

January 2024

# THE PANOLA EXTENSION

A Monthly Newsletter by the Panola County AgriLife Extension office



## Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 1/1: Office Closed for New Years Day
- 1/4: Ag Industry Breakfast, 7:00am, Expo
- 1/5: AgriLife Conference, Tyler, TX, 8:00am
- 1/8: 4-H Council Meeting, 5:30pm, and ALPA Meeting, 6:00pm, Expo Hall
- 1/8: Intro into 4-H Robotics, 5:30-7:30pm, Sammy Brown Library
- 1/9: Panola County 4-H Food Challenge, 5:30pm, Central Baptist Church
- 1/10: Beef and Forage Program Planning meeting, 12:00pm, Extension Office
- 1/12: District 4-H Food Show, Henderson Civic Center
- 1/15: Office Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/26: Going Native in the Landscape, Carthage Civic Center, 8:30am
- 2/1: Rabbit Validation and Entries, 6:00-7:00pm, Expo Hall
- 2/1: Project Fair Entries and Payment Due to the Extension Office
- 2/9: East Texas Fruit, Nut, & Vegetable Conference, Tyler, TX, 8:00am
- 2/3: Indoor Archery Meet, Expo Hall
- 2/16: District 5 Food Challenge, Center, TX
- 2/26: Panola County Jr. Livestock Show and Project Fair Week

## In This Issue:

- Research Establish Link Between Vigorous Soil Biology & Range of Advantages
- 7 Tips to Motivate Yourself to Exercise
- Onions the Versatile Vegetable Great in all Gardens
- 2024 Project Fair
- 4-H News and Events
- East Region AgriLife Conference and Expo
- 2024 East Texas Fruit, Nut, and Vegetable Conference
- Build a Better Breakfast

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  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION





# Research Establish Link Between **Vigorous Soil Biology** & **Range of Advantages**

By Lee Dudley

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Agricultural producers traditionally base their land management decisions on observable factors above ground, such as crops, livestock, forage, weeds, insects, and wildlife. However, emerging research underscores the need to broaden this perspective to include the often-overlooked life existing beneath the soil.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service Soil Microbiologist Michael Lehman, an astonishing 50% of global diversity resides in the soil. Lehman emphasizes the significance of soil biology, comprising microorganisms and other soil fauna, in the production of essential resources like food, fiber, and fuel. He emphasizes, "Without microbes, there's no life, period," highlighting their role in sustaining global biogeochemical processes, the very foundation of all life forms.

Chuntao Yin, a USDA-ARS Soil Microbiologist working with Lehman, elucidates the myriad benefits of soil biology for producers. These benefits include breaking down crop residue, releasing nutrients into the soil, enhancing soil health, suppressing diseases, improving soil structure, and even mitigating climate change by consuming greenhouse gases.

Research conducted by Lehman and Yin demonstrates a direct correlation between land management decisions and the health and diversity of soil biological communities. These communities, in turn, significantly impact crop and forage production.

## **Soil Structure**

Maintaining healthy soil structure is paramount for sustainable agricultural production. Soil structure comprises small aggregates held together by substances secreted by soil biology. For instance, bacteria release

extracellular polysaccharides, acting like glue to bind soil particles, while fungi, with their hyphal networks, contribute to soil cohesion. The resulting spaces between aggregates allow for optimal air and water infiltration, crucial for sustaining plant and microbial activities.

Lehman's research reveals a direct link between short-term carbon mineralization (indicative of soil biological activity) and erodible soil fraction (a measure of soil structure). Producers can promote robust soil biology by adopting diverse crop rotations, fostering the development of healthy soil structure over time.

## **Yield**

Lehman and Yin's studies emphasize the importance of considering soil microbial communities in crop planning, as these communities are closely associated with crop yield. Examining various crop rotations, they discovered that corn biomass, an indicator of higher yield, significantly varied based on preceding crops. The microbial communities surrounding plant roots also exhibited distinct patterns, with some rotations fostering beneficial fungi while others harbored potential plant pathogens.

Yin's research further underscores the link between soil biology and crop yields, emphasizing the significance of microbial legacy in designing effective crop rotations.

