

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION - FRIO COUNTY

FRIO COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

Dear Agricultural Producers:

We are pleased to be able to provide you with information contained in this newsletter. The Frio County Agriculture & Natural Resources Newsletter is a Monthly newsletter beginning January 2023. Best efforts have been made to include Agriculture & Natural Resources information that should be of interest to you and helpful in the management of your agricultural operations. A wide variety of educational publications are available upon request or by accessing the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website at www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu. Our office hours are from 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., (Monday-Friday). It is recommended that office visits be scheduled in advance or by appointment as there will be times that I'm not in the office.

You are encouraged to read this newsletter and keep informed of all on-going agricultural events and activities. Try to do your best to attend Extension educational programs, workshops, etc., throughout the year as they are sponsored by your local Extension committees for your educational benefit. We would like to acknowledge the Extension Agricultural Specialists and cooperators including: TSCRA, Texas Drought Monitor, AgriLife Today, Aggie Horticulture, and the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Browsing, who contributed and provided the educational information for this educational newsletter. For any further questions regarding your agricultural operation, please contact the Frio County Extension Office (830) 505-7474, located at 400 S. Pecan St. Pearsall, Texas, or e-mail brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu. Visit the Frio County AgriLife Extension website at <https://frio.agrilife.org>.



Sincerely,

Brianna G. Gonzales
County Extension Agent- Agriculture & Natural Resources
Frio County



Inside this issue:

- Monthly BQA Tip**.....(Page 2)
- RANGE / Plant ID**.....(Page 3)
- CROP & WEATHER, Frio County TX Drought Monitor**.....(Pages 4-5)
- Aggie Horticulture**.....(Page 6-7)
- Over-the-counter livestock antibiotics requirements**.....(Page 8-9)
- Program Highlights**.....(Page 10)
- Texas BQA Training**.....(Page 11)
- Frio AgriLife Extension**.....(Page 12)

Helpful Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Websites:

- agrilifeextension.tamu.edu
- texaswater.tamu.edu
- aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu
- livestockvetento.tamu.edu
- animalscience.tamu.edu
- texashelp.tamu.edu
- SouthTexasRangelands.tamu.edu



BQA TIP

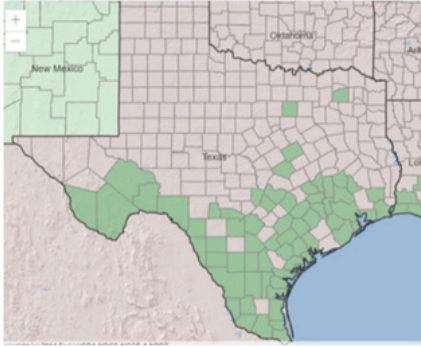
Unfortunately, some calves are lost at birth.

- In these situations, producers sometimes consider purchasing a calf to graft onto the cow for her to raise.
- When a calf is purchased from a dairy, an auction market, or another outside source it is easy to introduce new pathogens to the rest of the herd that can cause calf scours or other health issues that can lead to reduced performance or death.
- Whenever bringing in calves to graft to cows or any new animals it is critical to quarantine the new animals.
- Quarantining is especially important during the calving season.

For more information please visit:
<https://texasbeefquality.com/bqa-tips/>
[or animalscience.tamu.edu](http://animalscience.tamu.edu)

RANGELAND PLANT IDENTIFICATION

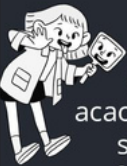
By: Stacey Hines Ph. D., Assistant Professor, Rangeland Habitat Management Specialist



Distribution Map Credit: USDA Plants Database @ plants.usda.gov

Huisache Distribution

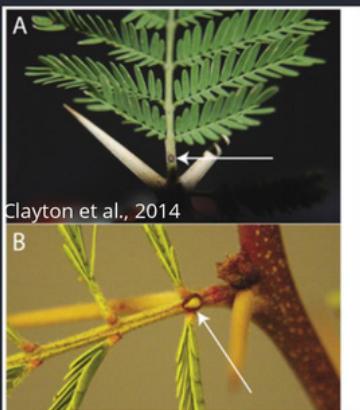
Huisache is found throughout most of South Texas and the coastal bend on acid sands, sandy loams, and clays. It can be an invasive plant that quickly invades rangelands after disturbance or overgrazing that exposes bare soil.



