

Polk County AgriLife Extension Beef/Forage & Natural Resources Newsletter

Local Programs

Produce Growers

Breakfast:

Watermelon

January 26

Tree Giveaway

Feb. 2

Forest Pest Seminar

Feb. 9

East Texas Natural

Resources Tours:

March Tour, location
and date TBD

Produce Growers

Breakfast: Assistive

Farming Tools

March 29

Additional AgriLife Programs

East Texas Fruit, Nut,
and Vegetable

Conference

February 9

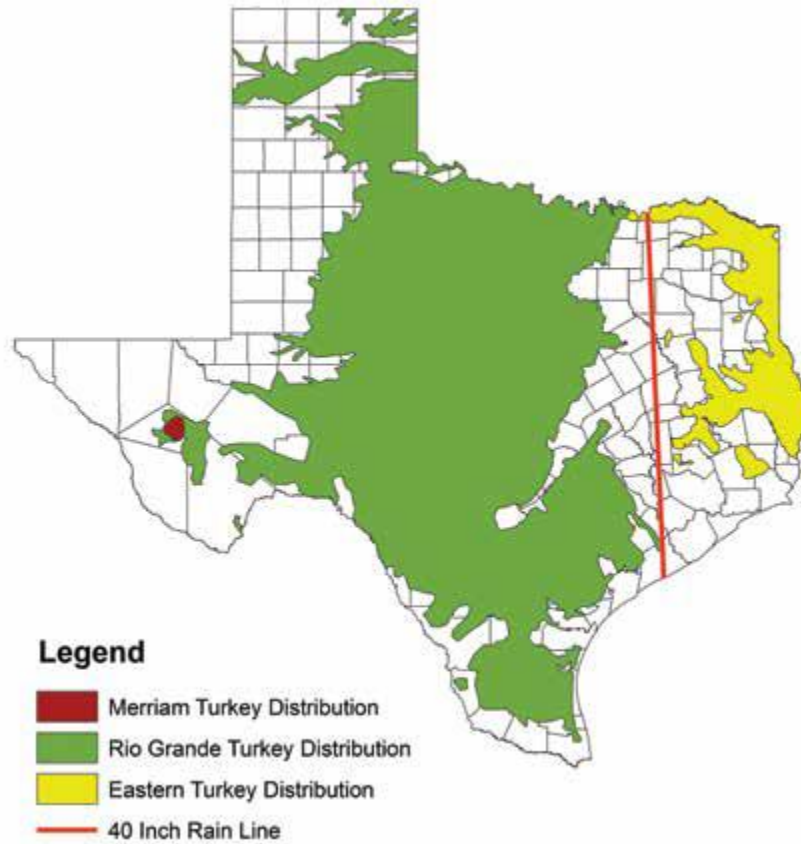
Texas Turkey

Did you know that turkeys weren't always so plentiful in Texas? Unregulated hunting and habitat destruction decimated wild turkey populations in the 1800s. Numbers remained low into the mid-1900s, with only an estimated 100,000 birds in 1959. Not to worry, conservation-minded decisions to protect and promote important habitat increased the species' numbers, and by 1970, Texas had an estimated 575,000 birds.

Turkeys can be found throughout the state but tend to avoid the very arid areas of the Trans-Pecos and the agricultural areas of the high plains. Out of the 5 subspecies of wild turkey, Texas has 3: the Rio Grande turkey, the eastern turkey, and Merriam's turkey. The subspecies tend to inhabit different environments. For example, Rio Grande turkeys prefer more arid and brushy environments and are found throughout the Edwards Plateau and the plains of South Texas. Eastern turkeys, on the other hand, prefer areas with higher rainfall, such as the Pineywoods and bottomland hardwoods of eastern Texas. Merriam's turkeys prefer the ponderosa pines found in the Trans-Pecos mountains.

Aside from location, the range of light- to dark-colored tips on the tail feathers is the most telling identifier of subspecies. Eastern turkeys tend to have the darkest tail feather tips, which are dark brown. Next, the Rio Grande tends to have lighter, tan-colored tail feather tips. The Merriam's turkey is the most obvious and has white tail feather tips. The intensity of gobbling also varies between subspecies, with eastern turkeys having the strongest gobbles and Merriam's turkeys having the weakest gobbles of all subspecies.