## **Other Connections**

Diverse crop rotations and healthy soil biology contribute to various benefits, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and enhanced soil fertility. Studies reveal decreased nitrous oxide-producing organisms and increased soil carbon accrual in plots with diversified rotations, leading to carbon sequestration.

## Making It Work

Promoting healthy soil biology involves adhering to guidelines outlined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and principles of soil health. These principles include maintaining soil cover, minimizing disturbance, keeping a living root in the soil, increasing biodiversity, and incorporating livestock.

Case studies, such as Jorgensen Land and Cattle, demonstrate the tangible benefits of these practices. Employing no-till practices, a diverse crop rotation, and incorporating livestock, the Jorgensen operation witnesses improved water infiltration rates, increased soil organic matter, and reduced input costs. These practices align with Lehman and Yin's research findings, emphasizing that management decisions significantly influence unseen but crucial aspects of agricultural systems, contributing to improved yield, sustainability, and resilience.

To learn more about soil health practices and for guidance and assistance on implementing sustainable land management practices, producers and landowners can visit their local AgriLife Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources by calling (903)693-0380 or emailing [jldudley@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jldudley@ag.tamu.edu).

## Principles of Soil Health

- 1) **Maximize** Presence of Living Roots
- 2) **Minimize** Disturbance
- 3) **Maximize** Soil Cover
- 4) **Maximize** Biodiversity



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# Going Native in the Landscape

**JANUARY 26 • 8:30AM-12:00**

**Carthage Civic Center • \$10 per person • Register by January 19: 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*



# 7 Tips to Motivate Yourself to Exercise

[lispine.com/blog/7-tips-to-motivate-yourself-to-exercise/](https://lispine.com/blog/7-tips-to-motivate-yourself-to-exercise/)

listen to at the gym. As a result, they ended up exercising more frequently. And after the study, 61 percent even said they would pay to have gym-only access to such a device. So if you're lacking exercise motivation, try to mimic this study for yourself with some of your favorite entertainment.

## 3. SET SIMPLE GOALS

Setting simple goals is the key to turning your good fitness intentions into a lifestyle change. Don't leave yourself any room for excuses by diving into workouts your body can't handle and expecting unreasonable results. "Remember to make your goals realistic and achievable," Mayo Clinic says. "It's easy to get frustrated and give up if your goals are too ambitious."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity — such as brisk walking or dancing — for adults per week. And it says adults should engage in strength training at least two days per week. But the kicker is "any amount of physical activity has some health benefits." So no matter how simple you have to start to keep yourself motivated, it's better than nothing.

## 4. SCHEDULE YOUR WORKOUTS

You probably have some kind of daily to-do list or schedule to follow. Is exercise on it? It should be. "If it's hard to find time for exercise, don't fall back on excuses," Mayo Clinic says. "Schedule workouts as you would any other important activity."

Try working out first thing in the morning, so exercise becomes No. 1 on your to-do list — and the first thing you get to cross off. Join a morning exercise group. Take your dog on a vigorous walk. Bike to work. Maybe you'll have to tweak your sleep schedule, but you might just find an energetic morning person buried inside.

If you simply cannot find the motivation to sweat in the mornings, don't allow fitness to fall off your radar during the day. Avoid sitting for long periods. Take the stairs. And prioritize that workout before you fall into the couch for the evening. But, on the flip side, never be hard on yourself if you miss a workout. Just get back on schedule as soon as you can.

Is exercising more often one of your New Year's resolutions? Having trouble getting started? If you're not already a fitness buff, it can be difficult to begin — and stick to — a new workout routine. But there are several ways to set yourself up for success. Try these seven science-backed tips for exercise motivation.

## 1. CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

First things first. If you're having trouble with exercise motivation, you might be due for an attitude adjustment. Instead of seeing exercise as a hassle, too exhausting, the worst part of your day and so on, view it as an essential, positive component of your self-care. Prioritize health over struggling to achieve unrealistic goals. Working out should make you feel happy, healthy and strong — not be a drag on your life. And if you only see it as a negative, you might have to change the exercises you're doing, as well as how you perceive them.

