

PECAN NEWS

Executive Director Editorial

The Texas Pecan Board has been around since August 1998. It is a Texas State Legislature Approved Checkoff Program meaning that all pecan growers in the state of Texas must participate in order that “all participate” to help and support anything pecan in Texas.

Checkoff programs exist because growers (not buyers or shellers) decided that they were better off if they all cooperate to do promotion, research, education and marketing – **TOGETHER!** The Texas Pecan Board like every other commodity board in Texas (beef, corn, sorghum, peanuts, etc.) is a state agency representing your commodity. We operate as a state agency under the umbrella of the Texas Department of Agriculture. They (TDA), oversee our assessment collection, our elections, our meetings, our budget, even our checking accounts to ensure that we spend your money properly and wisely.

Checkoff programs can have a lot of power and authority in an industry because they are a state agency and are a part of state government but they must have grower support to accomplish anything. Checkoff programs are the purest form of grower cooperation and USDA economic research consistently shows that for every \$1 invested you get as much as \$18 in return.

Currently, we are in a budget crisis. We are not broke and we don't have debt, but what we do have is momentum with Texas consumers, pecan food manufacturers and pecan retailers. Wild Hive, our marketing firm, has worked hard for us to make a difference in the Texas pecan world and we all hate to see it stop. We have lots of pecan production problems we need to solve and we have marketing issues that just won't go away. **Now is not the time to back up or even slow down. Please don't be part of the problem, send in your assessments and be part of the solution!**

Texas Pecan Crop Assessments

80 individual growers submitted assessments on the **2018** Texas Pecan Crop. These 80 growers paid in **\$113,501.03** in assessments on **22,700,206** pounds of pecans. This represents just **67%** of the total Texas crop in 2018 of 33,600,000 pounds. In **2017**, 63 growers paid **\$42,901.10** in assessments on **8,580,220** pounds of

pecans. In 2017 this represented **18%** of the total Texas Crop of over 49,000,000 pounds.

In 2018, of the \$113,501.03 paid by 80 growers in assessments, 6 individual growers paid in \$77,776.23 or just over 68.5% of the total. Of all growers that paid assessments in 2018, there were requests for refunds of \$44,794.77 or 39.5% of all payments. 94% of the \$44,794.77 refund amount was requested **by two of the 6 growers. There is every indication by those growers that this will continue.**

So far in **2019** there has been assessment payments totaling **\$15,925.96** representing **3,185,192** pounds of pecans paid by **14** Texas growers. Of the \$15,925.96, **\$3,290.26** has been refunded or 21%.

November 16, 2018 – February 27, 2020	
Savings (Nov. 16, 2018)	\$16,000.00
Checking (Nov. 16, 2018)	\$220,600.00
Income 2018-2020	\$143,543.06
Total Banking & Income	\$380,143.06
Executive Director	\$23,310.19
Insurance	\$1,798.00
Postage	\$1,241.14
Cindy Wise (retired)	\$5,544.76
Office Expenses	\$492.79
Office Supplies	\$980.76
TPB Promotions	\$5,000.00
Wild Hive Promotions	\$235,863.17
Refund Checks	\$33,525.07
Travel (Board and Ex Dir)	\$5,627.30
Future Obligations	\$25,000
Total Expenses	\$338,383.18
Current Assets	\$41,759.88

Pecan Weevil Plans

There are several issues these past few months that have really aggravated pecan growers and one near the top of the list is pecan weevil. If you live in most of Texas you

know pecan weevil and you know this insect can be a real problem in the later part of the year. It is not unusual to have a great crop in August and see it nearly disappear as pecan weevil grubs devour as much as 50% of all the nuts on the trees. Fortunately, this year pecan weevil all but disappeared, but next year, look out!



Because this insect can cause so many problems, western US pecan producers desperately want to keep it from moving into their area, an area that doesn't have pecan weevil. What is the Texas Pecan Board doing? First, we have a responsibility as the state agency for pecans to help growers with this issue. We are

working with the Texas Department of Agriculture to educate growers, implement compliance agreements and approve treatment facilities. Second, we are working with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to develop educational materials and methods that help growers contain this insect and possibly even bring more counties into the non-quarantine area. Third, we are working with USDA researchers to develop a pheromone for pecan weevil that will help us know if they are in an area much like the boll weevil traps. Fourth, we have worked with USDA and TDA to get Specialty Crop Grant funds that will help fund all our efforts. If you have questions don't hesitate to call!

Spring Freeze or Just Cold Weather?

