

AG NOTES
By John Teague
UT/TSU Extension
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FARMERS MARKET

It's going strong. The rains have helped some of the late crop and the continuing blooming plants. Vendor numbers are good, and variety is good.

We'll be open during the horse show as usual. Remember that even if there are parking fees around us it does not apply to the customers that come and go to the market. Just tell the people at the gates in front of the market pavilion during the shows that you are coming for the market and there won't be a problem. We're usually there and gone by the time they start charging anyway.

The market is at the pavilion next to the big blue water tower at the Celebration Grounds.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS?

I had a pear brought by with some specks and rotten areas. I sent photos to the lab and Dr. Eleanor sent back a diagnosis of pear scab. The black specks were actually some lesions of disease activity and the rotten areas were caused by this pathogen.

I've attached a picture of the pear with the damage. Treatment involves a year-round fruit spray protocol as outlined in one of our publications, Disease and Insect Control of Home Fruit Plantings, pub 1622. I'll be happy to share this one with anyone needing the information.

The protocol involves year-round care, not just when the fruit appears and then with a problem. The problems start well ahead of fruit appearance. This protocol covers diseases, fungal problems, and insect damage that occurs during the bud and loom stages.

The one thing not in this publication is what to do when the squirrels attack the fruit! Melody called me the other day to give me the news that the "tree rats" had damaged all but one pear on both of our little pear trees. She was not happy!

We have babied these trees while they have been growing from grafted stems from an old family heirloom tree. I'm at a loss as to what to do, but I'll think about it. Now, except for the one pear left, I've got several months to come up with a solution, if there is one!



MAKING IT THROUGH

Most everyone is short on hay. And buying hay is not much of an option, since the western hay growers have experienced even worse growing conditions than we have. And even if it's available, it's very costly.

I've had discussions with a lot of cattle growers about options. We need to think outside of the box. Doing something is better than doing nothing and hoping that things will work out. There appears to be some choices. Here's what some are considering.

One is to cull down to a more manageable level. And selling calves early is an option. This will allow these cows to mend back and reduce their nutrient needs. These may be options, and they may not. This is for you to decide.

Some are looking at planting some forage crops to help out grazing conditions. This option might work for several folks. No-tilling various combinations of wheat, cereal rye, ryegrass and/or triticale will produce forage that will be a grazing resource for several months. You can plant at a shallow depth into the sod with this moisture. This will help reduce the dependence on the short hay supply. Our experiment station farms are doing this to have enough feed for the dairy herds and the beef cattle herds. We'll be sharing the recipes and budgets with you shortly.

If this is an option, the planting time is here, and with the moisture that we have had, this is a good time to consider this move and do something about it. What's the costs to do this? Let me answer that with another question, what's the costs of hay if you can find it?

With any grazing effort, cross-fencing is a good management tool. Rotating pastures will give your animals fresh forages on a timely basis, allow time for regrowth, and manure management on a larger area will help feed the plants.

A soil test to help determine pH issues is highly recommended. A good pH encourages root development and allows for better use of available plant nutrients. Lime is still the least expensive soil additive for plant growth. When is the right time to apply lime? When you can get a spreader truck in and out without getting stuck! You may be surprised at how much grass you have if you get the pH into the right range.

As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts in managing to make it through this feeding dilemma. But it can be doable. The key here is the 'do' part of doable. Doing nothing is not a good option. Take a look at options for your operation. Then make some decisions but only after gathering information on what, how, when, needs, costs, etc.