

# Organic News

## Upcoming Programs

**Monday, August 4th** – Cottage Food/Farmers Market Class Stephenville, TX – County Annex III (222 E. College St.) Great chance to learn more about the cottage food industry, food safety, farmers markets and consumer demand for organic. Contact Andrea Brooks, Erath Extension Agent for details. [andrea.brooks@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:andrea.brooks@ag.tamu.edu)

**Monday, August 4-Tuesday, August 5** – Southern Family Farmers & Food Systems Conference, San Marcos, Texas. Pre-conference workshops Aug 2-3rd. LBJ Student Center, Texas State University. Email: [conference@farmandranchfreedom.org](mailto:conference@farmandranchfreedom.org) or [smallproducers@txstate.edu](mailto:smallproducers@txstate.edu)

**Tuesday, August 19** – Organic Cotton and Peanut Tour, Seminole, Texas. near Seminole. 8 am to 1 pm. Several stops, great sponsored lunch, and lots of organic crop updates. Lunch is provided by generous sponsors for the tour.

**Thursday, October 9** – 2025 Southwest Dairy Day, Dublin, Texas. Pepper Grass Fed Organic Dairy. Tons of exhibits, tours of organic dairy operations, milking robot demonstrations, presentations on field and forage management and much more. Free food and lots of dairy products. More coming soon!

**Thursday, October 9 – Friday, October 10** – Texas New Fruit Grower's Conference, Fort Worth.

## 2025 Organic Cotton and Peanut Tour Set

Working with organic producers, specialists, and researchers, a great organic tour of both peanut and cotton production has been planned for **Tuesday, August 19th in the Seminole area**. The tour will start with registration at **8:00 am** at the **Gaines Co. Civic Building** in Seminole at 402 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Street (Corner of NW 5<sup>th</sup> and NW Ave. D). **The tour will leave at 8:45 am from the Civic Building and return at 12:20 pm for a sponsored lunch by Birdsong Peanuts**. Two continuing education credits

for TDA Pesticide Licenses will be offered on the tour. There is no cost to attend!

**The first stop on the tour will be at the Neil Froese Peanut Farm** just north of Seminole on CR 108 and CR 109 east of Hwy 62 North. At this organic peanut field tour participants will discuss growing organic peanuts and production in 2025. **Dr. John Cason**, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Peanut Breeder will talk about an organic peanut research variety trial in this field. **Dr. Calvin Trostle**, Extension Agronomist - Lubbock will be on hand to discuss alternative crops for organic producers. **Dr. Emi Kimura**, Extension Agronomist and State Peanut Specialist will talk about peanut production in Texas.



**The next stop will be at an organic cotton field on the Froese farm** close to the peanut field. Tour participants will have a chance to talk about organic cotton on both upland and Pima fields including some skip row cotton. **Dr. Ken Lege**, Extension Cotton Specialist, will talk about the South Plains Cotton trials and issues in South Plains cotton fields in 2025. **Dr. Carol Kelly**, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Scientist for Cotton Breeding - Lubbock will be on hand to discuss cotton production and breeding in 2025. **Dr. Marina Rondon**, Extension Plant Pathologist for the South Plains, will be on hand to talk about problems in both cotton and peanut crops.



A special part of the tour will be information about the use of robotics for field operations, particularly weed control in cotton and peanut production.

**Carbon Robotics, Greenfield Robotics and Aigen** have all been contacted about speaking on the tour and if possible, having a crop demonstration. After lunch at the Gaines County Civic Building, a **few minutes** will be spent on an Organic Cotton and Peanut Market Update and answering questions for the 2025 season.

**Sponsors for the Organic Cotton and Peanut Tour** include Birdsong Peanuts, Texas Peanut Producers Board, May Cotton Seed, Golden Peanuts, OrCal Inc, Texas Earth, South Plains Compost, Kunafin Insectary, Living Water, Viatrac Fertilizer, Certis Biologicals, and New Deal Grain.

## Launching the Organic Roadshow: A New Kind of Organic Gathering Across Texas

I am excited to roll out a fresh and dynamic concept for Texas: ***The Organic Roadshow***. This traveling event series will bring together organic producers, transitioning farmers, seasoned certifiers, industry professionals, and students for a lively, hands-on experience rooted in the unique character of each region. With stops planned across **six major organic hubs**—from dairy and crops in the Panhandle to cotton and peanuts in the South Plains to citrus and vegetables in the Rio Grande Valley—the Roadshow is designed to reflect the diversity and strength of organic agriculture in Texas.

These multi-day gatherings will include field tours, equipment demonstrations, and real conversations about what's working—and what's challenging—in organic systems today. We'll explore everything from organic principles and production tips to region-specific market insights and success stories from local farmers. The goal is to create a space where learning flows in every direction, and where the organic community can build connections and momentum across the state.

We're still in the early planning stages, but we'll be sharing more details soon. If you're passionate about organic and interested in hosting, speaking, attending, or helping shape the Roadshow in your area, let us know. This is a collaborative effort—and we'd love you to be part of it. **Plus, it's FREE!**



## Planning Organic Production with a Practical Price Index

In Extension, we're often asked to help farmers and food businesses plan for the future—whether it's transitioning acreage to organic, developing budgets, or evaluating the economics of new practices. One of the most common challenges we face is this: how do you make plans when you are in a very unpredictable market?

