

December 2023

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

A Monthly Newsletter by the Panola County AgriLife Extension office



Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

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Facebook:

[/PCAgriLife](https://www.facebook.com/PCAgriLife)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 12/7: 4-H Record Book Training, 6:00pm, Extension Office
- 12/8: Cottage Food Class, 12:00-1:00pm, Chamber of Commerce
- 12/9-10: Panola Christmas Classic Show, Panola County Expo
- 12/12: Chicken order forms due in the Extension Office
- 12/14: 4-H Cookin' Night, 5:30pm, Extension Office
- 12/15: Private Applicators Training, 8:00am, Extension Office
- 12/19: 4-H Christmas Party, 5:30pm, Panola County Expo
- 12/19: Registration deadline for the 4-H Food Challenge
- 12/25-27: Extension Office closed for Christmas
- 1/4: Ag Industry Breakfast, 7:00am, Expo
- 1/9: Panola County 4-H Food Challenge, 5:30pm, Extension Office
- 1/12: District 4-H Food Show, Henderson Civic Center
- 1/12: AgriLife Conference
- 1/26: Going Native in the Landscape, Carthage Civic Center, 8:30am

In This Issue:

- Selecting the Perfect Yule-Tree
- 9 Tips on Making Healthy Choices
- Less can be More during the Holiday Season
- Cottage Food Class
- Leaf it Be
- AgriLife Conference and Expo
- Private Applicators Training
- How to use hay-feeding strategies to build soil health and improve forage production on your regenerative ranch

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

TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION



Selecting the Perfect Yule-Tree

By: Lee Dudley, CEA AG & NR

With thanksgiving now behind us and the memories for turkey and dressing fresh in our minds and still around our middle, we see families actively at the task of replacing their fall themes for the festive bright colored decorations that make the season bright. It's during this time of year as my own family decorates our house and go about placing ornaments on our Christmas Tree that I get to thinking, just where this custom of decorating trees comes from and what all goes into selecting that perfect Yule-tree.

Wikipedia states a Christmas tree "is a decorated tree, usually an evergreen conifer such as spruce, pine, or fir associated with the celebration of Christmas." In my readings I found that the trees were traditionally decorated with edibles such as apples, nuts, or other foods, with origins tracing back to early modern Germany. Predecessors can be traced further back to the 16th and possibly 15th century to the symbolism of evergreen trees in pre-Christian winter rites. This can be seen through the story of Saint Boniface and the conversion of the German pagans. In which Saint Boniface cuts down an oak tree the German pagan worshipped, and replaced it with an evergreen tree, telling them about how its triangular shape reminds humanity of the Holy Trinity and how it points to heaven.

While the use of Christmas trees originated during the Renaissance of early Germany, the tradition wasn't introduced to America until 1850. When an engraving of the British Royal family from 1848 with their Christmas tree at Windsor Castle was republished in America, this time with the absence of the Queen's tiara and Prince Albert's moustache to make the image more American. It was distributed in Godey's Lady's Book a popular American women's magazine at the time, making the image the first widely circulated picture of a decorated evergreen Christmas tree in America. The image was reprinted in 1860, and by the 1870s, the Christmas tree had become common in America. Understanding better now the origins of the humble Christmas tree, it's easy to see why everyone wants to have that perfect tree being the center piece of all our winter decorations.

Well, that's enough about the history of the Christmas tree, let us look at selecting a tree. Before your family makes that trip to the local tree farm, you should determine where you will display it in your home. This will help you choose a tree of the correct height and dimensions and whether all four sides must be suitable for viewing. A good rule-of-thumb to remember is that most trees on farms are trimmed to an 80% taper. So, a tree that's 10' tall will be 8' wide at the bottom. A tree that will fit in the room vertically may be entirely too big horizontally.

Freshness is extremely important when selecting a tree. Hold a branch about eight inches from the tip between your thumb and forefinger, apply gentle pressure and pull your hand towards you as the branch slips through your fingers. Needles should adhere to the branch and not slip off into your hand. Other indicators of dryness or deterioration to look for would include discolored foliage, a musty odor, and wrinkled bark. A good rule-of-thumb is, when in doubt about the freshness of a tree, select another one. Remember, when choosing from pre-cut trees, all Christmas trees are painted or dyed to achieve a uniform dark green color, but they also should have a fragrance and freshness to them.



