

## Protect Your New Range and Pasture Plantings



New warm season range and pasture plantings are common in conservation planning systems. With each new planting, proper management is critical to guarantee success. While most of the emphasis is placed on planting viable seed at the right rate and depth, seedbed preparation, nutrient management and grazing deferment, one other challenge is commonly overlooked. Pest management is crucial, especially during the establishment period, for successful range and pasture plantings. Producers need to be aware of the potential pests and the damage these insects can cause to a newly planted range or pasture. A common sight on Texas highways during the summertime is the vast population of grasshoppers. Pickup grills are covered with the ones that made the detrimental decision to “jump” instead of “staying put”. Damage from insect feeding varies depending on environmental conditions. With the above average rainfall this year, abundant food sources are available for feeding insects.

During dry conditions, food sources are less available, so populations are concentrated and the damage can be more extreme. Producers can take steps to manage insect pressure and protect new plantings. Chemical treatments are available to control heavy infestations. Producers should always read and follow chemical labels for maximum effectiveness. Controlling over-wintering habitat will also help manage early spring insect populations. Producers can also use plant diversity around new plantings. This will not only reduce the pressure on direct feeding of the new planting, it can also provide predator habitat. While these management practices will not completely control damaging insects, they can reduce the loss to new pasture and range plantings.

## PMC Training Opportunities

### Drill Calibration, Seeding Depth, and No-Till Grass Seeding Training

Demonstration plantings are an essential part of promoting new releases throughout the service area. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, the PMC, with the help of the State Plant Materials Specialist, had the opportunity to plant a demonstration plot of ‘Centennial’ sand bluestem in San Angelo, TX. We took the opportunity to work with zone 2 agronomist to provide a grass seeding training to local field office staff. Seventeen participants discussed various management decisions in regard to grass plantings. Topics covered were seeding depth, drill calibration, and planting rates. Operation and adjustments of no-till drills was also discussed. The training concluded with the sowing of the demonstration block. The PMC also had the research plot planter on hand to plant demonstrations of warm-season species used in cover crop mixtures and commercial pollinator mixes. These demonstrations will serve as a teaching aid throughout the year.



### Cotton and Wheat Cropping Systems and Pollinator Planting Workshop



On May 19<sup>th</sup>, area specialists from zone 5 along with PMC staff provided a cropping systems, equipment and pollinator planting workshop at the Plant Materials Center. Twenty-six attendees met to discuss the benefits and challenges cotton and wheat producers face under various management practices. The group was able to explore the PMC no-till and tillage demonstration plots and talk about the differences in management decisions. Training was also offered on equipment used in these systems as well as planter calibration, seedbed preparation, planting rates and depth, and economics. The workshop ended with the discussion of the importance of pollinators and an over view of the new pollinator demonstrations being planned at the PMC.