



Vacation Bible School! Area children enjoyed the puppet show at the Vacation Bible School held at Southside Church of Christ in Robert Lee June 10-12, 2014. Photo Courtesy of Leta Caston.

There's an App for that!

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We have all heard this phrase and with so much technology at our finger tips we have all used different kinds of apps to make our lives a little easier. Well now apps for your iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch can help with stocking rates, feral hog management, and landscape management.

GrazingCalc is a new mobile smartphone application developed by personnel at Texas A&M University's department of wildlife and fisheries sciences, ecosystem science and management units of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This app can help with the most common problem that livestock managers deal with; determining the most favorable number of livestock to have grazing without overusing the available resources.

Overgrazing can cause issues such as decreased forage production, erosion problems and

degraded wildlife habitat. To use this app a small amount of work will need to be done by the rancher to determine the forage production on their property. This can be done easily and a video is available on the app that demonstrates how to obtain this value.

GrazingCalc allows ranchers to manipulate the number of types of animals, grazing months and remaining available forage. GrazingCalc is available on iTunes Store and was developed by Dr. Megan Clayton and Blake Alldredge.

For many farmers and ranchers, it may seem as though feral hogs

are well on their way to taking over the country. But now at least, the new app, Feral Hog Management, developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, is here to help landowners learn the legal strategies available to impede this apparently unending flow of unwanted porcine invaders. This app, which is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch, gathers years of science-based information and field experience from a host of sources into a single easy-to-use format right at your fingertips. The app provides valuable features, notably control

methods like snare-building and strategic shooting, as well as bait recipes and trap design. The visuals are outstanding, with the vivid photographs providing users with the detailed examples many of us need to help us further understand the management practices outlined. With the information in this app alone, a landowner could conceivably identify, plan, and implement a highly effective feral hog management plan to rid his property of feral hogs and, with vigilance, keep it hog-free. Feral Hog Management can be found at the iTunes Store and was developed by Mark Tyson.

Whether it is shade, pH, salinity, soil compaction, air circulation, soil type, spray application, lawn size or soil moisture, there are an increasing number of helpful apps available for professionals, such as landscapers, golf course superintendents and athletic field managers, as well as homeowners. Some iPhone or iPad apps that are handy for landscaping are: Sunseeker this app allows a person to enter any date and determine the exact trajectory of the sun for that date, helpful in determining how many hours of direct sunlight will reach a given area. This is good for tree pruning

and planting, allowing landscapers to identify the problem trees when they have shade issues and determine where the shade pattern will fall when a new tree is planted. The Planimeter app allows a landscaper to pull up a GPS map of a client's home and drop pins on the corners of their property to get a quick, accurate estimate of the size of their lawn. Landscape and Garden Calculator app helps the landscaper or do-it-yourselfer to calculate the quantity of materials, such as fertilizer and mulch needed for any given area, as well as fence lengths, spaces between items and angles if needed.

Turfgrass Management app is designed for the southern U.S. and has pictures and information for all types of insects, pests and diseases. SoilWeb app allows anyone to access the GPS-based system, identify their location and determine what soil type is there.

These are just a few examples of technology that can help in everyday decisions that combine past research and data collection that is just a tap of the finger away. Technology is in so many aspects of our everyday life that we might as well take advantage of apps available that can help better manage grazing, feral hogs, and landscapes.

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