

Texas Crop Weather

Much of the Panhandle and northern regions of the state experienced a frost early last week. Some irrigated wheat and oats continued to emerge in parts of the Blacklands, while planting continued in most areas of the state.

Cotton harvest occurred in the Plains, the Blacklands, Edwards Plateau, and Trans-Pecos.

In the Northern High Plains, corn harvest neared completion.

Sorghum continued to mature in the Northern Low Plains, while

harvest occurred in the High plains.

Peanut producers started digging, and harvest continued in the Southern Plains and South Texas.

Soybean harvest continued in the Upper Coast, while harvest neared completion in the Northern High Plains.

Spinach continued to be planted, while harvest of pumpkins, red dry chilies, and green beans occurred.

Pecan harvest continued in

the Blacklands, Edwards Plateau, and South Texas.

To maintain good body condition, some ranchers were forced to supplement their livestock. Topsoil moisture was mostly short to adequate statewide.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: Wheat and oats continued to be planted in many areas of the state and some irrigated fields continued to emerge in parts of the Blacklands.

Statewide, wheat condition was mostly fair to good and oat condi-

tion was mostly fair to good.

Cotton: Cotton harvest continued in the Plains, the Blacklands, Edwards Plateau, and Trans-Pecos.

Statewide, cotton condition was mostly fair to good.

Corn: Corn harvest neared completion in the Northern High Plains.

Corn condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Sorghum: Some sorghum harvest occurred in the High Plains, while sorghum continued maturing in the Northern Low Plains.

Statewide, sorghum condition was mostly fair to good.

Peanuts: Peanut harvest continued in the Southern Plains and South Texas, while producers started digging peanuts in the Cross Timbers.

Peanut condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Soybeans: Soybean harvest neared completion in the Northern High Plains, while harvest continued in the Upper Coast.

Soybean condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

Early vegetable harvest continued and fall vegetable crops continued to progress well.

Spinach planting continued,

while pumpkins, red dry chilies and green beans were harvested.

Pecans: Pecan harvest continued in the Blacklands, Edwards Plateau, and South Texas, but crop continued to look light.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

In order to maintain good body conditions, some ranchers were forced to supplement their livestock due to lack of rain and forage.

Stock tank water levels and pasture quality continued to decline due to the lack of rain across most areas of the state.

Pasture and range condition was mostly poor to fair statewide.

Soil Test Campaign Runs Through Nov.

Colorado/Austin County AgriLife Extension is sponsoring a soil testing campaign beginning November 1 - November 30.

Soil sample bags and instructions will be available during that time at Colorado County Extension Office, Columbus, Heffley's Mill & Grain - Columbus, Eagle Lake General Store, M-G Farm Service Center - Weimar, Farmers Co-Op - Garwood, Texana Seed - Garwood, Garwood Implement & Supply - Garwood, Bernardo Farm & Ranch - Bernardo

and Heinsohn's Store - Frelsburg. Routine Analysis is \$6 per sample. If you want Routine Analysis plus other micro nutrients your cost is \$10. Prices are only good for this soil testing campaign.

This should give all agricultural producers the opportunity to participate. You should have ample opportunity to get your test results back in plenty of time to decide how you want to apply fertilization this coming year.

Soil testing is the foundation

of a sound fertility management program. A soil test is a series of chemical analysis on soils which estimates whether levels of essential plant nutrients are sufficient to produce a desired crop and yield. When not taken up by a crop, some nutrients, particularly nitrogen, can be lost from the soil by leaching or volatilization. Others, like phosphorus react with soil minerals over time to form compound which are not available for uptake by plants.

Collecting a good soil samples is the most critical step in soil testing. It is generally recommended that one "composite" soil samples be collected from each uniform area of 10 to 40 acres. Care should be taken to prevent sampling across areas with historically different land uses, soil types, fertilization practices or crop yields.

If you need further information, please feel free to call me at the Extension Office 979-732-2082.

Pecan Crops Short In Texas This Year

If Texas pecan growers and eaters are having to look hard for a kernel of good news this year, it is in the quality and nutrition the nut offers.

The state will yield only about 32 million pounds of pecans this year, less than half of the 2007 crop and far under the average 60 million-pound harvests, according to the Texas Agriculture Statistics Service.

"The light production this year is the result of a big crop last year and the lack of rain at the end of the 2007 season," said Dr. Larry Stein, AgriLife Extension horticulture specialist at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Uvalde.

"Production was not only affected by the drought, but also the rains we received in September, which caused a good amount of disease."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture in October forecast pecan production at 204 million pounds (in-shell basis), down 47 percent from last year's crop and 2 percent below 2006. About 85 percent of the total, or 171 million pounds, are the improved varieties, while 16 percent, or almost 33 million pounds, are from native trees, the USDA estimated.

While production is down significantly from last year, the quality of the pecans is generally good, Stein said.

"Since there were fewer pecans coming from a more con-

centrated area this year, those locations were harder hit than usual by insects and wildlife that typically feed on pecans, including raccoons, squirrels and deer," Stein added.

"On the plus side, we're having good harvest weather here in South and South Central Texas and the pecan harvest, which started here about three weeks ago, will continue for about another month."

Mike Adams of Henderson, president of the Texas Pecan Board, said the nut trees traditionally bear large and small crops in alternate years.

"Texas is a diverse pecan growing area also because we have both native trees and improved variety orchards," said Adams, who is also a grower.

