through by meeting them at the temporary fence.

“We knew what end they were going to run to, so we’d get on the other side of the fence to at least slow them down once they got there,” Pierce says of turning out newly trained stock. “Then they could sniff around, and maybe get shocked. But once they get shocked, they’re done with it.”

6. ADEQUATE FORAGE AND GOOD WATER KEEP LIVESTOCK FROM WANTING TO CHALLENGE A FENCE.

Pierce says one or two hot wires will hold his sheep and goats as long as they are happy and have what they want to eat, but if they run out of what they like, “they can get out of the hot wire anytime they want to. Now, cows are a little bit different,” he says. “They can eat up everything, and still, they’re more respectful to a fence.”

For more information pertaining to this topic or others, fill free to contact your Panola County AgriLife Extension office at (903)693-0380.





— THE PANOLA EXTENSION —

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