While no one can forecast future prices with certainty, that doesn't mean we're flying blind. We base our planning on something measurable,

reliable, and rooted in history—and in organic agriculture, one of the most useful tools for this is a broad price index or multiplier.

### Why Use a Price Multiplier?

Organic markets—like all markets—fluctuate. Prices are affected by everything from weather and input costs to consumer demand and global trade. But when we look at long-term trends, we begin to see patterns that can inform sound decision-making.

When we have access to strong market data—such as for organic corn, cotton, dairy, and many fruits and vegetables—we can use that data to create benchmarks. These help answer practical questions: What kind of price can I reasonably expect if I go organic? How much more can I budget for input costs and still break even? Will this transition pencil out?

To answer these questions, we need a reference point—and that's where a 1.6 multiplier comes in.

Okay, I am stopping here because this article has lots more information. Just use the QR code to read more!



## Insights on inter-row electrical weeding as a non-chemical weed management tool in organic cotton.

by **Ryan Hamberg** – Graduate Research Assistant and PhD Candidate at Texas A&M University working in weed control research.

Inter-row cultivation is a “go-to” tool in organic production systems. However, repeated soil disturbance is bad for soil health, leading to erosion, organic matter loss, and more. Practices that maintain or enhance soil health are at the forefront of organic production systems. The problem is that few non-chemical tools exist to

manage inter-row weeds organically without soil disturbance.

*The Zasso inter-row electrical weeding prototype.*

*(Left) The generator is located at the back of the*



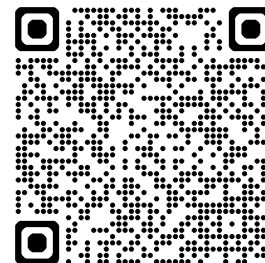
*tractor and the front applicator attachment. (Right)*

*This unit is designed for small plot research and covers just two rows*

Research is underway at the Texas A&M University Research Farm, where a “first-of-its-kind” prototype inter-row electrical weeder (EW) in cotton is being tested (**Figure 1**). This prototype unit was designed through collaboration with Zasso (Indaiatuba, Brazil) and purchased through the support of AgriLife Research and Cotton Incorporated. The prototype includes a large generator and transformer that is powered by the tractor PTO, with the applicator attached to the front loader. Many growers may already be familiar with the Weed Zapper or similar tools that can manage weeds present above the canopy. Though both technologies use electricity, this EW prototype uses a distinctly different delivery method and can kill weeds present between the rows, allowing for control of weeds present below the crop canopy.

Numerous experiments are currently being conducted to test this prototype unit to determine the feasibility of using this technology in organic row crops, including cotton. The study highlighted in this article aims to determine how EW compares to traditional cultivation methods.

To continue reading this great article and see the results of the research, use the QR Code.



*Electrical Weeding QR Code*



## Turning Oilfield Wastewater into Agricultural Opportunity



Just As farmers in the Texas know all too well, water is the lifeblood of our land—and it's in short supply. But what if one of the most abundant waste streams in our region could be cleaned up and used to grow crops? That's the question being tested right now in several pilot projects across Texas, where treated oilfield wastewater, called produced water, is being evaluated for agricultural use.

### What is Produced Water?

Produced water is the salty, chemical-laden byproduct that comes up with oil and gas during drilling operations. The Permian Basin alone generates around 24 million barrels of this water every day—that's equivalent to roughly 1 billion gallons, about 37,196 acre-inches, or over 3,100 acre-feet daily. Historically, this water has been disposed of underground, but with growing water needs and improving treatment technologies, many are asking: can we make this water safe and useful

for agriculture??

Thanks to recent legislation (notably SB 1145, effective Sept. 1, 2025), Texas is laying the groundwork for farmers to eventually use treated produced water.

## Using Google Earth and Web Soil Survey to Understand Your Fields

Modern agriculture is becoming more data-driven—and one of the most powerful, yet underutilized,

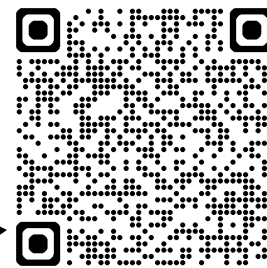
tools available to producers is the combination of **Google Earth** and the **Web Soil Survey (WSS)**. By combining satellite imagery with accurate USDA soil maps, we can get a clearer picture of what's happening below the surface—and make better decisions above ground.

In this post, I'll show how I use Google Earth to not only view an alfalfa field visually but also overlay the soil types, interpret their characteristics, and use that data to plan irrigation, understand yield variability, and improve management.

### Step 1: Start With a Clear Aerial View of the Field



Here I opened Google Earth and zoomed in on our irrigated pivot field that we are studying. This field is part of an irrigation experiment we are conducting to determine alfalfa response to varying irrigation rates. Numbers 1-6 pins on the map represent the sensors buried in the soil and those sensors measure soil moisture to 3 feet deep. You will also notice a jagged yellow line through the field which represents where two soil types are in this field. The east side is a May soil type, and the west side is a Chaney soil type. Google Earth does not typically show soil types – so how did I get these soil types added?



**Thanks, and be sure to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.**

*Bob Whitney*