Dr. Lu Zhang is a researcher at Oklahoma State University and a regular contributor to the Oklahoma Growers Association newsletter and meeting. She spoke last June at their yearly conference on the "Influence of Spring Freeze on Pecan Bloom." I was at the conference and was fascinated by the discussion. She cut pecan limb shoots with buds or flowers at the outer bud scale shed stage or even early bloom stage to conduct her simulated cold weather test.

You can see in the picture (courtesy of Bill Reid in Kansas) that the bud scales are just open or are at bud scale shed stage. She put these cut shoots in the freezer at 21.2°, 24.8°, 32° and 39.2° temperatures for 4, 8 or 12

hours. After treating they were cultivated in pure water in a growth chamber. The shoots then grew and bloomed.

Interestingly at the 39.2° temperature for 4 hours the male flowers were wilted and were without female flowers. Dr. Zhang's conclusion, "cold temperatures" may be a better description instead of a "spring freeze." We have always thought that we lose pecan crops to freezes but sometimes it is simply cold weather at the wrong time!



Texas Pecan Retail Product Innovation Workshop, Maybe?

As you can tell from the chart on the first page the Texas Pecan Board has received very few 2019 assessments and as a result our promotion efforts are severely curtailed at a time when we are seeing great results from our promotion programs. Fortunately, Wild Hive is working with us to continue to pursue dollars outside of what pecan growers are willing or able to pay. TDA approached us about submitting a proposal that would work with the snack food industry to develop new products and promotions.

In this proposal the Texas Pecan Board is seeking to increase demand for Texas pecans by helping Texas pecan growers and processors develop new consumer packed goods (CPG) or shelf-stable retail products that use Texas pecans. The **Texas Pecan Retail Product Innovation Workshop** will engage Texas pecan growers and processors in a two-day innovation workshop during which participants will explore the science of pecans, flavor combinations, and the culinary possibilities that pecans offer to stimulate innovation and creativity in product development.

Additionally, the session will explore strategies and tactics to help Texas pecan growers and processors develop CPG and shelf-stable retail products that will be successful at retail. From concept to packaging and branding, the session will prepare participants to develop and launch Texas pecan products in the retail environment.

Objectives

- Educate Texas pecan growers and processors about product ideation, packaging, labeling, branding and marketing of consumer-packaged goods and shelf-stable retail products
- Increase the availability and diversity of consumer-packaged goods and shelf-stable retail products using Texas pecans
- Support an expressed Texas pecan grower/processor need

The proposal has a significant cost because there are so many parts and it spans over a year in time but we are hopeful it will be funded, **maybe**. With less grower funds this year we are pursuing every other avenue possible to keep our promotion efforts alive. Thanks to Wild Hive for their great work with the Texas Pecan Board!

Pecan Orchard Benchmarks

How many pounds of pecans do you produce per tree? What are your input costs per tree, per pound or per acre? How do your costs compare with other pecan growers? What should you be paying for harvest, cleaning, spraying, hedging? What is the average production in my area of Texas? What is my orchard worth? Should I even be in the pecan business? So many questions????

We are in difficult times in the pecan business but for far too long we have not run our pecan business like a “business.” Most growers don’t really know how much it costs to be in business and they sure don’t know how they compare with other pecan growers.

It is this uncertainty that led me to apply for a TDA Specialty Crop Grant to study what it costs to be in the pecan business. I teamed up with Dr. Jason Johnson,

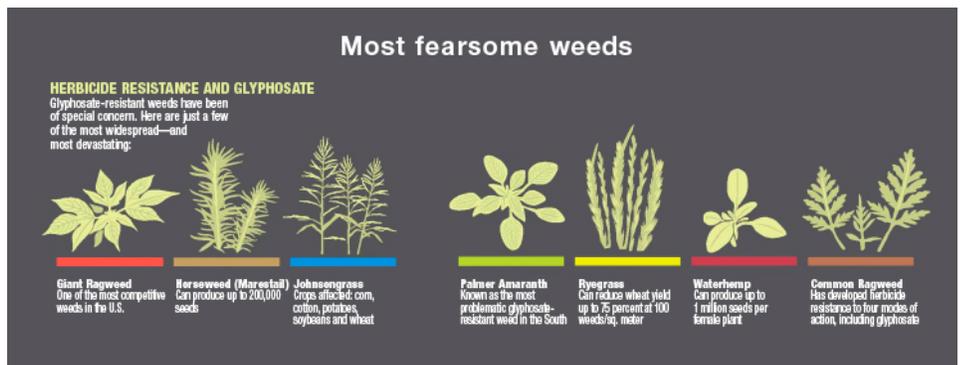
Associate Professor and Extension Economist at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Stephenville. I have known Dr. Johnson a long time and he is a great resource for knowing and understanding producers, Texas ag industry and how to get answers!