Once you have purchased your tree here are some tips to keeping your tree fresh, beautiful, fragrant, and above all else, safe throughout the holiday season. If it is going to be one or two days before you actually set up and decorate your tree; store it in a garage, on a cool porch or in the shade where it will be protected from the sun and wind. If the tree is to be stored for several days, make a straight cut across the base of the trunk about an inch from the end. This opens the trees' vascular system and allows for the uptake of much needed moisture. Store the tree upright, with the freshly cut trunk in a container of water. Maintain a constant supply of moisture. When the tree is moved to the house for decorating, make another fresh cut, straight across the trunk about an inch above the original cut. Place it on a tree stand that has a large water container. Trees are thirsty depending on their size they may "drink" one to four quarts of water per day. Check water levels regularly and remember to keep them placed away from heat sources, such as fireplaces, radiators, exhaust vents and even TV sets. Always turn your lights off when you leave home or before going to bed for the night. Never use combustible decorations. Always check electric lights, cords, connections before you begin decorating. Avoid overloading wall sockets and never allow open flames such as candles in the vicinity of the tree. Following these simple guidelines will help ensure that you and your family enjoy one of the oldest and grandest traditions of the season. If you need additional assistance in learning more about tree selection and care, remember to stop by your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension or give us a call at (903)693-0380. So, make your plans and if you have not yet started turning your home into a winter wonderland this Christmas season always remember the reason for the season and above all else enjoy the time with family and friends.



Office will be closed
DECEMBER 25-27
We'll be back December 28

9 Tips on Making Healthy Choices

By Amy Mullins with UF/IFAS Extension



1) Don't Restrict Food

Restricting food can lead to uncontrolled feelings of hunger and could cause you to eat too fast, overeat, and not enjoy your meal. Try eating small balanced meals throughout the day with a filling snack 2 hours before the main meal. Some snack examples include:

- Vegetables and hummus
- String cheese and a fruit cup
- Apples and peanut butter
- Pretzels and peanut butter

2) Use Smaller Plates

Large plates can easily lead to overeating and incorrect portion sizes. Use smaller plates and fill according to your hunger level. It can take up to 20 minutes for your body to signal to your brain that you are full and to stop eating. If you are still hungry after eating and your food settling, then go back for seconds.

3) Stay Hydrated

Drink lots of water throughout the day. Staying properly hydrated will help keep you from feeling overly hungry during mealtimes & can prevent overindulging.

4) Chew Your Food Fully

Try chewing your food 10 times and focus on the taste and flavors. This can help digestion and satisfaction. This is special food that you may only eat once a year, so slow down and enjoy the experience!

5) Don't Overstuff Yourself

Being in touch with your hunger level is very important. After eating a few bites put your fork down, take a sip of water, enjoy conversation, and check in with your hunger levels. Don't feel like you only have this one meal to eat the foods you really want during the holidays. Try enjoying the rest of the meal as leftovers the next day for lunch!

6) Consider Drink Choices

Figure out what is most important to you during the holidays. Is it the foods you're most looking forward to, your favorite drink, or maybe a little of both? Be mindful that empty drink calories from alcohol or soda can add up quickly. These empty calories do not provide nutrients and still leave you hungry and unsatisfied. Try setting a limit on the number of drinks you plan to enjoy, and be sure to drink lots of water.

7) Make Your Plate a Rainbow

Adding multiple colors to your plate from multiple different foods is the best way to get a variety of nutrients!

8) Bring Something Healthy

Bring a healthy appetizer that you can snack on before the big meal, or a side dish to add nutrition to your plate. This is a good way to ensure you get some nutrients in.

9) Don't Feel Guilty

Food is all about socialization. Your memories are worth more than anything. Soak up the people around you and have a good time. One day of eating is not going to ruin your progress or derail your goals. Enjoy the holiday and enjoy the food!



Less can be **More**

During the Holiday Season

Proper holiday planning and preparation are the keys to balancing the joys of the season with the stressors of the season. Remember the old adage: "less is more." This holds true for the holiday season as well.