Currently, wild turkey populations are thought to be thriving in Texas, with an estimated 500,000 Rio Grande turkeys, 16,000 eastern turkeys, and a few hundred Merriam's turkeys. However, this isn't the case in a lot of places due to poor habitat. Expanding human populations means an increase in things like urbanization and agriculture, and turkeys require an interspersed of early successional habitat for nesting and brood rearing and mature trees for roosting. Proper habitat management is crucial to ensuring that the critters we all love stick around for the future.



From left: Eastern turkey, Rio Grande turkey and Merriam's turkey.

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Polk County Produce Growers Breakfast Meeting, Last Friday of Odd Numbered Months

Join us for a fellowship of local growers and garden enthusiasts. Meetings allow participants a chance to gain knowledge and skills from vegetable and fruit specialists while also getting to know other growers in the county. Free donuts and coffee courtesy of Polk County Farm Bureau. Meetings occur the last Friday of odd numbered months at 8:00 am. Location is Farm Bureau Office in Livingston. If you will be a first-time attendee, please RSVP by calling the Polk County Extension office. Upcoming meetings include watermelon production on Jan. 26th and assistive farming tools for elderly and individuals with disabilities on March 29th.

Tree Giveaway, February 2nd

The annual tree giveaway will occur at Polk County Chamber of Commerce 1001 US 59 Loop North, Livingston. The event will begin at noon and will last until all trees are passed out or 2:00. Trees will be bare root and trees available this year include bald cypress, cherrybark oak, overcup oak, swampchestnut oak, and water oak.

Forest Pest Seminar, February 9th

CEUs credit pending approval will be available for TDA applicator license holders, Society of American Foresters, Texas Accredited Foresters, Certified Arborist, Pro Logger and wildlife society. Vendors will be on site so that landowners and foresters can talk to companies in the industry. This event covers a variety of topics and will be of interest to anyone involved in forestry from commercial loggers to first-time timber owners. Cost is \$60 and seminar will be at Lufkin Convention Center. Registration: Through QR code below or call Angelina County extension office 936-634-6414.



East Texas Natural Resources Tours

Come join us on free tours of professionally managed sites across east Texas. Guided tours by professionals will allow participants a chance to gain in field knowledge of managing habitats, wildlife, and fisheries resources of east Texas. All tours will depart from the extension office in Livingston at 8:00, but transportation and lunch will not be provided. Tour Schedule: Dates and locations are still being finalized for 2024. Tours will occur in March, May, and July. Tours will be finalized by the end of January and information will be available in the March newsletter.

East Texas Fruit, Nut, and Vegetable Conference, February 9th

Topics will include blueberries, grapes, tomatoes, peppers, pears, and blackberries. The conference will take place in Tyler and the registration fee is \$25. For more information contact the smith county extension office 903-590-2980.

Can you match these hay analysis terms with the correct definition?

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Dry Matter (DM) | calculated from true protein & non-protein nitrogen |
| Crude Protein (CP) | total mineral content of forage |
| Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) | sum of digestible fiber, protein, lipid, and carbohydrate components |
| Ash | no specific nutritional meaning and used only as an index of the relative value of a forage |
| Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) | reports nutrients with the moisture removed |
| Relative Feed Value | measurement of poorly digestive components plus indigestible portions of the plant |

Answers Below

Dry Matter (DM) = reports nutrients with the moisture removed

Crude Protein (CP) = calculated from true protein & non-protein nitrogen

Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) = measurement of poorly digestive components plus indigestible portions of the plant

Ash = total mineral content of forage

Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) = sum of digestible fiber, protein, lipid, and carbohydrate components

Relative Feed Value = no specific nutritional meaning and used only as an index of the relative value of a forage

Management Tips

- Winter pastures in east Texas may require up to 3-4 split applications of nitrogen fertilizer.
- Spring will be here before you know it, so beat the rush and get your soil samples done!
- Calves should be vaccinated with a blackleg vaccine, such as a 7-way vaccine, at 60 to 90 days of age.
- Feeding adequate hay through early springs reduces the risk of livestock consuming toxic plants that can be common in pastures during early spring.

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YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/AgriLifeExtensionPolkCounty>

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