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Ag office condemns cattle rustling, OKs gulf shrimp

by Drew DeBerry, Texas Deputy Ag Commissioner

In the wake of what some are calling the worst environmental disaster in American history, the Texas shrimp season opened this summer with a clean bill of health.

Texas researchers studying the effects of the BP oil spill continue to report Texas shrimp remain unaffected.

During recent testing of Texas shrimp, Dr. Ronald Kendall, director of the Institute of Environmental and Human Health and chairman of the Department of Environmental Toxicology at Texas Tech University, found no evidence of oil residue or oil dispersants in any of the tested shrimp.

More recently, Good Morning America sent Dr. Kendall a follow-up sample of Louisiana Gulf Coast shrimp, which had been caught a few weeks after the oil well was capped.

Despite being caught in waters more heavily impacted by the oil spill, Dr. Kendall reported the Louisiana shrimp were also free of oil.

Consumers should know the Gulf of Mexico continues to be monitored by the Food and Drug Administration, and other federal and state agencies, to ensure the safety of shrimp and other seafood entering marketplace.

You can learn more about the FDA's seafood safety efforts at www.fda.gov or by calling 1-888-info-fda .

Closer to home, Texas shrimpers continue to work hard to bring fresh, quality Gulf shrimp to your favorite restaurants and grocery stores.

Visit [www.texasagriculture](http://www.texasagriculture.gov)

.gov and click on Go Texan Programs to find a local shrimp wholesaler near you.

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Back on land, cattle rustling, a crime many people associate with outlaws from the days of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin, is on the rise in 21st century Texas. The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) reports that in 2009, approximately 7,400 head of cattle were stolen in Texas - 1,000 more than the previous year.

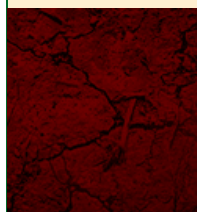
With steer and heifer calves worth as much as \$650 or more, cattle losses to rustling can devastate a rancher's livelihood. Although Texas doesn't require livestock branding, it can go a long way in identifying stolen cattle. Brands can be recorded at the county clerk's office and are helpful to law enforcement when tracking stolen cattle. Common sense measures like locking gates and building pens away from main roads can also help deter thieves.

If you are the victim of cattle rustling, contact your local sheriff, then call the TSCRA Special Rangers at 800-242-7820 . TSCRA offers a cash reward up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and grand jury indictment of rustlers through its "Operation Cow Thief" hotline, 888-830-2333 .

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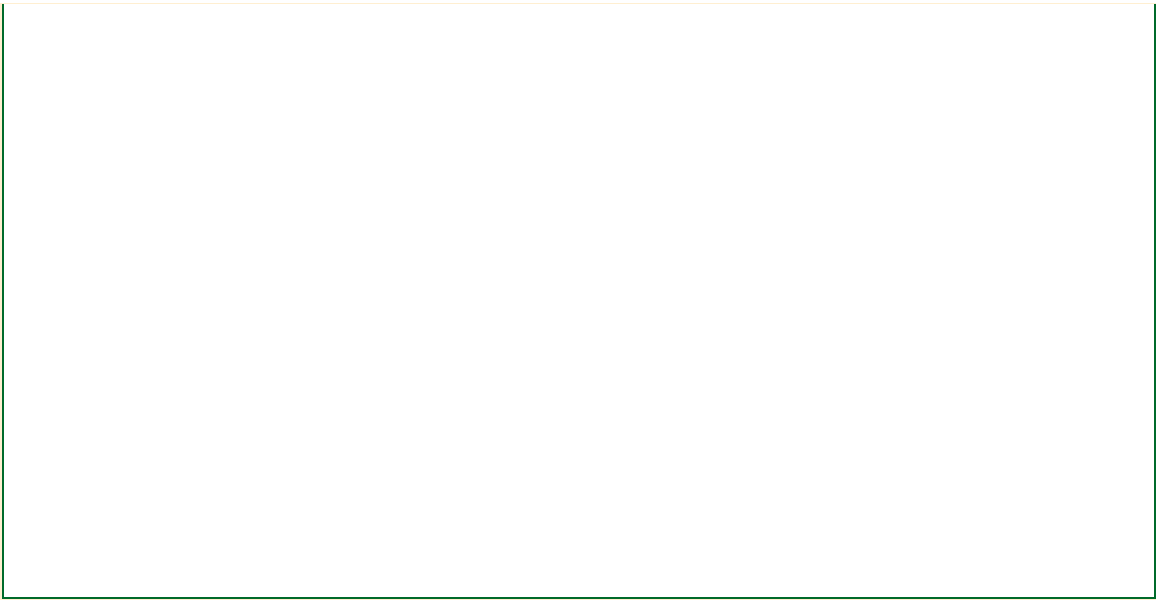
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