- Don't overbook your social calendar. Decide ahead of time which parties you will attend. If you are feeling especially stressed, you may even have to skip out of the party early.
- Set a gift-giving budget and stick to it. Shop early and set a deadline for yourself. Even if you don't like to shop online, you can do your browsing and comparison-shopping online. Then, when you get to the store, you will know exactly what you want.
- Simplify your recipes and choose healthy, yet still delicious, alternatives. Cook ahead of time and freeze as many dishes as possible. Solicit friends and family to bring a dish.
- Say "yes." Don't try to do it all yourself. If someone volunteers to set the table or serve the drinks, accept.
- Say "no." Remove the guilt. You have a right to turn down a party invitation or to decline baking cookies for the office party. This won't make you the scrooge of the season; in fact, it might make you the jolliest soul around.
- Take care of yourself. Nothing is worse than being sick during the holiday season and missing out on all of the festivities. Be sure to get enough sleep, try to squeeze in some exercise and maintain your diet as much as possible. But, be willing to cut yourself some slack. If you overindulge one day, make up for it the next.

Give yourself a holiday this season and savor those precious moments with family and friends.



Let's Grow Safely Together

PIPELINE AG SAFETY ALLIANCE

Buried utility depth varies. Pipelines and cables can be less than 12" below the surface. Contact 811 before participating in any ground disturbing activities.

811 Click Before You Dig

Learn more at PipelineAgSafetyAlliance.com

Cottage Food Class

December 8 • 12:00-1:00pm
Chamber of Commerce, Carthage

Free to Attend • Light Lunch provided by the Chamber
RSVP 903-693-0380 • Space is Limited

A cottage food production operation is defined as an individual, who wants to sell prepared foods out of their home, farmers market, or other vendor space.

Learn the basic requirements and restrictions of a cottage food business such as labeling requirements and what can/can't be sold under a cottage food business.

Examples of Cottage Food:

Baked Goods
Coated and Uncoated Nuts
Fruit Butters
Canned Jam or Jelly
Fruit Pie
Pickled Fruit or Vegetables
Dry Mix
Dehydrated Fruits or Vegetables
Vinegar
Roasted Coffee or Dry Tea



www.dshs.texas.gov/retail-food-establishments/texas-cottage-food-production

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Leaf it Be

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



With falling foliage in full force, the age-old tradition of raking leaves beneath our trees comes to the forefront. However, there's been a major push of late by entomologist and author Dr. Doug Tallamy and many others to avoid the practice and let them lie, especially under shade trees.

Tallamy has written several influential books, including *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard*, and *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*. I once heard him speak in Lufkin and hopefully one day we can bring him to Tyler to share his views on ecological landscaping.

Here are some reasons to consider not raking and discarding your leaves this fall.

Biodiversity Boost: Leaves on the ground create a microhabitat that supports a diverse array of organisms. In this leaf litter, insects find refuge, amphibians seek shelter, and beneficial microbes thrive. It's a bustling ecosystem that contributes to the overall biodiversity of the garden.

Soil Enrichment: As leaves break down, they become a natural source of organic matter, enriching the soil beneath your trees. This organic mulch improves soil structure, retains moisture, and enhances nutrient levels, providing a healthy foundation for your trees and surrounding plants. Think of them as free mulch and compost.

Natural Fertilizer: As they have for millions of years, decomposing leaves release essential minerals into the soil, acting as a slow-release fertilizer that nourishes your trees and promotes overall soil health and friability.

Water Conservation: A leafy layer on the ground acts as a protective shield, reducing water evaporation from the soil. This not only conserves moisture but also helps maintain a more stable soil temperature. As a result, your trees are better equipped to withstand both drought and excessive rainfall, both of which occur regularly here.

Pollinator Paradise: Many pollinators, including various species of native bees, butterflies, and moths, overwinter in the leaf litter. The layer of leaves provides a protective cover, shielding them from harsh weather conditions. By leaving leaves in place, you're offering a refuge for these pollinators during the colder months.

Erosion Prevention: The fallen leaves act as a natural barrier, preventing soil erosion caused by wind and water. This protective layer stabilizes the soil structure, ensuring that your trees' root systems remain securely anchored in place.

Time and Energy Savings: Let's face it – raking leaves can be a time-consuming and energy-draining task. By embracing the natural process of leaf decay, you not only save yourself the effort but also contribute to a more sustainable and low-maintenance garden.

