

Agriculture News

Tech honors ag leaders

Texas Tech University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources honored three Texas residents with Gerald W. Thomas Outstanding Agriculturalist Awards on Thursday (Nov. 8) during its annual Pig Roast at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center Banquet Hall. The Pig Roast also features scholarship donors, recipients and intercollegiate judging team accomplishments.

The annual Outstanding Agriculturalist Awards recognize individuals for their significant contributions to the agriculture industry in three categories.

This year's recipients were Richard Ridgway of Flower Mound for public service, Joe Hurst of Idalou for agribusiness, and Kevin Igo of Plainview for agricultural production.

Richard Ridgway – Public Service. The Flower Mound resident now serves as the president of the Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation, where he's initiated a partnership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the World Food Prize Foundation to promote a

broader understanding of agriculture and to demonstrate the importance of scientific knowledge.

Previously he served in research and leadership positions with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in both College Station and Beltsville, Md. He received his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Texas Tech (1957). His master's and doctorate in entomology are from Cornell University (1959, 1960).

Joe Hurst – Agribusiness. Hurst is currently the general manager of Hurst Farm Supply, which was established in 1955 by his father as a Lorenzo John Deere dealership. Hurst developed a process for trading and selling late model, used cotton strippers that enabled the firm to earn the title of the nation's top cotton stripper dealer for John Deere. The company has dealerships in Lubbock, Slaton, Crosbyton, Colorado City, Snyder and Abernathy. Hurst is a long-time supporter of FFA, Texas Boys Ranch, Women's Protective Services, and the American Museum of Agriculture. He received his bachelor's degree

in agricultural education from Texas Tech (1979).

Kevin Igo – Agricultural Production. The Plainview native currently farms 3,000 acres of land, with crops including corn, cotton, wheat, milo, cucumbers, soybeans and alfalfa. He also runs 225 head of Black Angus cattle and operates a feedlot/finish yard with background cattle. Igo has produced and raised 14 Breed or Reserve Breed Champion steers at major Texas stock shows in Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston. Along with being a crop consultant in his area, he's also the president and owner of Halfway Farm Chemical, Inc. He has been a Hale County 4-H Adult Leaders for more than 28 years, as well as a member of the Hale County Stock Show Board and Texas 4-H Foundation Board.

The Outstanding Agriculturalist Awards, established in 1969, are named for Dr. Gerald W. Thomas who served as dean of Tech's College of Agricultural Sciences from 1958 to 1970.

High Plains Ag Conference set for Dec. 7

from AgriLife TODAY

A wide range of agricultural topics will greet participants to this year's High Plains Ag Conference set from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 1102 East Farm-to-Market 1294, Lubbock.

"This year's conference will address traditional crops for our area such as corn and grain sorghum, but we'll also be taking a look at strawberry production

and pigweed control," said Robert Scott, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent in Lubbock County. "The topics are timely and I think it will be a day well-spent for those wanting to catch up on the latest developments in High Plains agriculture."

The program conducted by AgriLife Extension will offer five Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units – one laws and regulations, one

integrated pest management and three general; and five Texas Certified Crop Adviser continuing education units – three crop management and two pest management.

Individual pre-registration is \$35 by Dec. 3 and \$45 thereafter. The fees include lunch. For more information and to preregister contact Scott at 806-775-1680, rj-scott@tamu.edu.

Dwindling water supplies prompt recommendations for growers

from AgriLife TODAY

WESLACO – Texas A&M AgriLife Research has released a set of recommendations for South Texas growers facing an extended drought and dwindling water supplies, according to an agency water engineer.

Dr. Juan Enciso, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research water engineer, has helped develop a list of 16 recommendations for growers facing curtailed water supplies next year. (AgriLife Communications by Rod Santa Ana)

"A relentless drought, record high temperatures and depleted water reserves for the past two years in South Texas require us to take a closer look at how we manage water under water-limiting conditions," said Dr. Juan Enciso, a water engineer at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Weslaco.

While the state has suffered multi-billion dollar agricultural losses due to drought, the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas has been especially hard-hit, he said.

"We're facing a critical situation in the months to come in providing water for domestic and business consumption, and because of projected water shortages, many irrigation districts in the Rio Grande Valley have informed growers that water may have to be allocated next year," Enciso said.

But not all irrigation water districts are created equal, according to Wayne Halbert, manager of the Harlingen Irrigation District, one of 26 in the Valley.

"Before growers start planning for what they're going to plant next year, they need to contact the manager of the irrigation district they are in," he said. "Each irrigation district has individual allocations of water, policies of how water is allocated and water duties, meaning water available to farmers varies by district."

By now, Halbert said, irrigation district managers know how much water they'll have next year.

"They each know their storage water amount, so they can tell growers what to expect so growers can make decisions on what they should or should not plant. Unfortunately, sugarcane and citrus growers are locked into the water they need, but they have options in planting other crops such as grain sorghum, cotton or corn."

Maybe, based on what their irrigation manager says, they'll decide to plant part of their crop on dryland in order to save water for their other crops. It all depends on the grower and the district he or she is in; no one person can

tell growers what to expect Valley-wide. Only their irrigation manager can do that."

AgriLife Research has provided 16 management recommendations to help growers address this period of limited water supplies, Enciso said.

"It's a long list that is available by emailing me at j-enciso@tamu.edu," he said. "These recommendations are also available at <http://weslaco.tamu.edu>. The list includes taking advantage of this drought to level their land, install flow meters and rain gauges to better manage water use, reduce irrigated areas to give priority to perennial crops like citrus and sugarcane, plant more drought-resistant crops, and consider which crops have high- and low-yield response, profitability and risk to water stress."

Others recommendations include considerations regarding irrigating at critical crop growth stages, managing furrow flow rates to advance water faster on rows to reduce deep percolation, supervise irrigation to avoid runoff, reduce the irrigated areas and the number of irrigations in some crops, he said.

Also on the list is using plastic irrigation pipes, irrigating alternate rows, irrigating on furrows compacted by the traffic of tractor wheels and the use of surge irrigation. Farmers can also plant dryland crops such as sorghum and cotton.

"The details on each of these recommendations vary by district and farmer; not all recommendations apply to all growers. But our office is ready to help any and all growers who would like more information," Enciso said.

The list of recommendations was compiled by AgriLife Research with input from the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water District Managers' Association, he said.



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