



# TEXAS COUNTY AG NEWSLETTER

April 2007

## **Russian Wheat Aphids**

Wheat producers will want to keep a close eye on wheat fields if you plan to harvest for grain.

Russian Wheat Aphids have been detected in the wheat at the Oklahoma Panhandle Research and Extension Center. The Russian Wheat Aphid has not been a severe problem in this area for several years. Russian Wheat Aphids may look similar to greenbugs with the naked eye, however with a hand lenses, there will be some detectable differences. The Russian Wheat Aphid has small appendages protruding from the posterior end of the body that resemble tail pipes, these are absent from the greenbug. The RWA has shorter antennae and do not have the stripe running down the middle of the body.

RWA inject a toxin in the plant that prevents the production of food in the plant. This causes the leaf to roll longitudinally like a soda straw. These toxins will then cause the leaf to exhibit white, yellow or purple longitudinally stripes on the leaves.

The infestations will usually start in small spots in the field then increase in size. As populations increase at the jointing stage, the area where the RWA are located may look like something has laid down in the field. RWA are usually found on the upper portions of the plant.

RWA can cause up near 100% loss in the wheat field if the infestation is severe. With the current grain price and the good moisture conditions, the potential for a profitable wheat crop is possible. Several products are commercially available to control the RWA.

For more information contact Steve at the Texas County OSU Extension Service at 338-7300 or come by 301 N Main in Guymon.



## CATTLE MARKETING SYMPOSIUM-ALL NATURAL BEEF

By Dale Blasi, KSU

What does “All-Natural” Beef mean to the producer and what opportunities exist?

Despite the fact most fresh beef in the retail case is already “natural”, there is a growing consumer base who perceive beef is safer and more nutritious when cattle are raised in either a natural or certified organic manner compared to conventional production management systems. This phenomenon is evidenced by the dramatic double digit growth of these branded programs in recent months when compared to conventional production practices.

Much confusion exists today regarding the definition of “natural” beef simply because a certified definition does not presently exist. Consequently, every beef company who markets an “all natural” product has actively promoted their own definition of “all natural” beef based on the combination of various animal husbandry attributes that appeals to their desired consumer audience. Some of the various attributes attached to a specific brand label may include the prohibited use of growth implants, antimicrobial feed additives and antibiotics, specific breed types, forage finishing and humane handling.

While there are definite opportunities for realizing greater gross returns from calves raised and marketed through these alternative management strategies, there are downside risks that must be factored into the overall equation as well. First, all producers interested in these alternative production systems must thoroughly understand and document compliance to the strict guidelines which exist for participating in each program. With that said, it is incumbent upon the interested producer to thoroughly research the specific production parameters each program requires. One must pay very close attention to the records required while the animals are in your custody as well as the necessary paper trail required when ownership transfer is completed to ensure there is no “fall out” of cattle eligibility.

If purchasing stockers eligible for a natural program, one must ensure proper immunization and commingling protocols have been prudently followed prior to receiving as significant opportunity cost of that calf will be realized if morbidity occurs and subsequent antibiotic treatment is necessary. Moreover, producers must also have a marketing strategy for those animals that are disqualified from the program for any reason.

Finally, it is very important for producers to recognize that costs of gain will be significantly increased through reduced daily gains, lowered feed efficiency and, potentially, higher death loss if growth implants and antibiotics such as Rumensin and Tylan are not incorporated throughout the stocker and finishing phase. Strict attention to bunk management and the increase in roughages level while in the feedlot will be necessary to offset the higher likelihood of digestive upsets and resulting liver abscess rates which may consequently impact performance and carcass merit. It is critical for producers to fully anticipate and properly manage these potentially negative aspects of managing cattle to fit natural and certified organic branded beef programs or else trade dollars realized from premiums for the numerous productivity losses that will accrue during the pre-harvest phase.

Presently, total sales and volume at the retail supermarket channel for natural and certified organic branded programs are quite small (1.5 to 2%) relative to conventionally produced beef. I frequently interact with a few colleagues who personally believe the potential upper market share for natural and certified organic branded beef programs (% of total beef marketed) will “sputter out” around 5 to 10 percent (% of total beef marketed). However, incidents such as the massive pet food recall (at the time of this writing) as a result of a dog food ingredient (wheat gluten) contaminated with rat poison that was imported from China will only hasten the demand for food that is traceable. If a person can't fully trust what he or she feeds their dog or cat, can we not expect that they will demand to know what they eat?



