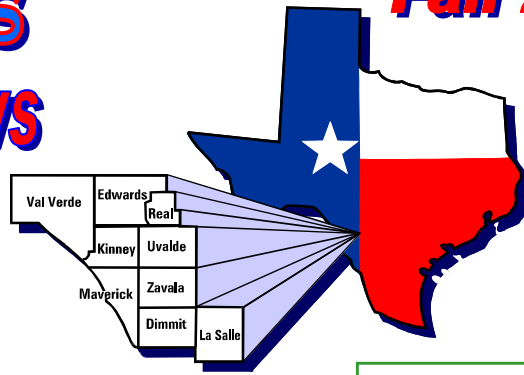


# RIO GRANDE-NUECES RC&D 9 County News

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**Fall 2009**



## President's Message

*Greetings to All:*

*It is just astonishing to me how time has a way of passing us so quickly and here we are preparing for the fall newsletter and September meeting of our RC&D Council.*

*This summer has been extremely challenging for the counties in our service area as we join the rest of the state with extremely hot and dry conditions. This current situation is particularly of concern to our agricultural producers who make up most of the industry in the 9 county area of the Rio Grande Nueces RC&D.*

*With this in mind it is only fitting that my message addresses the need to continue to partner with organizations and agencies that can collaborate with us in addressing the needs of the people in our service area. Whether it is drought, wildfires, livestock diseases or economic recessions our programs and our efforts will always be needed in both good and bad times. These collaborative efforts were exemplified by the collaboration of the Rio Grande Nueces RC&D, city of Eagle Pass, Texas/Mexico Border Coalition, NRCS, Stockman's National Bank, Medina Electric Cooperative, Capital Farm Credit, Maverick County SWCD, La Salle County SWCD, Devil's River SWCD, Dimmit County SWCD, Upper Nueces SWCD, West Nueces-Las Moras SWCD, Winter Garden SWCD, and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in providing two valuable and extremely well attended Workshops in Cotulla and Eagle Pass, addressing the current Texas Fever Tick issue in our area.*

*These two events are excellent examples of how vital our RC&D is to our region. These are the kinds of events and partners that support RC&D efforts and we must continue to strengthen these relationships to insure the needs of our clientele are met and that future needs are addressed with the same spirit of cooperation and support. We must continue to communicate with these and other partners the efforts, programs and events we plan, sponsor and co-sponsor. We must celebrate successes and we must evaluate our effectiveness for future projects to continue to be of value, success and importance to the people we serve. If you see, talk to, write to or simply run into one of these collaborating individuals thank them, praise them and invite them to continue to be our partners for years to come.*

President  
Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D

## Calendar of Events

**Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Council Meeting**, TX AgriLife Experiment Station, Uvalde, TX - September 24, 2009, 9:30 AM

**SWTGP Annual Meeting**, TX AgriLife Experiment Station, Uvalde, TX - September 30, 6:00 PM

**Entrepreneurial Classes**, Sept.—Nov. Contact 830-279-0164 for details.

**Olive Oil Field Day**—to be announced—Sept.?



## 2008-2009 Council Officers

Eddie Ramirez, President  
Marcel Valdez, Vice President  
Tom Austin, Secretary  
John Earl Smith, Treasurer

## RC&D Coordinator

Mario A. Morales

## Admin. Asst.

Leigh Ann Sanderlin

## Fever Tick Meetings Held in Maverick and La Salle Counties



Attendants at the Eagle Pass Texas Fever Tick meeting.

transmit a tiny blood parasite called, *'babesia,'* that can be deadly to cattle.

The 17 counties included are Brooks, Cameron, Dimmit, Duval, Frio, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, La Salle, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willyacy, Zapata, and Zavala.



Marcel Valdez, Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D V. P. moderated the two meetings.

To help landowners, stockmen, and wildlife ranch operators fight Texas Fever Tick, two workshops were held to discuss the potential environmental and economic impact of the Texas Fever Tick, and the technical and financial assistance available through the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The first workshop was in Eagle Pass and the second was in Cotulla. Over 150 persons attended the two meetings.

The USDA-NRCS is providing technical and financial assistance to ranchers in a 17-county area to help fight the spread of the Texas Fever Tick. The conservation assistance will be available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for the Rio Grande Domestic Animal Stress/Mortality State-wide Resource Concern, since the Texas Fever Ticks can carry and

Workshop topics included Texas Fever Tick History & Effects; Conservation Planning & the Texas Fever Tick; Texas Fever Tick NRCS EOIP Special Emphasis Program; Texas Fever Tick Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)



NRCS State Conservationist, Don Gohmert, addressing producers at the meeting in Cotulla.

Program; Prescribed Burning – Laws, Regulation and Liabilities; Texas Fever Tick and Wildlife Concerns; Range Improvements through Chemical Brush Control; and a wrap up with questions and answers.

In Eagle Pass, workshop partici-

pants enjoyed a catered lunch provided by Capital Farm Credit. In Cotulla, participants were treated to a catered lunch by Medina Electric Coop and Stockman's National Bank.

Sponsors included Rio Grande-Nueces, and Rio Bravo Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D), City of Eagle Pass, Capital Farm Credit, Stockman's National Bank, Medina Electric Cooperative, Texas-Mexico Border Coalition, USDA-NRCS, Maverick County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and La Salle County SWCD.

Also supporting this effort are Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and the SWCDs of Devil's River, Dimmit County, Upper Nueces, West-Nueces-Las Moras, and Winter Garden.

## Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applies for an Updated Goat Producer Study Grant.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applied for a Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant in August to expand the information base for a viable goat industry. We have been working on this project for over three years.

