

Mandatory Trainings Available for Herbicide and Pesticide Applicators

Friday, December 27, 2019 By Dr. Pete Dotray
New EPA-Required Paraquat Training - 2020

In March 2019, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that certified applicators must successfully complete an EPA-approved training before mixing, loading, and/or applying paraquat dichloride (commonly referred to as paraquat). Paraquat is a restricted use pesticide (RUP) due to acute toxicity and is sold under several brand names. New labeling with the active ingredient paraquat dichloride (e.g. Gramoxone, Paraquat, Blanco, Bonfire Herbicide, Devour, Firestorm, Helmquat, Para-SHOT, Parazone, and Quik-Quat) will require additional training in order to apply these products.

Newly labeled paraquat dichloride products may ONLY be mixed, loaded, or applied by a certified applicator who has successfully completed the paraquat-specific training before use. Application "under direct supervision" of a certified applicator is NO LONGER allowed. Anyone purchasing and using these products must have a private applicator license or a commercial applicator license. If you have been applying under someone else's license in the past you will need to get your own license before applying these products with the new label statements.

New label changes will include improved toxicity communication in English and Spanish, and a "DANGER – ONE SIP CAN KILL" statement. Since 2000, 17 deaths have been caused by accidental ingestion of paraquat. Many of these deaths resulted from people illegally transferring the pesticide to beverage containers and the victim later mistaking it for a drink. A single sip can be fatal. Since 2000, three more deaths and many severe injuries have been caused by the pesticide getting onto the skin or into the eyes of those working with it.

The only training that meets the requirements is housed on the eXtension website (<http://usparaquattraining.com>). You will need to create an account if you don't already have one and allow approximately 30 minutes for this training. Once the training is complete a certificate will be provided. The training will be required every three years.

New Auxin Certification Training - 2020

New Auxin Certification Trainings are planned at several venues in 2020. This training will satisfy the US EPA annual requirement for mandatory dicamba applicator training and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) requirement for annual auxin specific training for approved dicamba and 2,4-D formulations. This training is not a substitute for the state-specific Certified Applicator training, which is required to purchase and use RUPs. This training will highlight Federal label restrictions for approved formulations, Texas 24C label modifications, and new approved formulations for use in 2020.

The TDA-approved training from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a one-hour training and 1 continuing education unit (CEU) in Laws and Regs will be provided. In

addition to several county-based and industry-sponsored trainings, trainings are scheduled at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center - Lubbock on February 14, March 13, April 10, and May 8 at 9:00 AM.

For more information on any of the above, please contact Dr. Pete Dotray with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at pete.dotray@agnet.tamu.edu.

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Farm Stress - Help and Hope

December 2019 by Mary Jane Buerkle
The holidays mostly have come and gone, and while they may have been stressful for some, for others they could be downright debilitating, intensifying depression and anxiety. Couple that with today's farm economy crisis, and the feelings of stress and isolation can increase dramatically, leading to depression, substance abuse and suicide.

Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, Plains Cotton Growers, and experts at Texas Tech have teamed up to provide information about how to get help and have hope. PCCA has created a page on their website called "Farm Stress – Help and Hope" with resources and facts about mental health crisis. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, 91% believe that financial stress or fear of losing the family farm impacts mental health.

"Every day, farmers and their families deal with factors that are beyond their control, which impact their finances, relationships, and many other aspects of their operation," PCG CEO Steve Verett said. "We urge anyone struggling with stress, depression, or suicidal thoughts to seek help, and encourage everyone to check on their family members, friends and neighbors to offer support and help during these trying times."

Resources include (but are not limited to):

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255. The call is free and confidential, and they will connect the caller to a counselor in their area.
- Crisis Text Line – text HOME to 741741 to be connected to a trained counselor 24/7.
- Farm Aid Farmer Hotline, 1-800-327-6243. Staff will answer calls Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

More information can be found at <https://pcca.com/farm-stress-help-and-hope/>.

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**All Ag/Timber Exemptions
 Expire December 31!
 RENEW NOW!**

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/ag-timber/>

Upcoming Area Ag Conferences

January 10 – West Plains Crops Conference, Registration at 8:30 a.m., Sundown Room at South Plains College, Levelland. CEUs available. More info: Kerry Siders, EA-IPM, or Wes Utley, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 894-3159.

January 13 – Crop Production Meeting, **Dalhart**. More info: Mike Bragg, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 244-4434.

January 13 – Hemp Production Meeting, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, 6500 W. Amarillo Blvd., **Amarillo**. More info: Megan Eikner, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 373-0713.