Huisache Look-a-Like

Huisache looks like twisted acacia. Huisache typically has a spreading, cone-like growth form and shorter bean pod.

Also, huisache can be distinguished from twisted acacia by a gland at the base of the leaf on the petiole or leaf stem. The petiole gland on huisache will be absent or just below the bottom pair of leaflets, while it is between the bottom pair of leaflets on twisted acacia.



Clayton et al., 2014

Figure 6. (a) Huisache petiole gland below the bottom pair of leaflets and (b) twisted acacia petiole gland between the bottom pair of leaflets.

Huisache

Vachellia farnesiana



Plant Identification Tips

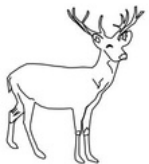
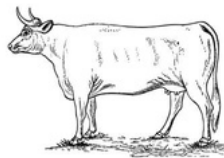
Huisache, also called sweet acacia, is a native shrub or small tree that can grow up to 30 feet tall. The stems have many paired, pin-like spines. The leaves are twice compound with 10-20 paired, narrow (~1/16" wide) leaflets that are fern-like. The leaflets are gray-green in color. At the base of the leaf, on the petiole or leaf stem, the petiole gland is either absent or just below the bottom pair of leaflets.

The flowers are very fragrant and look like yellow-orange puff balls. The fruits are bean pods that are tapered at the end and are 1.5 to 3 inches long. When the pods mature, they are dark in color, turning brown or black.



Livestock & Wildlife Value

The leaves and flowers are considered poor grazing, but the fruits provide food for livestock and wildlife.



Management Tips

Prevention tips: keep healthy cover of grass and do not engaged in disturbance management practices close to established plants. Also, keep livestock out of pastures when fruits are present. Click the link for the [AgriLife Extension Brush Busters](#) for tips on individual plant control.

Parts of this article were derived from:
[Clayton et al. 2014. Huisache Ecology and Management. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension ERM-001.](#)
[Richardson and King. 2011. Plants of Deep South Texas, 1st Ed., Everbest Printing Company.](#)

Stacy L. Hines, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Rangeland Habitat Management Specialist
361-265-9203 | stacy.hines@ag.tamu.edu

Row crop farmers need rain to start summer crop season

"Texas row crop farmers in large swaths of the state are facing a suite of problems related to Mother Nature, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts."

While all problems relate to the lack of rainfall over the past two years, concerns are compounding as the summer season begins. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows 81% of the state was still experiencing some level of drought compared to 95% this time last year. Drought conditions continue in the Plains, Panhandle, Central and Southwest Texas, with dozens of counties experiencing severe to exceptional drought that is putting the summer crop season in jeopardy after widespread failures in 2022. AgriLife Extension agronomists Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., Amarillo; Calvin Trostle, Ph.D., Lubbock; and Reagan Noland, Ph.D., San Angelo, said the 2023 cropping season is off to a poor start due poor moisture and weather conditions, including high winds and above-average temperatures. Conditions could change with rainfall, but the poor planting conditions have producers waiting for moisture and weighing their crop options. In 2022, cotton in the central and southwestern parts of the state failed due to drought but wheat cover and grain crops that followed caught decent rains in October and November, Noland said. Wheat fields got off to a good start, but conditions since then have severely stressed many fields. Noland said his region has been relatively dry but that he's heard about much worse conditions further west and north into the Permian Basin and Plains. Trostle said normal rainfall amounts for the calendar year up to April 8 are 2.7 inches in his region, but that the Lubbock area has received only 0.75 of an inch so far this year. "Lots of farmers would have planted sorghum by now or going to plant, but if it doesn't rain soon, they may be on the fence about whether to plant cotton or something else," Noland said. "The season is uncertain and they're making last-minute planting decisions based on the forecast and local conditions."