"Overall, I'd said this year's crop is mediocre and spotty."

"In some areas, there will be a good crop with good quality, but in other areas, especially those damaged by Hurricane Ike, it will not be so good."

He mentioned one pecan farm in southeast Texas that had about 80 percent of its 50 and 60-year-old trees blown down by the hurricane.

Mediocre harvest or not, consumers will clamor after the much-loved holiday nut, industry officials say.

"As usual, demand for good-quality pecans has been strong in the early season," according to

Cindy Wise, Texas Pecan Growers Association spokesperson.

"Prices paid to growers have been strong thus far, and most of the good quality pecans harvested so far this year have gone to the gift pack and fundraiser markets."

"Commercial shellers are not very active yet," she said.

"They will wait until more volume becomes available to begin buying in earnest."

A large inventory in cold storage from 2007, plus a fairly large Mexican pecan crop will make up for any shortfall in the current crop, she noted.

Mexico, the major pecan exporter to the U.S., is expected to produce almost 199 million pounds, up 16 percent from the previous year, according to Jose Pena, AgriLife Extension management specialist.

As much as 72 million pounds of pecans come into the U.S. from Mexico each year, he said.

"Consumers should not have any problem finding good quality pecans."

"The native crop is where the significant shortfall is, and these are typically sold to commercial shellers and used for ingredient purposes," Wise said.

For top quality, early maturing in-shell pecans, Texas growers have received \$2.50 per pound and higher in the early part of the season, she said.

Prices would be expected to

decline somewhat as the gift pack/fundraiser markets fill their early-market needs and commercial sheller's become more active.

"Consumption for pecans and other tree nuts has been very strong for the past couple of years, and we attribute that to the positive health message that has emerged from various research studies," Wise noted.

"Pecans have more antioxidants than any other tree nut and are actually ranked high among all foods for antioxidants, an important component of disease prevention."

Adams agrees.

He said the pecan board, which collects check off money from producers to use for research and promotion, envisions assuring that the nuts are available and consumed year round.

"We are concerned with producing high quality, healthy nuts," Adams said.

"So we are dedicated to getting a No. 1 pecan on consumer plates."

"They are more than just for holidays, and consumers are showing a preference for them."

For a list of where to buy this year's nuts, see the Texas Pecan Growers Association site at <http://www.tpga.org/buysellpecans.html>.

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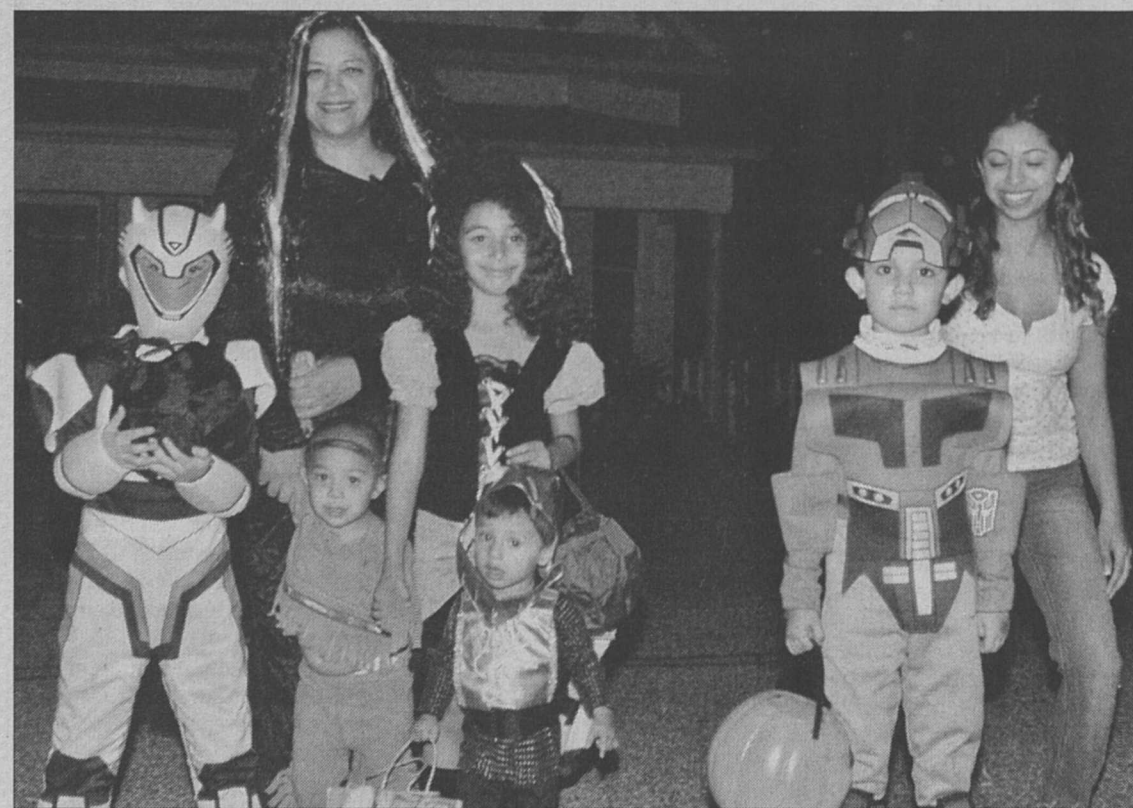
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A group of trick-or-treaters looks for goodies on Halloween night.



Kacie Rucka was part of the Haunted House on Halloween Night.

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