This effort is titled, “**Identifying Management Benchmarks for Profitable Pecan Production in Texas.**” The purpose of this project is to identify relevant production and financial benchmarks for pecan growers in order to sharpen management targets and goals and communicate those critical performance measures to Texas pecan growers. Benchmark analysis is a methodology that has been employed by many commodity groups (dairy, beef cattle, bison, row crops, etc.) to help improve profitability, but has not been developed or employed for pecan production. Collecting and examining the production and financial performance of many pecan growers can help identify characteristics or factors that are true of the financially successful producer, as well as those characteristics of the financially stressed. We are very hopeful that this grant will be funded and that we will soon have a great economic database that will help growers make great financial decisions.



Weed Control in Pecan Orchards is Tough!

It is almost here – Growing Season! We look forward to a new crop year and yet we can also dread a new crop year and all the problems it brings. I have been in many central Texas orchards lately and made a fast trip out to El Paso last week looking at pecan orchards and attending the West Texas Pecan Growers Association



TEXAS PECAN BOARD

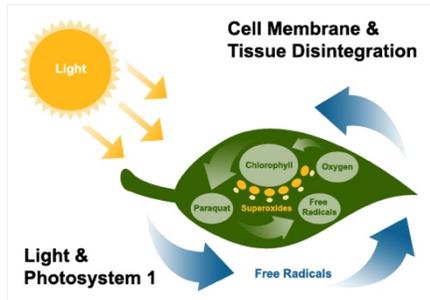
meeting. I don't think anybody is ready just yet for a new year and still here it is.

A big struggle we have in orchard management is weed control and the struggle is getting worse. The picture above from Syngenta shows the weeds we most fear because they are so hard to control with our traditional herbicide programs. Glyphosate is a great herbicide but weed resistance is a game changer and nobody likes these weeds being in the way come harvest time.

There are two things you must keep in mind as you think about weed control. First, it is difficult to control weeds with only contact herbicides. In the past spraying glyphosate repeatedly worked but not anymore and just using contact herbicides is not working and is costly. Second, any weed control program is probably going to include a pre-emerge herbicide of some type. There are several effective ones on the market and most growers combine two or more to increase effectiveness on both grasses and broadleaf weeds. There is still time to act but that time is growing short.

Paraquat is an option but training is required!

Because of the weed resistance issue with glyphosate some growers are switching to paraquat dichloride simply known as paraquat. This is strictly a contact herbicide with very little to no root activity but it has a long history of pecan orchard use. Some growers are now taking another look at it or have completely switched but there is a catch this year. EPA is mandating that any certified applicator who will be buying, transporting, handling, mixing, spraying, etc., must go through online training and be certified to use or handle paraquat. The training is easy and takes a little over an hour – I know, I took it! Let me know if you need help. **By the way, paraquat is a dangerous chemical but the real significant danger is if you or especially a child drinks the chemical.**



April is National Pecan Month

I am sure you will hear more about this from the American Pecan Council as they do lots of pecan promotions during April. But you can do your part by

promoting pecans to your friends, telling them about the month and by buying and eating new and different pecan products. Most pecan growers have never tried any of the many new and varied pecan products on the market so now is the time. Pecan oil, pecan flour, pecan “malk”, pecan meal, pecan pie crusts, all are made by pecan pieces and remove this product making room for expensive pecan halves in the market! **And, remember that here in TEXAS we celebrate October as Texas Pecan Month!**



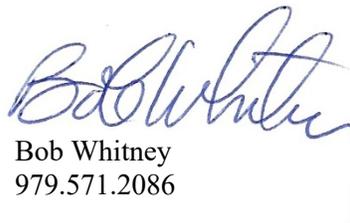
Upcoming Texas Pecan Board and APC Elections

Every even numbered year the Texas Pecan Board holds open elections for 3 board seats. Your 9 board members are elected to 6-year terms and 3 are elected every 2 years to guarantee a staggered rotation program for board members. Board nomination forms will be available after May 1 and the election will take place in the month of August when ballots are mailed out. TPB meets face-to-face at the TPGA meeting in July but all other meetings are by conference call which saves time and travel. Here is your chance to make a difference in your Texas pecan industry. **American Pecan Council** nomination forms were just mailed out and I am sure the election is just around the corner. Already I am seeing campaign ads, here is another chance to direct your pecan future...

Upcoming Pecan Meetings

March 6th – Comanche County, De Leon
March 10th – Hedging to Increase Pecan Production, Montz Pecan Orchard, 1pm
April 2nd – Mills County, Goldthwaite
May 4th – San Saba County, San Saba
May 14th – Andrews County, Andrews

Don't hesitate to call or text.


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