

Blackland Income Growth Conference Scheduled Feb. 9-10

January 14, 2010

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WACO – The 2010 Blackland Income Growth Conference will provide producers updates on current and pending climatic, market changes and regulatory issues affecting Central Texas agricultural production, according to organizers.

The event is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Waco Chamber of Commerce.

“The annual B.I.G. Conference is one of the most extensive agricultural production conferences of the year,” said Rebecca Parker, Extension regional program director for agriculture and natural resources. “There will be several important topics that will be of interest to everyone during these difficult financial times. Our goal each year is to bring in the most knowledgeable speakers available who can offer homeowners, landowners, farmers, and ranchers the best ideas to enhance production in this region.”

Featured topics include: a cellulosic ethanol update and information on herbicide resistance for grain producers; turfgrass emphasis for homeowners; economic and marketing options for beef cattle producers; options in managing forage production costs; and information on controlling feral hogs and a look at “harvesting the hunter” for wildlife enthusiasts.

“The successful Family Issues Summit will feature exercise and living well, protecting children online, exploring emergency services, as well as dealing with the cash crunch,” Parker said. This summit will be located off-site this year at the nearby Emergency Services Education Center.

Registration for the Feb. 9 sessions is \$15 per person and includes lunch. The sessions will also award Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units, Beef Quality Assurance and Certified Crop Advisor credits.

Producers are encouraged to download the brochure at <http://dallas.tamu.edu/BIG> to see specific CEU allocations and sessions for Feb. 9 - 10.

Jerry Patterson, Texas Land Commissioner, will provide the keynote address at noon on Feb. 9 during the awards luncheon. Patterson will offer enlightening insight to many critical land issues affecting agricultural producers.

“The highlight of the awards luncheon will be the presentation of 10 scholarships to Blackland high school seniors,” Parker said.

AT A GLANCE:

The following is a list of concurrent sessions scheduled Feb. 9-10 as part of the 48th Blackland Income Growth Conference at the Heart of Texas Fair Complex in Waco:

-- 9 a.m. – noon (Feb. 9): Grain session topics include crop insurance options; new technology affecting grain choice; herbicide resistance in grain sorghum; cellulosic ethanol update; and wheat varieties and management.

-- 9 a.m. – noon (Feb. 9): Horticulture topics include turfgrass maintenance, diseases, and insect management.

-- 9 a.m. – noon (Feb. 9): Beef topics include a Beef Quality Assurance presentation from a state 4-H competition; market update/cattle cycle/future outlook; update on animal health issues; marketing options/backgrounding/when to wean.

-- 2 - 4:30 p.m. (Feb. 9): Cotton topics include cotton root rot management; new opportunities and challenges; changes in cotton stalk destruction dates; boll weevil eradication Updates; Blackland Cotton & Grain Producers Association Meeting; Texas Department of Agriculture Zone 8, Area 1 and 2 cotton stalk destruction committee meeting.

-- 2 - 4:30 p.m. (Feb. 9): Forage topics include improved pasture management; new possibilities for managing forages production costs; and management and utilization of native pastures.

-- 2 - 4:30 p.m. (Feb. 9) Wildlife topics include feral hog management - Plum Creek Watershed; Reducing protein loss to non-target Species; Harvesting the Hunter; and a panel on predator control.

The Family Issues Summit is scheduled Feb. 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is \$20 which includes lunch. Mail pre-registration to Colleen Longbotham, P.O. Box 191, Groesbeck, TX, 76642, by Feb. 1, 2010. Make checks payable to: Family Issues Summit. Participants may also register at the door for a \$25 fee.

Concurrent sessions scheduled for Feb. 10 are:

-- 8 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.: A pesticide license recertification training workshop will be offered for \$35 (pre-registration) which includes lunch. Participants may also register at the door for a \$50 fee. Topics include Laws and Regulations; Identifying and Managing Pecan Pests; Pond Management; Weed and Brush Management; Proper Handling of Herbicides.

This workshop is appropriate for TDA license holders needing to acquire CEUs to renew their license. There will be five CEUs offered (one laws and regulations; one integrated pest management; three general).

Call the McLennan County Extension Office - Master Gardeners at 254-757-5180 to register.

-- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. -- Private applicator training and testing workshop is for landowners wanting a TDA applicator license for their own land. The training program will be held in the Bachporch Club. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch; information is available from the Hill County Extension Office at 254-582-4022. Registration can be mailed to: Gideon Jennings, P.O. Box 318, Hillsboro, TX 76645. Checks should be made payable to the Hill County Crops Committee. Contact (254)582-4022 for information on how to order your books and study materials.

-- 10 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.: The “Tools and Strategies for Developing Corporate and Community Leadership” Course will feature presentations on leadership and the development of leaders. Pre-registration for this course is \$15, or \$20 at the door. Registration includes materials and lunch. Call 254-968-1984 for registration information, or mail by February 4th to Beth Underwood, Box T-0040, Stephenville, TX 76402.

-- 3– 5 p.m.: A second year addition to the conference will be the Renewable Energy Session to be held on Feb. 10. This session will be free of charge for those attending. It will provide an overview of the wind and solar energy as options to landowners. Experts will be on-hand to answer energy related questions from those attending in this new field.

For a complete brochure with program sessions and speakers, visit <http://dallas.tamu.edu/BIG>.