The seemingly simple act of leaving leaves beneath your trees can have far-reaching ecological benefits. By appreciating the ecological role of leaves and allowing them to remain beneath trees, you create a more sustainable and pollinator-friendly environment.

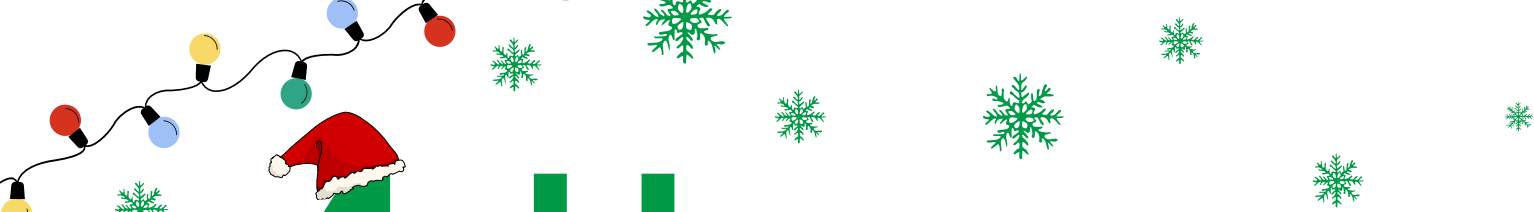


Panola County

4-H CLUBS

*Some meetings have been changed due to Christmas, 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	Meeting Canceled
DEBERRY 4-H	Shawntel Wells 903-690-6552	3rd Thursday, 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	3rd Monday, 6:00pm Gary ISD Cafeteria
SHOOTING SPORTS 4-H	Lee Dudley & Clarissa Moon 903-693-0380	Meeting Canceled
STILL WATERS 4-H	Corie Young 903-692-7737	Meeting Canceled



4-H CHRISTMAS Party

Tuesday, December 19
5:30-7:00 • Expo Hall

Gift Exchange \$10 value

Cookie Contest Judged on taste and decoration

Minute to Win it Games Hosted by 4-H Council delegates

Winner of Food Drive Announced



We will weigh all of the food being donated to Mission Carthage, the club with the most pounds of food will get a pizza party (sponsored by ALPA) at their January Meeting.

Panola County

FOOD CHALLENGE



January 9, 2024 • 5:30pm • Panola County Extension Office

*Register on our website by **December 19***

The Food Challenge contest challenges teams of 4-H members to create a dish using only a predetermined set of ingredients. From these ingredients, team members must identify and prepare the dish, then make a presentation about it to the judges.



4-H COOKIN' NIGHT

December 14 • 5:30pm
Extension Office

Christmas Cooking



4-H Record Book Training



December 7
5:30pm

at the Extension Office

Limited to 12 parents due to space

SPOTS STILL AVAILABLE!!

Chickens and Rabbits

Panola County Junior Livestock Show

December 12:

Chicken forms due in Extension Office

February 1:

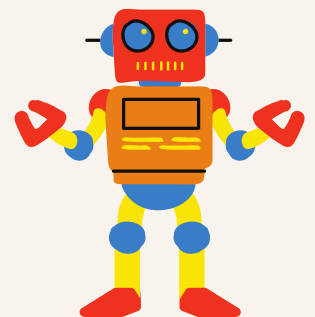
Rabbit validation, 6-7pm, Panola County Expo Hall



Interested in Robotics?

Contact:

Nikki Ritter: 979-575-0617



The Robotics Challenge is a contest designed to allow participants the opportunity to demonstrate their robotics, engineering, and problem-solving skills.

EAST REGION AGRILIFE CONFERENCE & EXPO

W.T. BROOKSHIRE CONFERENCE CENTER
2000 WEST FRONT STREET
TYLER, TEXAS 75702
FRIDAY JANUARY 5, 2024

TDA/AG CEU

- 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM** **Registration and Visit Vendors**
- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM** **IPM Strategies for Growing Warm Season Forages in East Texas**
Dr. Vanessa Corriher - Olson, Professor and Extension Forage Specialist
- 9:30 AM - 9:45 AM** **Break and Visit Vendors**
- 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM** **Implementation of IPM Strategies in Conjunction with Pesticide Modes of Action -** *Dr. Mark Matocha, Associate Professor & Extension Specialist*
- 10:45 PM - 11:00 AM** **Break and Visit Vendors**
- 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM** **Feral Hog Toxicants -** *Dr. John Tomecek, Associate Professor & Extension Wildlife Specialist*
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM** **Lunch and Visit Vendors**
- 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM** **Toxic Plant I.D. & Control in Pastures -**
Dr. Barron Rector, Associate Professor & Extension Range Specialist
- 2:00 PM - 2:15 PM** **Break and Visit Vendors**
- 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM** **Picolinic Acid Training -** *Rob Brooks, Range & Pasture Specialist*
Envu & Clint Perkins, CEA- AG/NR, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Smith County

