

**...Youth Farm Safety**

*(Continued from previous page)*

The guidelines examine when a youth is ready to complete a task by helping parents and farm workers assess their size, maturity and knowledge level.

“There are 50 tasks that we see youth doing on farms, and these guidelines can be interactive. A parent can actually go on and answer a series of questions about the youth they want to hire to do that task, and they can really see if the child is ready,” Ploeckelman told the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network.

By looking through the 50 tasks on cultivatesafety.org, farmers, farm workers and parents are able to see what an adult or supervisor should do to keep youth safe on the farm.

“We see a lot of young children, or youth, working and living on farms. Farms are different than any other industry because the workplace is the home place,” Ploeckelman said. “There’s a lot of benefits for youth growing up on farms. They learn responsibility. They learn the circle of life.”

But there are hazards on farms and ranches.

According to the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, the top three causes of youth fatalities on the farm are tractors, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), utility terrain vehicles (UTV) and drowning.

The top three reasons for non-fatal injuries are falls, animals and machinery/vehicles.

“We need to remember that the full-size ATVs are created for someone 16 years and older to be driving,” Ploeckelman said. “ATVs are not created to have passengers on them. It seems like a lot of fun, and it seems like a great joy ride, but what happens when something goes wrong?”

ATV and UTV operators are encouraged to wear helmets and ride alone on vehicles designed for a single person.

“Most UTVs have seat belts. Make sure you click the seat belt, and put up the gates on the side. That’s what’s going to keep people safe as they ride on these vehicles,” Ploeckelman said.

Farm owners with young children should also consider establishing a safe play area with physical boundaries.

“A lot of parents will tell their children, ‘Don’t go past the big pine tree in the yard.’ But when dad comes driving up on the tractor, when that youngster gets excited, they’re going to run over there,” she said.

The problem with that, Ploeckelman explained, is it can be difficult for drivers to see small children, especially in an area with trees and other large objects.

“Put up some type of physical barrier that the child can’t get past like a white picket fence—something they can’t get through,” Ploeckelman said. “That’s going to keep your young ones safe in the home and on the farm.”

Tips and other farm safety resources for youth are available on cultivatesafety.org.



**Meet and Greet!** Coke County voters were given the opportunity to visit with Republican Party candidates at a meet and greet event held on Thursday evening, February 6, in Bronte. The men pictured above (from left to right), Wesley Verdell, Jamie Berryhill, J. Ross Lacy, Robert Turcker, Brandon Batch, and Ned Luscombe, are all running for Congressman Mike Conaway’s seat. Lynette Lucas, candidate for Texas House of Representatives attended as well.

**Water Weekly**

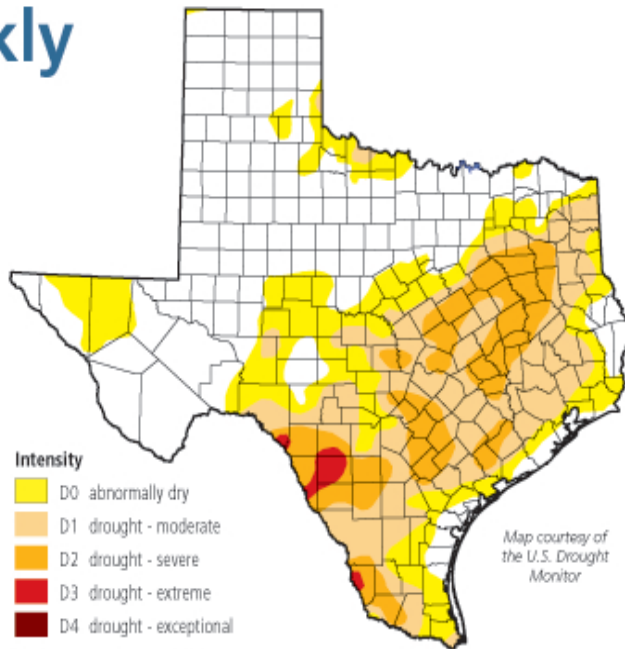
For the week of 02/10/20

**Water conditions**

For the fourth straight week, moderate or worse drought decreased across Texas, falling one percentage point in the last week. But as of February 4, one-third of the state remains in moderate or worse drought and 12 percent of the state is in severe or worse drought.

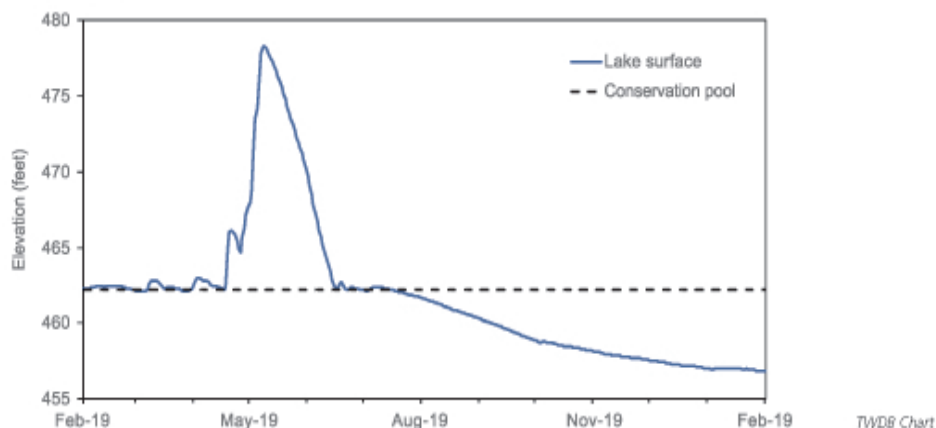
**Drought conditions**

- ◆ 33% now
- ◆ 34% a week ago
- ◆ 41% three months ago
- ◆ 2% a year ago



**Lake Waco hydrograph**

Lake Waco protects the city of Waco from both floods and droughts. While providing that protection, lake elevation has varied more than 30 feet in the last year. The lake is currently at 78 percent of its water supply capacity.



Written by Dr. Mark Wentzel — Dr. Mark Wentzel is a hydrologist in the TWDB’s Office of Water Science and Conservation.

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