

Hondo irrigation conference designed in response to shrinking water supplies

Voluntary irrigation suspension program option to be discussed

HONDO – The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service can't create water, but on Jan. 31, the agency will be conducting a training to help growers deal with likely decreases in irrigation water.

Jason Ott, AgriLife Extension agent for Medina County said the South Texas



Spinach under irrigation in January near Hondo. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Jason Ott.)

Irrigation Conference and Trade Show will be held Jan. 31 at the Medina County Fair Hall in Hondo.

Registration before Jan. 25 is \$20, and \$30 thereafter, and will include a noon meal and educational materials, Ott said.

“In times of drought and rising costs of farming, it's important to know about the many new technologies available to growers to help save water, become more efficient and operate more profitably,” Ott said. “This conference will offer Winter Garden growers the opportunity to see the latest technologies in improved irrigation systems and their management. The event will also offer region-specific information about irrigation practices, cropping systems, policy updates and cost-sharing programs available to local producers.”

Program topics will include: The voluntary irrigation suspension program option, or VISPO; Groundwater District Updates; Status of Cost Share Funds for Growers through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program; Edwards Aquifer Authority Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Option; Economic Considerations for Irrigating; Making Best Use of Limited Water Resources; Strategies to Increase Water Productivity in Irrigation; Selection and Practical Use of Soil Moisture Sensors; Maximizing Irrigation Water Use Efficiency throughout the Growing Season; and What's New in Irrigation Technology.

Speakers will include: Dr. Guy Fipps, AgriLife Extension agricultural engineer, College Station; Jim Bordosky, Texas A&M Agrilife Research associate, Halfway; Dr. John Robinson, AgriLife Extension economist, College Station; Roland Ruiz, general manager, Edwards Aquifer Authority, San Antonio; Dr. Robert Schwartz, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bushland; and Charles Stichler, AgriLife agronomist (retired), Knippa.

“A trade show will also be held in conjunction with the conference. Local and statewide irrigation dealers and manufacturers will be present showcasing latest products and services available”, said Charles Swanson, AgriLife Extension program specialist and conference trade show coordinator.

Attendees holding a Texas Department of Agriculture private pesticide applicator’s license can earn three continuing education units, one in the general category, one in integrated pest management and one in laws and regulations.

The program is sponsored by AgriLife Extension, the Edwards Aquifer Authority, Evergreen Groundwater Conservation District , Medina County Groundwater Conservation District, Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Water Resources Institute, and the Uvalde County Groundwater Conservation District.

Conference program and trade show information can be found at the Irrigation Technology Program Website at <http://itc.tamu.edu>