## **Oklahoman's Have A Unique Opportunity . . .** ***Help set the agenda for the State's water resources!***

The Oklahoma panhandle is full of vital agricultural interests that require an adequate supply of water. However, agriculture is just one important use of water. Businesses and homes depend on a clean, adequate supply as well. One overriding question is how does Oklahoma balance the needs of all water users in a way that ensures a clean, plentiful supply of water while planning for the state's water needs in the future.

The answer is not a simple one. The Oklahoma Water Resources Board and the Water Research Institute want you to help answer that question by attending a local input meeting regarding the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan update.

The Water Research Institute (WRI) is conducting a meeting on April 19 in Goodwell, OK at the Oklahoma Panhandle Research and Extension Center Conference Room located ½ mile north of Goodwell on Hwy 54. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and is open to all area citizens. Participation by all parties interested in the future of Oklahoma's water is encouraged.

The Water Research Institute at Oklahoma State University will be conducting 42 local input meetings throughout the state. The purpose of the meetings is to record issues, concerns questions and suggestions citizens have regarding Oklahoma's water resources.

"We all use Oklahoma water whether in our homes or to make a living," said Jeri Fleming, WRI Stakeholder Communications Specialist. "I think most of us take water for granted, that it will always be at our fingertips, but that may not be the case if we don't start thinking about the future now."

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board is required by law to develop a Comprehensive Water Plan and update it every ten years; this is the third revision of the plan. The WRI is working with OWRB to facilitate stakeholder input into the Water Plan.

Information sheets about water law as well as some regional and statewide issues will be available prior to the April 12th meeting. A record of discussion and all reports will be posted on the WRI website. Citizens will have the opportunity to make comments at the meeting or may fill out an input form and turn it in at the meeting. The input form will also be available on the website or can be faxed or mailed.

"We want the process to be fair, inclusive and transparent. There is no set agenda for the water plan now, the agenda will be set by the people of Oklahoma," Fleming said.

"The Water Research Institute is excited about the process we are about to embark on and we look forward to hearing from Oklahoma citizens," said Mike Langston, WRI Assistant Director. "The stakeholder input portion of the Water Plan update is a unique endeavor designed to allow citizens a voice in planning for the future of Oklahoma's water resources."

For more information and a schedule of meeting locations visit their website at <http://okwaterplan.info> or email the WRI at [waterplan@okstate.edu](mailto:waterplan@okstate.edu).

If you have a concern regarding your water supply - I encourage you to attend.

## APPLE TREE SPRAYS

Two common diseases on apple trees are cedar apple rust and apple scab. Though some apple varieties are resistant to these diseases -- including Liberty, Jonafree, Redfree, Freedom, Williams Pride and Enterprise -- most varieties are susceptible. For a description of disease-resistant varieties, go to <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1401.html>.) Fungicide sprays during April and May are critical to preventing disease on susceptible varieties. A fungicide that is available to homeowners and very effective for control of apple scab and cedar apple rust is myclobutanil (Immunox). There are several formulations of Immunox, and only one is labeled for fruit. Check the label. Bayleton (Green Light Fung-Away) is excellent on rust, but poor on scab. Captan, a common component of fruit tree sprays, is excellent on scab, but does not control cedar apple rust. Sprays should be done on a 7- to 10-day schedule to keep the protective chemical cover on the rapidly developing leaves and fruit. An

insecticide will need to be added to this mixture after petal drop to prevent damage from codling moths that cause wormy apples. Methoxychlor, carbaryl (Sevin), or malathion can be used as an insecticide. In order to protect bees, DO NOT use any insecticide during bloom. Also, do not use Sevin within 35 days of bloom because it will encourage fruit drop.

Although gardeners may continue to use myclobutanil throughout the season, certain other fungicides are more effective on summer diseases such as sooty blotch and fly speck. Consider switching to Captan or to a fruit spray mixture about June 1.

A spreader-sticker can be added to the fungicide-insecticide chemical mixture to improve the distribution and retention of the pest control chemicals over the leaves and fruit. A hard, driving rain of about 1-inch or more will likely wash chemicals from the leaves and fruit. In such cases, another application should be made.

## Judge Orders “Stop Sale” For Roundup Ready® Alfalfa

As you may be aware, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California issued a preliminary injunction placing restrictions on the purchase and planting of Roundup Ready® alfalfa seed across the United States.

The March 12, 2007, court order allows for the continued harvest, use and sale of Roundup Ready® alfalfa forage, but places limits on the purchase and planting of Roundup Ready® alfalfa seed until further hearings are held.

Under the order, Roundup Ready® alfalfa purchased on or before March 12, 2007, may be planted by growers through March 30, 2007. The order also states that growers intending to plant alfalfa after March 30, 2007, must plant non-genetically engineered alfalfa. Purchases of Roundup Ready® alfalfa seed are prohibited after March 12, pending the scheduled court hearing on April 27. Following the hearing, the court is expected to decide the status of Roundup Ready® alfalfa during the time it takes USDA to satisfy its procedural obligation to complete an environmental impact statement.

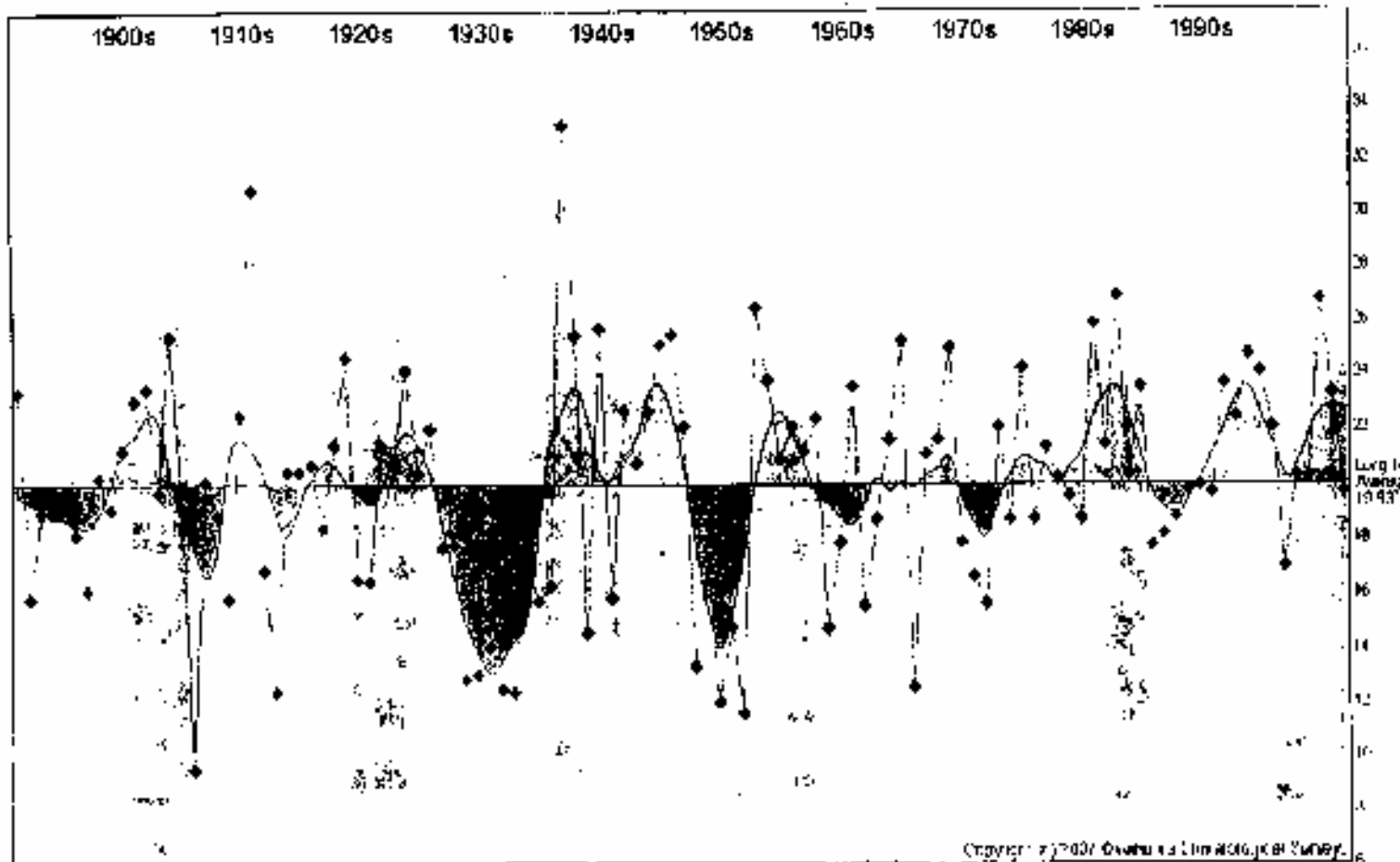
If you purchased Roundup Ready® alfalfa and will not plant it by March 30, you should contact the seed dealer or company from which you purchased the seed. They should be able to advise you of their return policies and their ability to supply you with conventional alfalfa seed.

This case, brought by the Center for Food Safety and others against the U.S. Department of Agriculture as Geertson Seed Farms Inc., et al. v. Mike Johanns, et al., centers on the USDA's process in approving Roundup Ready® alfalfa for non-regulated status.

As these proceedings continue, it is important to note that this case is not focused on the safety of Roundup Ready® alfalfa. The scope of this case is the regulatory procedure used to approve Roundup Ready® alfalfa for planting. The District Court and other regulatory agencies, both at home and abroad, agree that Roundup Ready® alfalfa poses no harm to people or livestock. There was no evidence in this case showing environmental effects of Roundup Ready® alfalfa.

| Month        | Temperature |     |           |           | Precipitation |                |               | Wind    |         |
|--------------|-------------|-----|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------|---------|
|              | Max         | Min | Max. mean | Min. mean | Inches        | Long term mean | One day total | AVG mph | Max mph |
| Jan          | 80          | 12  | 59        | 25        | 0.10          | 0.30           | 0.03          | 13.0    | 47.5    |
| Feb          | 86          | 1   | 55        | 20        | 0.00          | 0.46           | 0.00          | 12.5    | 50.6    |
| March        | 82          | 15  | 61        | 32        | 1.04          | 0.95           | 0.57          | 14.1    | 62.8    |
| April        | 94          | 25  | 77        | 43        | 0.24          | 1.33           | 0.22          | 15.2    | 57.0    |
| May          | 100         | 37  | 83        | 52        | 2.19          | 3.25           | 0.79          | 12.1    | 47.6    |
| June         | 104         | 52  | 93        | 62        | 2.34          | 2.86           | 1.16          | 14.4    | 71.4    |
| July         | 104         | 56  | 94        | 66        | 2.05          | 2.58           | 0.69          | 11.4    | 46.1    |
| Aug          | 100         | 52  | 89        | 65        | 4.06          | 2.28           | 1.49          | 10.2    | 67.8    |
| Sept         | 90          | 37  | 77        | 52        | 1.19          | 1.77           | 0.53          | 11.1    | 65.3    |
| Oct          | 94          | 24  | 70        | 42        | 2.02          | 1.03           | 1.18          | 11.5    | 51.8    |
| Nov          | 86          | 9   | 62        | 29        | 0.00          | 0.77           | 0.00          | 12.2    | 66.6    |
| Dec          | 69          | 11  | 48        | 23        | 3.70          | 0.31           | 2.10          | 10.5    | 43.6    |
| Annual total |             |     | 70.8      | 42.9      | 18.93         | 17.9           | NA            | NA      | NA      |

Data from Mesonet Station at OPRC



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**OKLAHOMA**  
CLIMATOLOGICAL SURVEY

Annual Rainfall History with 5-yr Weighted Trends  
Climate Division OK-1 (Oklahoma Panhandle) 1895-2006

☐ Wet historical periods  
☐ Drier historical periods

## **Central Oklahoma Meat Goat Conference**

*May 5, 2007 - 9:00 a.m. - Norman, OK  
Cleveland County Fairgrounds*

Doe Health Management

- Business Management
- Meat Goat Selection

### Conference Topics

- Economic Impact of Meat Goats in Oklahoma
- Modifying Fencing and Shelter Systems From Existing Cattle Operations
- Nutritional and Forage Management Considerations
- Parasite Control & Predator Management Considerations
- Goat Cooking Demo and Lunch
- Basic Goat Care-General Herd Care Hoof Trimming,

Pre-registration fee of \$20.00 is due by April 26th to Cleveland County Extension Service. For more information contact Justin Rogers at 405-321-4774.

Steve Kraich, Ag/4-H Educator  
Texas County OSU Extension Service

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Texas County Cooperative Extension Service  
Oklahoma State University  
P.O. Box 320  
Guymon, OK 73942