When you learn to view exercise as some quality "me" time, you might actually start looking forward to your workouts. In fact, one study found that positive memories of exercising helped to inspire future workouts. There are countless exercises that can help you maintain a healthy body, so find a fitness routine you love, rather than one you dread.

## 2. GIVE IN TO TEMPTATIONS

No, not the junk food and TV binge temptations (though everything in moderation, right?). Sometimes, a little bribe goes a long way in exercise motivation. For instance, treat yourself to workout clothes you love — and only allow yourself to wear them if you're actually exercising. Or save listening to your favorite music, podcasts, audiobooks, etc. for when you're at the gym.

One study looked at the effects of "temptation bundling" — "measuring the impact of bundling instantly gratifying but guilt-inducing 'want' experiences (enjoying page-turner audiobooks) with valuable 'should' behaviors providing delayed rewards (exercising)." Participants received iPods with four audiobooks of their choosing that they only could

## 5. INCORPORATE RESISTANCE TRAINING

If you're not already incorporating resistance training into your fitness routine, you might want to start. A study on older adults found resistance training helped to improve exercise motivation. Researchers put 104 healthy 65- to 75-year-olds who weren't meeting their physical activity requirements on a regular resistance training plan. After nine months of this training, the participants reported more enjoyment in exercise, and they led more active lifestyles. Plus, after the program, almost half of them continued regular resistance training on their own.

Besides having the potential to influence your exercise motivation, resistance training is key to maintaining muscles and boosting overall health as you age. "It can increase your resting metabolic rate, decrease body fat, and enhance muscle tone — as well as improve your balance and motor coordination," according to Cleveland Clinic. For best results — and continued interest — vary your routine. Try free weights, resistance bands, machines and body-weight exercises to work all your muscle groups.

## 6. MAKE A BET

Things always seem to get a little more serious when money is involved — even when it comes to exercise. One study recruited 57 adults with a body mass index between 30 and 40 to lose weight through diet and exercise. Two groups received various financial incentives while the control group did not. In the end, the incentivized groups lost considerably more weight than the control group, suggesting the cash was a good motivator.

So if you need some added exercise motivation, try placing a bet on yourself. There are several apps that will reward you with financial incentives when you meet health and fitness goals. You also could set up your own challenge by putting money in a jar or donating to charity every time you skip a workout without a reasonable excuse. Or simply sign up for an expensive gym membership or exercise class, and vow not to let that money go to waste.

## 7. GET COMPETITIVE

There's nothing like a good support group to help you achieve your goals. But when it comes to exercise, competition might win over support. A study divided participants into four exercise groups: one with supportive relationships, one with competitive relationships, a combination of both and a control group of people acting individually. The "social support condition" offered incentives when the whole group succeeded, whereas the "social comparison condition" provided individual incentives. And the combination group compared their results as a team against other teams.

The study found comparison (or competition) was much more effective in increasing physical activity than support alone. But it was actually the group that combined competition with support that performed the best overall.

Still, it's important to keep competition healthy. For instance, there wouldn't be anything helpful about comparing yourself to a friend who does marathons while you're training to run your first mile. If anything, try competing with yourself — seeing whether you can beat your times or pushing for a few more reps. Crushing your own records and seeing your health improve might be all the exercise motivation you need.

# Banana Nut Overnight Oats

## Ingredients

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup Unsweetened Vanilla Almond Milk
- 1/2 medium Banana mashed
- 1 Tablespoon walnuts chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 Tablespoons low fat vanilla Greek yogurt



Stir in some nut butter and/or protein powder for added protein!

## Instructions

- In a mason jar or tight seal container, place the rolled oats and almond milk. Stir together.
- Continue to add ingredients (banana, walnuts, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and Greek yogurt) and stir after adding each for even distribution.
- Once all the ingredients are mix, place in the refrigerator overnight or for 6-8 hours.
- Serve and enjoy! Overnight Oats are best when eaten within 3 days



## Onions the Versatile Vegetable Great in all Gardens

By Lee Dudley

While originating from Pakistan, onions have gained immense popularity in Texas, so much so that in 1997, we officially adopted them as our state vegetable. Growing onions is a relatively straightforward process, especially when done during cool temperatures and short days. The renowned "Texas 1015" variety, celebrated for its super sweetness and low pyruvate content (minimizing tears during chopping), has propelled onions to become the leading vegetable crop in the state.

