

Exciting Slate of New Programs being planned for Fall 2019 in Sabine County

Grape Vineyard Establishment Seminar is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 1, 2019 in Hemphill.

Jordan and Chris Cox of Hemphill, who recently established the first commercial grape vineyard in Sabine County, conceived the idea and initiated plans for this seminar, which will be co-sponsored by the Sabine County Chamber of Commerce, Sabine County Ag Committee and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Currently, scheduled speakers include:

- **Fritz Westover** of Westover Vineyard Advising and Virtual Viticulture Academy. Fritz holds a BS in horticulture from Penn State University as well as an MS from the Penn State Department of Plant Pathology. Prior to founding Westover Vineyard Advising, Fritz worked both internationally and across the US in a variety of viticulture related roles including positions with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Virginia Tech, and the Vineyard Team in California focusing extensively on developing viticulture education and research programs.
- **Fran Pontasch**, Viticulture Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in College Station. Fran holds a BS in Horticulture from Texas A&M and a MS in Biology from Sul Ross State University. Prior to being named Extension Program Specialist, Fran was Vineyard Manager for Messina Hof Winery and Resort in Bryan, spent six years as viticulture advisor with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Stephenville and over four years in Biological Research with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Beaumont.
- **Jordan and Chris Cox**, Owners of Pineywoods Vineyard near Hemphill. Jordan, a Hemphill native, and Chris planted their Blanc du Bois grape vineyard with 425 vines on March 9, 2019. Chris holds a BS in Geology and Marine Science from the University of Miami and a MS in Geologic Oceanography from Texas A&M. Jordan holds a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Texas A&M. Both are employed by BP (British Petroleum) since 2011.

Sabine County is well suited to be one of the next major Agritourism magnets in East Texas. Vineyards and wineries, combined with an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities (Toledo Bend, Sam Rayburn and Sabine National Forest), good soils, abundant rainfall, and other Agritourism possibilities, could be the next big thing in Sabine County.

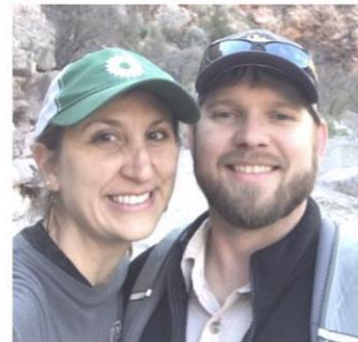
This seminar will allow you the opportunity to hear from specialists, consultants and producers what you would need to consider to enter the viticulture industry.



**Fritz Westover
Vineyard Consultant**



**Fran Pontasch
Extension Viticulture Specialist**



**Chris and Jordan Cox
Local Vineyard Owners**



Dr. Todd Sink



Dr. Joe Masabni

Aquaponics Workshop is being planned for November, 2019.

Discussions are underway to host a workshop at Hemphill High School to introduce participants to Aquaponics, which is the combination of aquaculture (science of raising fish) and hydroponics (science of growing plants without soil). Aquaponics is a unique ecosystem within a food production system, where fish, bacteria and plants are mutually benefitting each other.

Mr. Carlin McDaniel and his Hemphill High School agricultural science students designed, constructed and installed an aquaponic production system this past year.

Tentative Plans are to include the following speakers in the program:

- Dr. Todd Sink, Extension Aquaculture/Aquaponics Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in College Station. B.S. Purdue Univ, PhD Univ of Tennessee
- Dr. Joe Masabni, Extension Vegetable and Aquaponics Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Overton.

For more information call Ronald Barlow, Sabine County Extension Agent, at 409-594-7400.