Row crop farmers hope for rain

Lack of topsoil moisture to germinate seeds and establish plants is holding up planting in drought-stricken areas. The window of time crops can be planted depends on the crop, plant variety and location's average climate. Noland said the window for planting grain sorghum is open now because waiting would put crops into the flowering stage in the heat of summer, which can compromise grain production. But without rain, farmers may wait until the late-season window, which opens in June or July. Row crop farmers in the High Plains and Panhandle continue to wait for conditions to improve, Bell and Trostle said. Farmers in those areas have about one month for topsoil conditions to improve enough for planting corn or sorghum for grain or forage and cotton. Bell said corn has been historically planted in April but is being planted from mid-April to mid-June because of declining groundwater and irrigation capacities. Producers are planting later as they monitor weather patterns and evaluate how to best allocate irrigation resources. Cotton is planted in May with some fields going in as late as early June depending on the crop, but earlier planted fields routinely perform better in the Northern High Plains, she said. Sorghum is usually planted mid-May to mid-June. Farmers continue to evaluate planting decisions and even cropping decisions – such as whether they might take crops like sorghum and corn to grain or harvest it for silage. The value of silage has increased due to the large forage demands coupled with drought that have caused regional forage deficits across the High Plains, which holds 80% of the state's dairy production and heavy volumes of beef cattle in feed yards. Farmers with irrigation have been pre-irrigating fields for more than a month in an attempt to maintain moisture, Bell said. But high winds and heat are reducing the impact pre-irrigation is having on topsoil moisture. "The impact of the high winds and heat is that fields are rapidly drying out even where producers are pre-irrigating," she said.

Row crop farmers need rain to start summer crop season

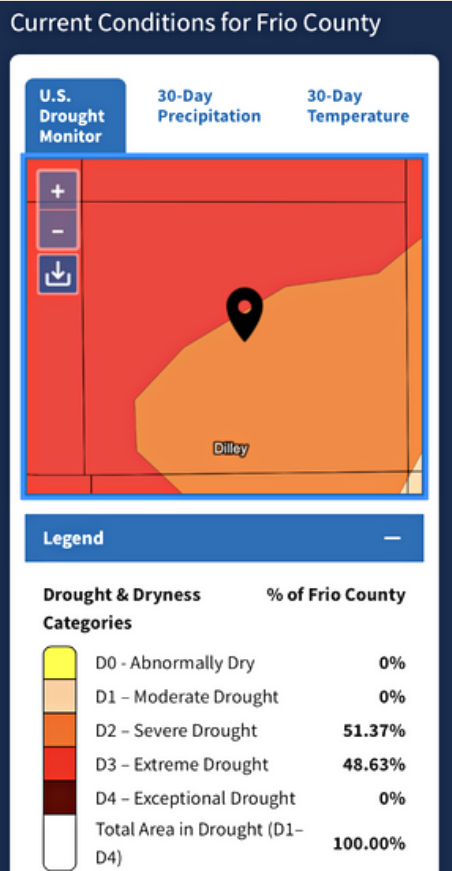
High winds blowing soil, sapping soil moisture