Onions thrive in cool weather but tend to bolt or bloom during hot, long days. For robust, tender, and mild onion tops, a cool climate is essential. To achieve large onion bulbs, it's crucial to plant bundled bare-root transplants, known as "sets," between late January and mid-February. Onions require at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily and thrive in well-drained sandy or loamy soils. Incorporating compost, organic matter, and a complete lawn fertilizer before planting enhances growth.

Planting onions in raised beds or rows, with proper spacing and soil preparation, ensures optimal results. Regular watering, especially during bulb formation, is crucial.

Fertilize the plants for about 3-4 weeks after planting with high nitrogen fertilizer, avoiding damage to the base. Mulching with organic materials conserves water and prevents weeds, contributing to healthier plants.

Green onions can be harvested at any time, while mature onion bulbs are ready when the necks soften, and the tops fall over. After harvesting, curing the onions in a cool, dry area for several days promotes longer storage. Recommended varieties for East Texas include 'Texas 1015Y,' 'Grano 502,' 'Granex' (Noonday, Vidalia), 'Granex 33,' 'White Granex,' 'Red Granex,' 'Candy,' 'Burgundy,' and 'Texas Legend.'

For those interested in growing onions, fresh Texas-grown sets are available at feed stores or garden centers across the state. Successful onion cultivation in Texas relies on ample sunshine, cool temperatures, and proper care throughout the growth and harvesting process. For more information pertaining to growing your own onions, fill free to contact your Panola County AgriLife Extension Office at (903)693-0380 or stop by the office for a visit at 316 W. Sabine St. Carthage, TX 75633

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## Panola County Jr. Livestock Show and Sale

Rules, Photos, Added Money Sheet, etc: <https://pcjls.net>

February 26 - March 1, 2024



# Panola County

## 4-H CLUBS

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

2024

# PROJECT FAIR

Open to all Panola County 4-H and FFA members, as well as students enrolled in art classes, photography classes or culinary/life skills classes.

**FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 1**



Entry fees: \$10 Grades 3-12, \$5 Clover Kids

**ENTRIES & PAYMENT DUE TO THE EXTENSION OFFICE BY FEBRUARY 1**

***Project Fair Planning Meeting: January 4, 5:00pm, Extension Office***

## DIVISIONS:

1. Foods
2. Fabric and Fiber Arts
3. Arts and Crafts
4. Legos
5. Photography
6. Floral Design
7. Educational Displays
8. Clover Kids



## SCHEDULE:

**Monday:** Exhibits with attached entry tags may be dropped off at the Civic Center Conference Rooms

**Tuesday:** Closed judging, awards will be announced at 5:00pm. Building will be open for viewing following the awards presentation till 7:00pm.

**Wednesday - Thursday:** Public viewing 12:00-4:00

**Friday:** Exhibits will be moved from the Conference Rooms to the Gymnasium in the Civic Center. They will be displayed during the buyers' luncheon and released from 2:00-4:00pm.



# Archery Meet



**February 3 • Panola County Expo Center**

Register by January 12 • \$35 per person



*Bow Classes:*

Barebow • Recurve  
Compound Aided  
Compound Unaided  
NASP Genesis Barebow

*Prizes awarded to top youth in bow classes  
and overall high point in bow classes*

# ROBOTICS

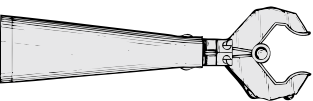
*in 4-H*

Next Meeting:

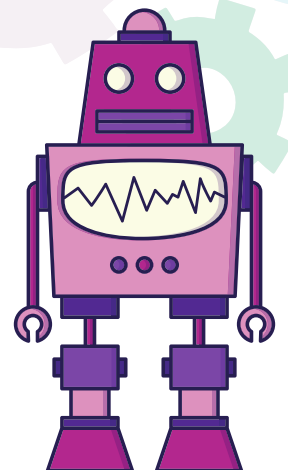
**January 8, 5:30-7:30pm**

**Sammy Brown Library, 3rd-5th Graders**

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



**Contact: Nikki Ritter: 979-575-0617**



# TEXAS FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIPS

## Multiple Scholarships!

*Applications close March 1, 2024*

[www.TexasFarmBureau.org](http://www.TexasFarmBureau.org)