How to Register:

Go to the website or scan QR

smith.agrilife.org/erace



Online registration is \$10.00 per person when you register by January 03, 2024 by 5:00 pm

On-site registration \$ 20.00 per person

Online registration will accept credit/debt card
(If you need assistance registering online stop by your local County Extension Office)

On-site will accept Cash/Check and Credit/Debit Card.

5 TDA CEU's

(Private/Commercial/Non- Commercial)

2 General

1 L&R

2 IPM

Presented by:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Service from the following counties:
Anderson, Cherokee, Gregg,
Harrison, Henderson, Kaufman,
Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith,
Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood

Private Applicator License Training

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15 | 8:00AM

Panola County Extension Office: 316 W. Sabine St.

As regulated through the Texas Department of Agriculture, a producer must obtain a private applicator license to purchase and use restricted-use herbicides and insecticides.

The training will begin at 8am and run through the lunch hour.

The training is required for all Private Applicators. It is highly recommended that all study material be ordered prior to attending this training.

Study Materials including the Private Applicator General Manual, the Texas Department of Agriculture's Laws and Regulations Manual, and all the handouts/worksheets needed for this training are available for purchase at the following website.

<https://agrillife.org/aes/files/2021/10/TDA-PA-order-form-revised-10.8.21.pdf>

Ag Industry *Breakfast*

January 4 • 7am

CEU: 1 IPM

Topic:

Managing External
Parasites in Cattle

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*

How to use hay-feeding strategies to build soil health and improve forage production on your regenerative ranch

By: Noble Research Institute



In a regenerative mindset, oftentimes we think that one goal is to manage grazing in order to not use hay at all. Yet, just like any other tool that we have in our toolbox, hay feeding can be a useful strategy, especially if you are trying to rebuild soil health in areas that are extremely deficient.

There are numerous reasons to bale graze while keeping a focus on soil health. Typically, where we have seen it work well is when, even though we probably would prefer to feed as little hay as possible, we use our grazing plan to pre-identify locations where bale grazing can do the best for our soil health and forage production. Then, if inclement weather or other factors call for hay feeding, we know our spots in advance and can even pre-place the bales and fence them off until needed.

CHOOSING SITES FOR BALE GRAZING / HAY FEEDING

What we are typically looking for is a site that is low in nutrients and could use the organic matter and nutrients that would be deposited right there where the hay would be fed. Where you get your biggest bang for your buck is on sites that should be productive, but for whatever reason, they've been neglected, or they are just so far depleted of nutrients that there's not much production.

Another type of area to target, especially if your ranch where you could have wet conditions during the wintertime, would be a well-drained location, a sandy or rockier soil that would hold up better under those types of conditions. They may not be overly productive, but they tend to have more bare ground, and you know that they will hold the cattle up and let you get in and out of the area during wet spells. It works out nicely to build those areas up while you are feeding your cattle.

If it's a really dry year, we can use bale grazing to encourage animals to get out and utilize parts of pastures that normally would escape grazing, perhaps farther away from water, where the cattle don't want to roam quite so far out during the growing season.

One more place to plan bale grazing is a location where you want to be able to keep a closer eye on bred heifers or growing animals that need higher nutrition and a little extra attention during inclement weather or less-than-optimal grazing conditions.

PLANNING AND PLACING HAY IN ADVANCE

If you know that you're going to be feeding hay based on your growing season, or you want to build up an area, or just because you know inclement weather's going to get to you at some point, plan ahead and even place hay ahead of the winter feeding season. This is called "in-place" hay feeding. Don't wait until the last minute to do it.