The submitted proposal is an "expanded Feasibility Study" for

the goat industry in South West Texas. We will also be updating our Marketing Study through this grant. The grant will also cover additional producer training sessions and Cooperative Board Member training.

We look forward to receiving a positive response from the USDA

– Rural Development Office, so that we can begin the process of determining whether this industry has any potential in our area. For more information about this project, please call Mario A. Morales at 830-279-0164 or come by the Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Office at 105 Weeping Willow, Uvalde, Texas.

## Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applies for Wind Energy Study Grant.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applied for a Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant in August to study the potential for a wind energy industry in South West Texas. The "Wind Energy Feasibility Study and Educational Program" has been under consideration for over three years.

The submitted proposal is a "Feasibility Study for Wind Energy in South West Texas." We have a tentative agreement with the Texas Wind Energy Clearinghouse to conduct a year long study that will consist of installing three meteorological towers that will measure wind speeds, wind duration, and wind gusts on a daily basis. This information will

be incorporated into a Feasibility Study that should indicate whether the area has sufficient "wind resources" to warrant the establishment of 'wind farms,' in South West Texas. There will also be informational meetings that will keep the public informed about the current developments. Should the results be positive for this industry, we will host several informational meetings – late next year – describing the wind energy industry potential for the area and describing the income potential for prospective 'wind farmers.'

The wind energy industry provides several community benefits. They include: construction jobs,

transportation/trucking jobs, maintenance jobs, farm road construction jobs, electrical jobs, electrical transmission jobs, Broadband installation and maintenance jobs, IT jobs, and others.

We look forward to receiving a positive response from the USDA – Rural Development Office, so that we can begin the process of determining whether this industry has any potential in our area. For more information about this project, please call Eddie Ramirez or Mario A. Morales at 830-279-0164 or come by the Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Office at 105 Weeping Willow, Uvalde, Texas.

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## Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applies for a Specialty Crops Study Grant.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D applied for a Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant in August to study the potential for the establishment of an Aloe Vera industry, the re-establishment of a Citrus Industry, and the expansion of an "Olive Oil Industry" in South West Texas. The "Specialty Crop Feasibility Study and Producer Training Sessions" has been under consideration for over four years.

The submitted proposal is a "Feasibility Study" for these three specialty crops in South West Texas. We will be undertaking several efforts to establish, re-establish, or expand the above mentioned crop industries. Field days will be hosted for each crop, producer training sessions will be hosted for each crop, and we will be hosting training sessions for the establishment of Cooperative Boards for each of the above mentioned crops. A significant portion of our efforts will be to establish Cooperative Boards that will promote these crops and en-

courage the establishment or expansion of the mentioned crop lines. The information gathered will be incorporated into a Feasibility Study that should describe the potential for these crops, and the infrastructure needs for these crops, the income and production potential for these crops.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Council has been working with the Texas Olive Oil Council and hosted a Field day last year in the Asherton area. We are currently planning a second field day and follow-up activities for olive oil production in South West Texas.

The South West Texas area was a citrus producing area until the 'hard freezes' of the 1980s. There are still some citrus orchards in the area. We will be looking into the potential of re-establishing the citrus into the area. The re-establishment of this crop is especially important due to the fact that California producers are experiencing irrigation water con-

cerns and problems. There is a limited irrigation water source and they are having water salinity problems. The Florida producers are experiencing disease concerns, irrigation water concerns, and orchards are being lost to housing developments. The Rio Grande Valley, of Texas, is also experiencing development pressure and irrigation water concerns. We are importing more and more of the citrus crops that we consume. We feel that this is a good opportunity to re-establish a citrus industry in South West Texas.

We look forward to receiving a positive response from the USDA – Rural Development Office, so that we can begin the process of determining whether this industry has any potential in our area. For more information about this project, please call Mario A. Morales at 830-279-0164 or come by the Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Office at 105 Weeping Willow, Uvalde, Texas.

## La Salle County S.E.P. Project

TCEO has contracted with RG-N RC&D to implement an Supplemental Environmental Program Project. The project description is "Cleanup of Unauthorized Trash Dumps." The exact locations are still being discussed. Our RC&D Coordinator will be working with Joel Rodriguez, La Salle County Judge, to implement this project.

## SWTGP Update

Members of the South West Texas Goat Producers have been busy since the last update. A Beginners Soap Making class, a Grade A Dairy class, an Advanced Cheese Making Workshop, a field trip to Lampasas to a goat dairy farm, attendance at the American Cheese Society's Annual Conference and Cheese Judging in Austin, Quick Books Classes, Producer Coop Trainings in three locations, and a Basic Computer Class are just a few of the activities and events SWTGP members took part in recently.

### Council Meeting Agenda

**September 10, 2009, 9:30 AM, TX A&M Experiment Station  
Auditorium, 1619 Garner Field Road, Uvalde TX 830-278-9151**

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Establish quorum
3. Introductions.
4. Approval of Agenda.
5. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes.
6. Approval of Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable.
7. Presentation of Potential Projects.
8. Discuss and approve Council Audit.
9. Discuss the Bylaws Review and Reorganization Committee.
10. Other Old Business.
11. Coordinator's Report.
12. New Business.
13. Council Capacity Building Presentation.
14. Council Correspondence and Public comment (limit 3 minutes per person).
15. Next Meeting Date (December 17, 2009)
16. Adjournment.

## Our Mission

"A local volunteer council helping people along the Texas-Mexico border, to care for their rural resources in a way that improves the economy, environment and living standards of the community."

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