For questions contact [youthactivities@txfb.org](mailto:youthactivities@txfb.org) | 254.751.2258



## 4-H Council and ALPA Meeting

January 8 • 5:30 & 6:00pm • Expo Hall

### NO 4-H COOKIN' NIGHT in January or February

*to prepare for  
district food contests*



### Rabbit Validation

Panola County Junior Livestock Show

**February 1**

6-7pm, Panola County Expo Hall





JOIN US FOR...

# QUILTS OF VALOR SEW DAY KICK OFF

**JANUARY 20, 2024  
1 - 4 PM**

STITCHIN' HEAVEN FABRIC STORE &  
LEARNING CENTER  
321 RICHARDS STREET  
QUITMAN, TX 75783

MAKE A QUILT TOP AND TOUR THE TEXTILE  
FACILITY! DOOR PRIZES AND FABRIC  
PROVIDED

**Open to adults and youth  
grades 3-12!  
Beginners WELCOME!**

A huge THANK YOU to Texas Quilts of Valor for providing the fabric and  
Stitchin' Heaven for hosting this event.

- \$5 per person to participate.
- Fabric, refreshments and door prizes are provided.
- Bring your own sewing machines or rent one on-site for \$10 from Stitchin' Heaven.
- Register in a team of 2 to 4 people on 4HOnline. If only youth are participating on a team, bring an adult to assist the team.
- Learn quilting basics, about this new textile program, how to use a sewing machine and pressing guidelines for quilts.

**Limited Spaces - Register Today!  
Registration Closes January 12, 2024**

# 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](http://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



## 2024 East Texas Fruit, Nut, & Vegetable Conference

February 9 • Tyler Rose Garden, 420 Rose Park Dr. Tyler, TX 75702  
8:00am • \$25 fee • Register by February 7 • 903-590-2980

The annual East Texas Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Conference, Friday February 9 at the Tyler Rose Garden Center (420 Rose Park Dr. Tyler, Texas 75702) will offer both professional and amateur gardeners tips on blackberries, blueberries, bunch grapes, muscadines, and IPM (Integrated Pest Management) on peppers and tomatoes.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m.; followed by the first session at 8:30 a.m. Lunch is provided. Online pre-registration is required (for lunch head count) and ends February 7 at 5:00 pm. The cost of the program is \$25 (plus 5% convenience fee). The program will be held in person only. Pre-registration is required for a lunch headcount. No Texas Department of Agriculture CEU's will be awarded for this event. However, CE's (5 hours) for certified Texas Master Gardeners will be.

### Topics and speakers include:

*Growing Blueberries in East Texas:* Dr. David Creech, Professor Emeritus, Stephen F. Austin State University. Dr. Creech is the director of SFA Gardens in Nacogdoches and the leading expert on blueberries in Texas.

*Growing Muscadines and Bunch Grapes in East Texas:* Michael Cook, Viticulture Regional Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Michael earned his Master of Science in Viticulture and Enology at California State University.

*Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on Peppers and Tomatoes:* Dr. Rafia Khan, Assistant Professor and Extension Entomologist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Dr. Khan is the new entomologist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Experiment Station in Overton and has experience conducting research on commercial tomato fields in Florida.

*Knowing and Growing Pears in East Texas:* Dr. Andrew King, King's Nursery, Tenaha, Texas. Dr. King is a 4th generation East Texas nurseryman and the assistant director of SFA Gardens in Nacogdoches.

*Growing Blackberries in East Texas:* Dr. Tim Hartmann, Assistant Professor, Fruit Crops, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Dr. Hartmann is a lifelong horticulturist and well versed in all things "fruit."

This event was organized to meet the growing demand for information about fruit, nut, and vegetable production for home gardeners and commercial growers in East Texas. It's an opportunity to learn tips from specialists and agents on how to be successful, how to avoid common pitfalls, and how to learn more as you grow.