Timely rains have turned the tide in farmers’ favor following drought-ridden seasons in the past, Trostle said. But the lack of soil moisture is presenting other secondary problems including declining irrigation capacity and soil erosion. Soil erosion is an issue in fields where cover crops failed to establish or were blown out by high winds. Noland said local farmers were frustrated that fields tilled and bedded in December and January and ready to plant were losing a lot of soil to sustained winds of 40 mph. Bell said there have been several days of 60 mph winds with 70-plus mph gusts. Declining irrigation capacity is another major concern for producers in drier parts of the state. Irrigation supplements rainfall for crops. Applied water can help crops start or hang on and allow plants to progress between rains, but irrigation is not meant to bring a crop up and push it to harvest. For instance, many irrigated cotton acres in Noland’s area failed last year despite water applications. Water is pumped from the Edward Aquifer in his region while the Ogallala Aquifer provides water to fields in the High Plains. These groundwater sources provide water to homes and commercial properties as well as industry and agriculture in their respective regions. There is currently more water being pumped out than going back in via recharge zones – the areas of percolation of water through the water table to refill the aquifer. Groundwater recharge occurs relatively quickly for the Edwards Aquifer, but heavy rains have been minimal over multiple years, Noland said. Trostle said the Ogallala recharges at a much slower pace and water levels will likely never exceed what is pumped each year. “There have been many years like this where widespread rain can change the situation,” Trostle said. “Things will have to change to have a good start even with irrigation.”

Weekly Crop Report - South Region

Wheat and oat crops continued to mature or dry down, and field preparations for harvest were underway. Corn crops continued to develop. Cotton crop planting should be complete soon. Farmers were preparing for peanut planting. Supplemental feeding continued for all livestock. Brush was growing new leaves and blooming. Row crop farmers were preparing to spray and cultivate fields. Hay fields were reaching maturity and producers anticipated a good first cut. Forages in pastures and rangelands showed notable growth, and grazing availability improved significantly. However, rangelands and pastures were still in poor condition in some areas. Cattle body condition scores were improving along with grazing. Local beef cattle markets reported below normal sale volumes. Cotton growers were spraying weeds and fertilizing. Grain sorghum looked excellent with very little sugarcane aphid pressure. Corn looked good with many fields past the silking stage. Sesame was in the early growth stages and looked good. Sunflowers were blooming and appeared to be insect-free.

FARM & RANCH - agrilifetoday.tamu.edu



Spring Roller Coaster

Temperatures Impact Gardens:

Tips from AgriLife Extension

A roller coaster of temperatures isn't unusual for spring in Texas, but gardeners need to be aware of the impact of this year's weather fluctuations to maximize a garden's produce and blooms. "A wide variation in temperatures mean warm-season crops will struggle," said Larry Stein, Ph.D., horticulture specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Uvalde. "Cool temperatures hinder seed germination, and you may have to reseed if stands are poor." Also, lack of chilling temperatures this past winter is causing delayed and protracted bloom on perennial fruit crops in some areas, Stein said.

Know when to prune

Prune spring-flowering shrubs soon after flowering. Keep the plant's natural shape in mind as you prune and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size. Climbing hybrid tea roses may be pruned as soon as they complete flowering. Wait to prune such trees until you see what the final push will be.

Fertilize azaleas, roses, trees and shrubs

As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid-type fertilizer at the recommended rate. Don't over-fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing. Roses have high fertilizer requirements. For most soils, use a complete fertilizer for the first application just as new growth starts, then use ammonium sulfate or another high-nitrogen source every four to six weeks, usually just as the new growth cycle starts following a flowering cycle. Ideally, use a slow-release product. For organic sources, use cottonseed, rotted manures or alfalfa meal. Fertilize trees and shrubs by placing fertilizer at the drip line, and be sure to water it in.

Prepare for pests

It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leaved evergreens. Apply control measures, such as Sevin dust or spray, or Spinosad while the insects and the bags are about a half-inch long. When caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, it is very alarming, but usually nothing can be done. A healthy live oak will usually regrow its leaves and resume normal activities.

Purchase annuals with buds, not flowers

For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. Any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to allow plants to become established. Your best bet is to purchase plants with flower buds but not open flowers

Care for established annuals

Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth, and applying fertilizer to an established annual bed can do wonders toward rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.

Keep an eye out for aphids

Check new tender growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Always follow label instructions on approved pesticides. Washing them off with a strong spray of water may be all that is necessary for adequate control.

Start weeding early

Start weeding early in the flower garden since early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull. Examine closely soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers.

