March 30, 2015

Wilson County Agricultural Article from Ruth Correll, Agricultural Extension Agent

Agricultural Hall of Fame to Induct Four on April 7

In 2007 a group of agricultural leaders came together with an idea to recognize folks, who through their involvement, have made an impact and left their mark on agriculture in Wilson County. This was the birth of the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame.

The 2015 inductees are Dave W. Smith, Sr., Troy Vanatta, Dr. Mike Harris and James H. Wright. The banquet will be Tuesday, April 7, 6 PM at the James E. Ward Ag. Center. Tickets are $15.00 and are available by contacting Diane Major at 615-444-1890, ext 3.

Did you know that agriculture is one of the largest industries in Wilson County? You may ask how is this possible? It is due to the many components of the agricultural industry. It is an industry made up of many folks in production agriculture, agricultural business and agricultural education. Most of these folks are independent entities within this industry but all are involved in the same industry. It is beef cattle farmers, dairymen, sheep and goat producers, pork producers, agriculture teachers, feed stores, veterinarians, Extension agents, soil conservationists, farm organizations, and the many folks that support and serve the agricultural industry. Agriculture contributed over $18,000,000 to the Wilson County economy according to the 2012 agricultural census.

Visit the new website at www.wilsoncountyaghalloffame.org for information on those that have been inducted and the mission of this organization or to nominate an agriculturist.

Recent Freeze Event and Fruit Loses

We experienced some unseasonably cold nights this past weekend. The below freezing temperatures can cause damage to fruit tree and small fruit crops. Dr. David Lockwood, UT Extension fruit production specialist, provided the following information.

Buds and blossoms on tree fruit and small fruit crops are currently at their most susceptible point in regards to cold damage. For tree fruits approaching full bloom and for a period beyond it, 28 degrees F for 30 minutes or longer is considered to be the point at which 10 percent of the buds and blossoms will be killed and 24 to 25 degrees F for 30 minutes or longer is considered to be the 90 percent kill point. For many small fruit crops like strawberries and blueberries, the critical temperature is a bit higher – about 30 degrees. F. For periods where the subfreezing temperatures last longer, or where there are back-to-back cold events, damage may be more severe. The tolerance of the buds and blooms to cold will also be influenced somewhat by the overall health of the plant.
The critical temperatures for damage with developing fruits shortly after blossom are the same as for bloom. It is important to keep in mind that a healthy fruit tree can set a full crop on a small percentage of its blooms. Following a frost, it takes a while before the amount of damage can be assessed. With this in mind, it would be a mistake to quit caring for the crop immediately after the cold event because there may be more surviving buds than thought and by the time this can be recognized, other factors such as insects and diseases may have damaged the remaining fruits.

This may be late for this cold event but good information to file away. Some protection of the blooms from a frost/freeze event can be achieved in many cases, and often just a difference of a few degrees will mean the difference between no damage or minor damage and a severe loss. There are several thoughts on frost protection – some effective and some totally ineffective or worse.

**Small tree and small fruit protection recommendations.** –

- For small trees or small fruit crops, covering the canopy of the plant with a sheet or blanket will slow down re-radiation of heat accumulated in the soil during the day back up into the atmosphere at night. Plastic sheeting is not as good a covering as cloth. Plastic sheeting can cause a burn on the plant where the plastic rests against new plant tissue in subfreezing temperatures. The more of the plant canopy that can be covered, the better, however, the cover does not need to completely envelope the crown of the plant from ground to ground. The cover serves as a way to slow down heat loss from the ground under the plant.

- Covers should be put over plants late in the afternoon to early evening to take advantage of as much heat accumulation in the ground during the day as possible. Covers should be removed the following day before temperatures get too high.

- A small, supplemental heat source such as a trouble light using an incandescent bulb suspended in or under the plant canopy and under the blanket covering the plant will provide some added benefit. More intense heat sources should be avoided.

- For additional information contact your local UT/TSU Extension Office.

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**Agricultural Market Summary**

**Cattle Market Trends**
The question is if the market has already experienced its spring peak. Steers weighing 525 pounds lost $6 per hundred-weight from the previous week while 625 pound steers fell $5 per hundredweight. Similarly, heifers weighing 525 and 625 pounds fell $3 and $4 per hundredweight respectively. Feeder steers $3 to $8 lower, $173.00-$400.00; Feeder heifers $3 to $4 lower, $158.00-$290.00; Slaughter cows mostly steady to $2 higher, $93.00-$116.50; Slaughter bulls mostly steady to $2 higher, $124.50-$146.00.

**Grain Market Trends**
Corn was up; soybeans and wheat were down for the week. Corn – cash price, $3.76-$4.20. May futures closed at $3.91 a bushel, up 6 cents a bushel. Soybeans – cash price, $9.36-$10.09. May futures closed at $9.67 a bushel, down 6 cents a bushel. Wheat – cash price, $4.59-$4.94. May closed at $5.07 a bushel, down 23 cents a bushel.

**TN Goat and Sheep Market Summary**
Goats – Slaughter kids, $120.00-$268.00; Yearlings, $157.00--$207.50; Slaughter bucks, $115.00-$150.00; Slaughter nannies, $95.00-$152.50; Feeder kids, $140.00-$162.50. Sheep – Slaughter lambs, $146.00-$242.50; Slaughter ewes,$60.00-$100.00; Slaughter rams, $81.00-$109.00.

For additional information on these and other topics, contact the UT Extension Office, 925 East Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, TN 37087, 615-444-9584 or acorrell@utk.edu. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in all programs. Visit the UT/TSU Extension webpage at http://utextension.tennessee.edu/wilson or look for UT & TSU Extension, Wilson County on Facebook.

Submitted by:
Ruth Correll
Agricultural Agent
UT/TSU Extension, Wilson County
acorrell@utk.edu