For more information contact the Smith County Extension office at 903-590-2980. The flyer, schedule, and registration link are posted on the "Texas A&M AgriLife-Smith County" Facebook page and on the county web page at [smith.agrilife.org/fnvc/](http://smith.agrilife.org/fnvc/)

# BUILD A BETTER BREAKFAST

Go beyond toast and coffee and include more heart-healthy nutrients in your morning meal.



[www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/build-a-better-breakfast](http://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/build-a-better-breakfast)

Harvard-affiliated Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. To boost flavor, she suggests adding a squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkling of black pepper, garlic powder, and sunflower seeds.

## CEREAL SELECTIONS

Oatmeal is a great choice because this whole-grain cereal helps lower LDL (bad) cholesterol. Skip the individual instant oatmeal packets, which are often loaded with sugar. Just mix  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of regular rolled oats with  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of low-fat milk and heat in the microwave for two minutes. Another option is overnight oats: combine the oats and milk in a jar, shake, and leave in the refrigerator overnight; you can warm it up (or not) in the morning.

You can dress up oatmeal in a variety of ways by adding nuts, seeds, fresh or dried fruit, and cinnamon. Try different combinations, such as walnuts, flaxseeds, and blueberries, or pistachios, chia seeds, and chopped dried apricots.

Many popular ready-to-eat cereals, including granola, are high in sugar, so they're not ideal options, says Moore. "But if you miss the taste and texture of your favorite cold breakfast cereal, try adding a few table-spoons on top of your oatmeal," she suggests.

## EGGS WITH THE RIGHT EXTRAS

Decades ago, eggs were assumed to increase heart disease risk because of their high cholesterol content. But we now know that for most people, dietary cholesterol doesn't affect blood cholesterol nearly as much as the total mix of fat in the diet does. The ideal mix includes mostly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat, with limited amounts of saturated fat. The modest amount of fat found in eggs is mostly unsaturated. In addition, two large observational studies found that in healthy people, eating up to one egg a day might not be associated with a higher risk of heart disease.

Many studies have linked eating breakfast to better health, including a lower risk of heart disease. But does breakfast itself deserve the credit — or do habitual breakfast eaters have other healthy habits that explain the association?

It's hard to say for sure. But nutrition experts agree that having breakfast is a good opportunity to eat some of the nutrient-rich foods you need for keeping your heart in good shape. "The message is similar for everyone: Eat more whole grains instead of refined carbs, and choose healthy protein sources with more unsaturated fat and less saturated fat," says Linda Antinoro, a dietitian at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital.

## TOAST TOPPERS

If toast is your thing, make sure you're using whole-grain bread. Even if the label says multigrain or 12-grain, it's not necessarily whole grain. Look for the term "100% whole grain" or "100% whole wheat." To stave off midmorning hunger pangs, add some protein. Try nut butter (peanut or almond are popular choices) or part-skim ricotta cheese. Slice a banana, apple, or pear on top, or have a piece of fruit on the side.

The ever-popular avocado toast is another healthy choice, since the pale green flesh of this fruit is packed with healthy fats and fiber. "But a whole avocado may have close to 400 calories, so just use a half," advises Liz Moore, a dietitian at

Part of the problem with eggs can be the company they often keep. "People tend to eat eggs with bacon or sausage plus white toast with butter," says Antinoro. Those side dishes are the least healthy parts of that meal, she notes.

Instead, both she and Moore recommend pairing eggs with vegetables. An easy way to do this is to make egg muffins, which you can freeze and quickly reheat in the microwave.

## HEALTHY EGG MUFFIN CUPS

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk together 10 eggs with a few pinches of salt. (Optional additions include ground black pepper, onion powder, and paprika.) Chop up your favorite vegetables, such as broccoli, tomatoes, and onions (about 1 cup in total). Grate ½ to 1 cup of hard cheese, such as cheddar or Parmesan. Divide the vegetables, cheese, and eggs evenly into the 12 muffin cups. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until set. Store in the refrigerator for four days or in the freezer for up to one month.

# Ag Industry *Breakfast*

January 4 • 7am

**Topic:** Managing External Parasites in Cattle

CEU: 1 IPM

HAPPY  
New Year



WE WILL BE CLOSED

January 1 *New Year's Day*

January 15 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*



# — THE PANOLA EXTENSION —

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