Once you've decided where you need and want to place hay, and you've either baled it at the optimal time during the growing season or acquired it, go ahead and set your feeding area up. Just know that you're going to avoid using that area until the winter-feeding season.

We oftentimes go ahead and space large round bales "in place," typically 30 to 40 feet apart in a checkerboard manner on the target area, and then use temporary electric fences to allocate whatever hay that we want to utilize for a day or two of bale grazing at a time, when the time comes.

When applying “in-place” hay for bale grazing, you may consider using a lower-quality hay, because the hay serves three purposes:

1. to provide rumen fill and some nutrition through selective consumption,
2. to leave significant amount of litter to help build organic matter in the soil, and
3. to concentrate livestock manure and urine deposits to build soil nutrients.

There are benefits to letting the cattle work through the bale to get what they want out of it, push it around, pull out the hay they don't want to eat, and provide cover and nutrients to build up those areas.

If you're feeding bales of higher quality (and higher value) hay, you probably want to feed it with a ring, so that you can be more efficient with it. There will be less hay material distributed across the soil surface, but “in-place” hay feeding with higher quality hay still serves to concentrate the manure and urine on targeted areas.

In northern and northwestern states where the climate is usually dry but with snow cover, windrow grazing is another type of in-place hay feeding. The last cutting of a hay field is cut and windrowed prior to winter and left on the field in windrows. Once the hay feeding season is upon you, allocate a portion of a windrow every day or two to the herd using temporary electric fences. Cattle work through the snow to consume the hay without having to move hay bales out to feed the cattle. The benefits are similar to in-place hay feeding, where some of the hay is left to provide additional organic matter to the soil surface. It concentrates cattle manure and urine to a hay field, returning nutrients to the soil where the hay was harvested.

BENEFITS TO THE SOIL AND FUTURE GROWING SEASONS

The benefit of bale grazing in the wintertime in multiple strategic locations is that we get the nutrients and organic matter from the hay; nutrients from the cattle manure and urine; some soil cover; and better water infiltration. Then, there is the benefit the next growing season to the plants that grow on, and the organisms that live in, the soil in the area where the hay was fed. However, if we feed in the same spot time and again, we end up with a buildup of nutrients that really don't have an opportunity to begin cycling. Therefore, it is best to move the sites around and not use one area too often.

We want to try to be able to create that natural process where we have plants growing up through that material, and eventually have a functional ecosystem, all four processes working together: energy flow, water cycle, nutrient cycle and community dynamics. We would hope to see a lot of that material begin to break down to where it's not so built up that plants can't grow through it within that first growing season. But occasionally, it may take two good growing seasons before it decomposes enough to have additional forage production on those sites, especially those which are lacking in nutrients.

In areas where the ground is somewhat bare, the hoof action of the cattle as they bale graze helps stimulate ecosystem dynamics in the following year. The trampling incorporates whatever nutrients that have been deposited, breaking up the manure and incorporating the plant-based material that's coming from the hay into the soil. That enables a lot more biotic activity with our soil microbes in the spring and stimulates new plant growth.

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

The most common pitfall to bale grazing is if we're trying to use it as substitute feed to increase our carrying capacity, at an economic cost. Most of the time, feeding hay is going to cost money and time and effort, and when you add the equipment costs (maintenance, fuel, and depreciation) into it, it can be expensive. So, the ideal approach to bale grazing is to be very targeted and limited in duration.

The other thing to consider is that if you bale graze in an already fertile area, excess hay residue may slow the early growth of forage production in that area. But if the forage stand was thin anyway, when it does come in, it may take off in the last half of the growing season and produce more than it would have for the entire year if you hadn't been bale grazing.

Another potential pitfall is the risk of introducing non-native grasses and other undesirable plants into your native pastures. If you are bale grazing in a native forage environment, it's best to feed native-grass-type hay. If you're not baling your own hay, try to source hay locally from a known supplier to the extent possible.

Overall, I would encourage doing the cost-benefit analysis to see if using bale grazing to improve the soil health and forage production in certain areas of your ranch makes sense for your operation. If you have some hay that matches your forage system, and you have a site that could use more organic matter and nutrients, why not give it a try?



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LEE DUDLEY

Agriculture & Natural Resource, County Coordinator

CLARISSA MOON

Family & Community Health, 4-H Coordinator

LANI WEST

Support Staff - Secretary

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