January 14 – Southern Mesa Ag Conference, Registration 8 a.m., Forrest Park Community Center, **Lamesa**. CEUs available. More info: Gary Roschetzky, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 872-3444.

January 14 – Crop Profitability and Farm Bill Analyzer Meeting, Ochiltree County Expo Center, 402 Expo Drive, **Perryton**. More info: Scott Strawn, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 435-4501.

January 15 – SE Panhandle Ag Conference, Donley County Activity Center, **Clarendon**. 5 CEUs available. More info: Leonard Haynes, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 874-2141.

January 15 – Top of Texas Ag Conference, M.K. Brown Auditorium, 1100 W. Coronado Drive, **Pampa**. Four CEUs including Auxin Certification. Lunch provided. More info: Nick Simpson, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 669-8033.

January 15 – Crop Production Meeting, **Stratford**. More info: Dennis Coker, Extension Program Specialist, (979) 845-2862.

January 16 – South Plains Ag Conference, Registration 8 a.m., Reddy Event Center, 2149 Tahoka Road, US-380, **Brownfield**. Cost: \$20 at the door. More info: Geoff Cooper, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 637-4060.

January 21 – NW Panhandle Cotton Conference, Registration 8:30 a.m., Moore County Community Building, **Dumas**. More info: Marcel Fischbacher, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 935-2594.

January 22 – Crop Production Meeting, **Panhandle**. More info: Jody Bradford, Carson County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 537-3882.

January 23 – Texas Alliance for Water Conservation 6th Annual Water College, Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. No fee to attend, lunch provided, CEUs available. More info: <http://www.tawc.us>

January 23 – Hale/Swisher Ag Conference, Ollie Liner Center, Plainview. Cost: \$20 at the door. 4 CEUs plus Auxin Certification. More info: Andy Hart, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 291-5267.

January 24 – Caprock Cotton Conference, Registration 7 a.m., program begins 8 a.m., Floyd County Friends Unity Center, **Muncy** (between Floydada and Lockney on U.S. Highway 70). 7 CEUs and 7 CCAs available. Cost: \$40 before January 17, \$50 at the door. More info: Dr. Caitlin Jackson, Crosby County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 675-2347, or Mark Carroll, Floyd County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 983-4912.

January 28 – High Plains Cotton Conference, Registration 9:30 a.m., Ag Producers Co-op Gin east of **Spearman**. More info: Kristy Slough, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 878-4026.

January 29 – Pre-Plant Producers Meeting, registration 8:30 a.m., Randall County Extension Office, 200 N. Brown Road, **Canyon**. Cost: \$10 at the door, RSVP by January 24. Auxin Certification available. More info: Dr. J.D. Ragland, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 468-5543.

January 29 – Crop Profitability Conference, 10 a.m.-Noon, Gray County Annex, **Pampa**. Limited to first 10 people, cost \$25/farm unit. More info: Nick Simpson, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 669-8033.

January 30 – Yoakum County Ag Conference, Registration 9 a.m., Plains State Bank Event Center, **Plains**. Lunch provided, Auxin Certification available. More info: Sierra Stephens, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 456-2263.

January 30 – Right of Way Training, Registration 8:30 a.m., Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, 6500 W. Amarillo Blvd., **Amarillo**. Cost: \$20 at the door. 5 CEUs. More info: Rick Auckerman, Deaf Smith County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 364-3573.

To add your conference to this list, please email maryjane@plainscotton.org.

Check out PCG's NEW website!

www.plainscotton.org

We'd love to hear your feedback!

**High Plains Water District to Begin
 Annual Water Level Measurements**

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

From HPWD

Beginning Jan. 2, HPWD personnel will start water level measurements to determine the effect of 2019 pumping on groundwater levels in aquifers within the district.

These annual measurements are made in a network of more than 1,350 privately-owned wells. These observation wells are spaced at a density of approximately one well per nine square miles throughout the 16-county HPWD service area.

“We want the public to be aware that our staff will be visiting observation well sites from early January until completion of this work effort. They will be driving white pickup trucks that are clearly identified as Water District vehicles,” said HPWD Manager Jason Coleman.

These water level data are made available to the public through an interactive map on the HPWD website (<http://map.hpwd.org>). Persons may access annual observation well data, annual supplemental well data, and daily water level data in select wells using this feature.

An introduction to the interactive map and discussion of each of its features are included in tutorial videos posted to the HPWD YouTube channel.

Those without computer access are encouraged to contact Jed Leibbrandt at the HPWD office to request a printed report of annual water level measurement data for a county or counties of interest.

Editor's Note:

“Cotton News”, a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscotton.org