Often, contaminated soil sources bring nut grass and other weeds, nematodes and soilborne disease into the yard. It is a good idea to side dress – fertilizing crops once the plants have begun growing and adding soil nutrients that boost crop growth – your vegetable crops prior to mulching.

Watch wildflowers

Going for a drive or hike to see bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes and other wildflowers has become a Texas tradition once the weather warms up. Even though some wildflowers are in bloom, they are a bit weak in other areas due to extreme drought. Watch newspapers and other media sources for information regarding wildflower trails and open garden days.

Care for houseplants

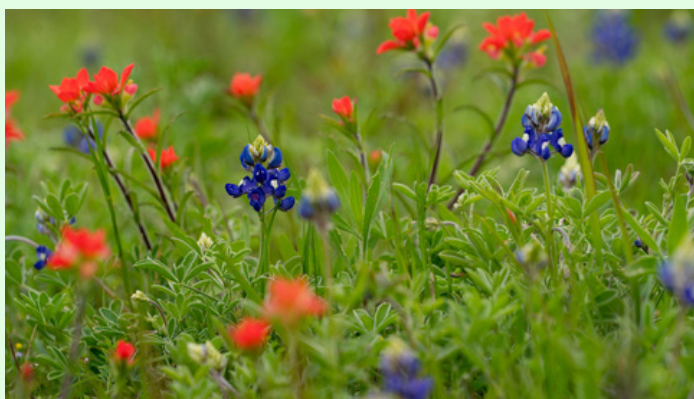
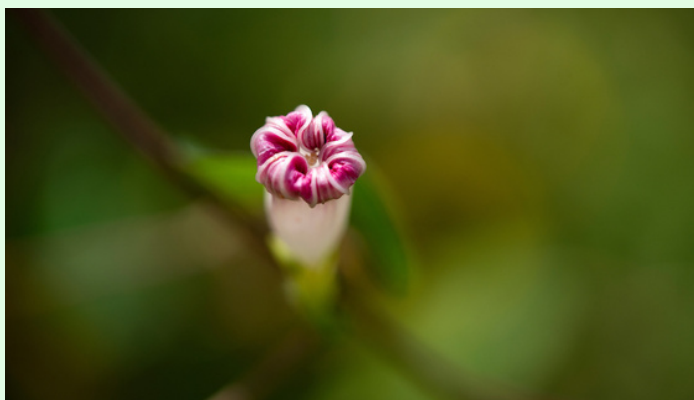
Houseplants can be moved outside to be re-potted but remember not to place them in direct sunlight. Place tropical plants in containers in full sunlight for a dazzling display of summer color.

Save for next season

Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting in the garden can be saved for the next season. Simply close the packets with tape or paper clips and store them in a sealed glass jar in your refrigerator. Spring is also a time to continue to collect fallen leaves and male catkin blooms to use as mulch.

Learn more:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>





Over-the-counter livestock antibiotics will require prescription after June 11

AgriLife Extension experts answer frequently asked questions to prepare livestock owners

Don't wait. Get to know your local veterinarian now and establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship if you expect to treat livestock in the future, as over-the-counter livestock antibiotics will soon require a prescription. That is the advice of a team of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts trying to help livestock owners who are used to going to the local feed store to buy some of their antibiotics and administer treatment themselves. All of that will change on June 11, when these medically important antimicrobial drugs will require veterinary oversight.

The following experts answer some frequently asked questions to let livestock owners know what to expect:

— Tom Hairgrove, DVM, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension cattle veterinary specialist in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Animal Science, Bryan-College Station.

— Joe Paschal, Ph.D., former AgriLife Extension livestock specialist, now representing industry as the executive vice president of the American Brahman Breeders Association, Corpus Christi.

— Billy Zanolini, Ph.D., assistant professor and 4-H and youth development specialist, Bryan-College Station.

What is the new rule?

The Food and Drug Administration recommends manufacturers of medically important antimicrobial drugs that continue to be available over the counter and are approved for use in animals, both companion and food-producing, regardless of delivery mechanism, to voluntarily bring these products under veterinary oversight or prescription marketing status.

By June 11, labels of the remaining over-the-counter antibiotics for livestock use will be required to read: "Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian," and the purchaser must have a prescription or drug order to buy it.

How does this differ from the Veterinary Feed Directive and why are the two confused?

Over-the-counter antibiotics used in animal feed were moved to Veterinary Feed Directive, VFD, in 2017, allowing closer veterinarian oversight of antimicrobial use in animal feeds. All over-the-counter antibiotics placed in the drinking water were moved to prescription status at the same time. This new rule concerns the few antibiotics that remained available over the counter in the form of injectables, intramammary tubes and boluses.

What does medically important mean?

Medically important drugs are essential to human medicine and also used to treat animals.

What antibiotics does this affect?

Prescription-only items will include injectable tylosin, injectable and intramammary penicillin, injectable and oral oxytetracycline, sulfadimethoxine and sulfamethazine, gentamicin, cephalixin and cephalixin benzathine intramammary tubes.



Over-the-counter livestock antibiotics will require prescription after June 11

AgriLife Extension experts answer frequently asked questions to prepare livestock owners

How and where can these items be purchased after the rule goes into effect?

Individuals with veterinary-client-patient relationships, VCPR, may purchase antibiotics directly from their veterinarian or from a distributor with the vet's prescription.

What constitutes a VCPR?

Three requirements must be met:

- (1) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions.
- (2) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the animal's medical condition. This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by examining the animal or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.
- (3) The veterinarian is readily available or has arranged emergency coverage and follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or the failure of the treatment regimen.

What's your advice to livestock owners without a VCPR?

Producers who already have a VCPR in place and purchase their animal health products through their veterinary office or through other distributors under an existing prescription system will likely notice little change. However, this may have significant impacts on how the livestock owners can access antibiotic therapy for their animals, so contact your local veterinarian as soon as possible.

Why shouldn't I go ahead and stock up on antibiotics now?

Do not stock up on these products to avoid needing a prescription once this change takes effect. Animal health products are expensive, have expiration dates and are sensitive to storage time and conditions.

Are there any specific instructions that should be given to livestock show exhibitors?

Livestock exhibitors, like all producers in animal agriculture, are responsible for understanding animal treatment regulations. For junior shows, students complete the "Quality Counts" quality-assurance curriculum that stresses the importance of VCPR.

What health/medical items can livestock owners continue to purchase over the counter?

Most vaccines, dewormers, injectable and oral nutritional supplements, ionophores, pro/prebiotics and topical nonantibiotic treatments will not require a veterinary prescription. However, there are some exceptions. Always read the label.

For more information, please visit: <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/> (Farm & Ranch)



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

The Spring 2023 Private Water Well Screening was hosted by Frio, Atascosa, McMullen, Dimmit, and Zavala counties on April 19-20, 2023, at the Frio County Extension Office. Agents assisted in screening a total of 17 water samples. These samples were individually tested for fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, salinity, and hydrocarbons. This educational event was followed by a Private Water Well Basics & Screening Interpretation educational program conducted by Dr. Joel Pigg, Extension Program Specialist - College Station, Tx. If you are interested in screening your private water well, contact the Frio County Extension Office at (830) 505-7474. or brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu.



BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING

DATE: June 27, 2023

TIME: 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

LOCATION: Frio County Extension Office
400 S. Pecan St. Pearsall, TX 78061
Lunch Provided.

Topics Include: Residue Avoidance - Vaccine Handling - Proper
Injection Technique - Genetic Selection - Environmental
Stewardship - Cattle Handling & Welfare



To register for the event, contact tschuster@tscra.org or 800-242-7820 ext. 1753,
or contact brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu.



**For more information please contact:*

Brianna Gonzales-

Frio County Extension Agent, at

(830) 505-7474

brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu

2023 Texas A&M
**Beef Cattle
Short Course**

Save the Date!

**August 7th - 9th, 2023
College Station, Texas**



Frio County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension