



## **Extension Education in Fort Bend County**

*Making a difference  
in 2014*

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The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and its partners have long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development. Among those served across the state are

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hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts as they relate to outcome and output program plans designed for Fort Bend County and its very diverse population.

**Fort Bend County, TX**  
**Founded – 1837**  
**County Seat – Richmond**  
**Total Area – 875 sq. mi.**  
**Population – 643,408(2013)**  
**College Educated: 40.40%**



### **Fort Bend County 2014 Summary of AgriLife Educational Contacts**

Total Educational Program Conducted - 736  
Total Participants - 389,927  
Contact Hours via Educational Programs - 168,911  
4-H Club Members - 585; 4-H Adult Leaders - 110; Youth Leaders - 94  
Youth Curriculum Enrichment Participants - 892  
4-H Special Interest/Short Term - 94,417  
Master Volunteers - 392  
Texas Extension Education Club Members - 37  
Total of Volunteers - 1,119  
Total Volunteers Hours in Support of AgriLife in Fort Bend - 53,484  
Value of Volunteer Hours to Fort Bend Citizens - \$1,251,526.00  
Office Contacts - 2,633  
Site Visits - 2,877  
Phone Calls - 5,609  
Newsletter/Mail/E-Mail Contacts - 65,911  
Web Contacts - 50,287  
Radio/Television Segments - 34  
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# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County – Backyard Basics Series

*Developed by James Boone Holladay, Fort Bend County Extension Agent - Horticulture*

### RELEVANCE

There is a growing statewide and national interest from consumers to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is prepared and preserved. Consumers are also showing greater interest in returning to some of those basics more often associated with rural living – many of which have been forgotten or overlooked in the hustle and bustle of today's world. Also, in response to major issues of diabetes and weight gain in both adults and youth, families are looking outside for activities to keep them engaged and offer easy forms of exercise.

### RESPONSE

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County, along with the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, are offering opportunities for the people of our region to learn more about getting back to homegrown and homemade basics. The Backyard Basics programs and workshops, conducted throughout the year, support healthy living through home-based food production, preparation, and preservation. The programs are offered at a nominal cost and are also a great way for people to reconnect with nature and to save money by recycling or conserving resources, including the water they use for their gardens and landscapes. By growing their own vegetables, people not only get enjoyment from the healthful outdoor activity of gardening, they also know where their food came from and how it was produced. The calendar series of programs offered in Fort Bend County included: Vegetable Production, Fruit Production, Culinary Herbs, Aquaponics, Poultry, Vermicomposting, Grilling, Freezing & Dehydration, Canning, and Jams & Jellies. Each Saturday program began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded around 11 a.m. This half day training is attractive to residents that are regularly "on the go!"

### RESULTS

**165** registered guests participated in the 2014 series of Backyard Basics programs. Results gained through formal evaluations and verbal feedback confirm that this series was well received and that people are eager to see continued efforts and new offerings in the future. The below evaluation results from a first-type program shows the need for and success of these courses.

**Activity Title:** Backyard Basics Aquaponics

**Number of Participants:** 31

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Percentages based on 29 respondents to the survey (Response rate = 94%).

**Overall:**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity.

**Content:**


- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being what they expected.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being accurate.
- 93% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being easy to understand.
- 83% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information given on each topic.
- 93% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information on decisions about your own situation.
- 96% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the relevance of the examples used.

**Instructor(s):**

- 97% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's knowledge level of the subject.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's responses to questions.

## FUTURE PROGRAM EFFORTS

Future programs being planned for 2015 include the addition of a course on sustainable landscape design as well as naturescaping. Updates on these future programs will be included in upcoming issues of the *Fort Bend Gardener* as well as through our current media streams. These as well as other new forms of external marketing will help increase community exposure to these quality programs. We aim to spread the word and get our communities back to the basics.

V A L U E	
Earth-Kind® Landscaping	
	The Earth-Kind® program teaches participants how to care for gardens and landscapes with environmentally friendly, research-proven techniques. Instructional topics include water conservation, responsible fertilizer application, and non-chemical options for controlling pests. Use of Earth-Kind® practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.

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# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Beef Cattle Production

*Agriculture & Natural Resources – Fort Bend*

**RELEVANCE:** Beef cattle production in Fort Bend County is still an important agricultural commodity. Livestock production, improved pastures, soil fertility, and small grains for grazing are an important part of the agricultural production in Fort Bend County. The volatility of the recent cattle and hay markets present difficult decisions for producers. In 2011, Beef and Forage producers in the county were severely impacted by the statewide drought conditions, thus resulting in a major sell-off. Weather conditions have gotten better, but the cost of restocking cattle operations is prohibitive for many ranchers.

The Fort Bend County Beef and Forage Committee play a vital role in the development of programs and activities that provide local producers of the latest information to remain profitable.

**RESPONSE:** Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County with assistance from the FBC Beef & Forage Committee seek to increase the knowledge and skills of producers through livestock and forage workshops, educational clinics, and the dissemination of relevant information in the areas of livestock and forage production. Educational activities for local producers included the annual Commercial Heifer Clinic at the Fort Bend County Fair, the Commercial Heifer Sale at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gulf Coast Ranch Expo at Twinwood US Inc., KTRK – ABC 13 news report on Drought Management, Houston Chronicle article on Drought Impact on local producers, KPRC – NBC 2 news report on Drought Management and the Drought Management Seminar. Major programs included:

- Commercial Heifer Sale at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo – 34 participants
- Commercial Heifer Clinic at the Fort Bend County Fair – 16 participants
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gulf Coast Ranch Expo – 120 participants

### **RESULTS**

The average number of acres “ranchd” was 58 acres. Attendees (60 of 120) identified the following:

- 1) 74.1% increase in how calf management practices might affect profitability;
- 2) 80.0% increase in utilizing the cow bid-price calculator;
- 3) 73.3% increase in the understanding of long-term projections of cattle prices;
- 4) 76.7% plan to adopt various aids to address management issues; and
- 5) 80.9% understand that many factors relating to calf management affect profitability.

The total anticipated economic benefit for the operation per head was a mean average of \$591 increase in value of cattle (from \$75 to \$3,000 range). The total anticipated economic benefit for the operation per acre was a mean average of \$2,256 increase in value of cattle (from \$64 to \$10,200 range).

**FUTURE PLANS:** The Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County plans to continue to develop educational programs to meet the needs of the citizens of the county. Potential programs for 2015 are Agricultural Expo, Drought Management, Commercial Heifer Programs, the Beef Cattle Symposium & Hay Show and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gulf Coast Ranch Expo.

V A L U E	
Livestock Production	
	Texas AgriLife Extension programs targeted to large- and small-scale livestock producers help generate safer food and fiber products with maximum efficiency. The result is quality, consistent, affordable products and industries that support the state's rural economies.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County – Master Gardener Training Program

*Developed by James Boone Holladay, Fort Bend County Extension Agent - Horticulture*

### RELEVANCE

Fort Bend County's population is one of the fastest growing in the nation. Increased population gives rise to urbanization. Fort Bend County faces a dilemma in creating a definition as either an urban or rural county. In actuality it is both. Fort Bend County encompasses over 560,000 acres. More than 100,000 acres are in agricultural production while the rest is considered urban. Urban homeowners make up over 85% of the population, making home landscapes an important part of the horticultural makeup. Many of these homeowners are unaware of the consequences of improperly using lawn and garden products, such as fertilizers, pesticides and other treatments. Many also are unaware of Statewide issues concerning water availability and how traditional landscape practices lead to the waste of this precious resource. Therefore, it is important for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to conduct educational programming to inform the community about acceptable horticultural practices and consequences of the use of improper practices.

### RESPONSE

The Master Gardener program educates participants on sound horticultural practices, with the intent of creating good environmental stewards. This program requires participants attend fifty hours of classroom instruction. Classroom instruction introduces the participants to the basics of horticulture including trees, perennials, landscape design, propagation, turf, entomology and pathology, and the Earth-Kind® approach. The Master Gardener training course is an intense one month course, with classes held two days each week. **Thirty-four** individuals enrolled in the Fort Bend County Fall 2014 Master Gardener class. Class members receive a tremendous amount of education and in return are expected to give fifty hours of volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to become a certified Texas Master Gardener.

### RESULTS

The **Thirty-four** individuals enrolled in the Fort Bend County Fall 2014 Master Gardener class will contribute a minimum of 1,000 cumulative hours of volunteer service in the coming year. For each consecutive year they remain certified, they also contribute a minimum of 36 hours of additional education and support. The associate class of 2014, if all remain active, would contribute an additional minimum of 997 hours of volunteer service. The knowledge they each gain will help them serve as

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localized stewards in their neighborhoods and other ranges of influence. This exponentially helps Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in fulfilling its goal of reaching and educating the diverse population of Fort Bend County.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Previously reported data shows that our Master Gardener Training class is increasing the participants knowledge on most topics presented. However, it is duly noted that we must be continually vigilant in improving our sessions, especially on certain topics to keep up with the knowledge of those participating in the class. Measures will be taken to ensure that our classes reach a greater depth and clarity of topic to ensure our participants receive a good understanding of the information. This includes development of a structured complete program evaluation instrument.

The Master Gardener program is a huge success in Fort Bend County. The class will continue to be offered in the Fall of the year. Further emphasis will be taken to offer more specialized training to those volunteers who wish to attain higher certifications. Fort Bend County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will utilize these volunteers to assist in the planning and implementation of additional educational programs within our community.



# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County – Small Acreage Horticultural Crops

*Developed by James Boone Holladay, Fort Bend County Extension Agent - Horticulture*

### **RELEVANCE**

In general, revenues from traditional agricultural enterprises have declined steadily over the past 5 years. This has forced many producers to diversify their operations to maintain profitability. During this time several horticultural crops have played a significant role in the diversification process. As crop land in Fort Bend County becomes transferred to residential use and increases in large acreage land prices continue, small acreage operators may find their niche in the region.

### **RESPONSE**

Goal 6 of the Agriculture Food, Fiber and Green Industries, as part of the 2012 Agency Strategic Plan, states Small scale agricultural operators and commercial producers in rural and suburban areas will become more knowledgeable in effectively identifying and evaluating diversification strategies (using horticultural crops) for risk mitigation and improved economic sustainability based on total management goals and optimal resource base use.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service has developed the Small Acreage Horticultural Crops Program to assist in identifying and evaluating diversification strategies for risk mitigation and improved economic sustainability using a variety of small acreage horticultural crops.

For 2014, our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension vegetable specialist has offered 2 web seminars, and Fort Bend County participated in this program acting as a host county. Typically, these programs were hosted in an average of 8 counties. Topics for 2014 included Aquaponics, Composting, Grafting Vegetables, Practical Weed Control, Food Safety, and Business Planning.

### **RESULTS**

A total of **27** guests attended the complete series with an average of 5 guests per session. Feedback was mixed on the nature of the courses: days, times, structure, etc. This was the second year of a program pilot to gauge local interest. As seen below, our program evaluation results stated the program was successful, but based off verbal feedback and the fact that producer turn out was low, this program needs major adjustment.

**Activity Title:** Small Acreage Practical Weed

**Activity Date:** August 21, 2014

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**Number of Participants: 6**

Percentages based on 5 respondents to the survey (Response rate = 83%).

**Overall:**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity.

**Content:**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being what they expected.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being accurate.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being easy to understand.
- 75% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information given on each topic.
- 80% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information on decisions about your own situation.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the relevance of the examples used.

**Instructor(s):**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's knowledge level on the subject.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's response to questions.

**FUTURE PLANS**

The horticulture unit in Fort Bend County will discontinue its efforts in Small Acreage Horticultural Crops web programming for 2015. We are currently working to reorganize program efforts for small acreage producers and are planning a sustainable agriculture field day for fall 2015. For 2015, we will continue to evaluate efforts to allow for more precise interpretation of program quality and relevance going into the future.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County – Urban X7 Texas Water Star

*Developed by James Boone Holladay, Fort Bend County Extension Agent - Horticulture*

### **RELEVANCE**

In Fort Bend County the need to conserve water is a “must.” Why?

- Because for more than 15 years, Fort Bend has been ranked in the top 3% of the nation’s fastest growing counties – in economic excellence, in population, and in highest quality of life;
- Because Fort Bend is the number one fastest growing county of the ten largest counties in Texas;
- Because the current population is 643,408 and is projected to top 1,000,000 by 2020;
- Because Fort Bend had 208,444 single family housing units in 2012 and is projected to have 225,584 units by 2015; and
- Because all have landscapes that require water – a lot of water!

Fort Bend County’s yearly rainfall is 48 inches, but we received only 20.4 inches in 2011. Needless to say as a result, water conservation is no longer an option, it is now a requirement. With water being a diminishing natural resource, it is important that we not only conserve water, but collect and use rainwater when and where possible. So, the challenge in Fort Bend County is to have a low input landscape that adds natural beauty to our local environment while conserving water, regardless of the amount of rainfall we may receive.

### **RESPONSE**

The Horticulture unit in Fort Bend continued to put forth emphasis on water education this year. Local homeowners learned how to adopt new technology and recommended management practices to improve water conservation in landscapes. Homeowners will also improve water quality by using recommended fertilizer and pesticide application practices. What was done?

- Advanced training of Master Gardener volunteers (2) in Irrigation Efficiencies. These have in turn given several presentations on water conservation to the public;
- We further developed our water conservation topic given during our 2014 Master Gardener training;
- We continued the Home Water Conservation workshop in Sugar Land that focused on methods to conserve water in the landscape;
- We implemented a new Home Water Conservation workshop teaming with the City of Richmond and Richmond Rotary Club focusing on methods to conserve water in the landscape;

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- We worked in collaboration with the City of Richmond and Keep Richmond Beautiful on a Earth-Kind landscape project at a local parks;
- We teamed with the City of Sugar Land, the North Fort Bend Water Authority, and the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigators Association to implement an irrigators conference teaching local water specialists with municipalities, water districts, and licensed irrigators about issues around water.

## **RESULTS**

- Water conservation, low water-use landscaping, rainwater harvesting and similar topics were added to a range of educational programs, agent or volunteer driven;
- Continuation of 3-hour class on “Water Conservation” within the 2014 Master Gardener Short Course;
- The Home Water Conservation Workshop held in Sugar Land in October that focused on methods to conserve water in the landscape had 52 Fort Bend County Citizens in attendance;
- The Home Water Conservation Workshop held in Richmond in June that focused on methods to conserve water in the landscape had 56 Fort Bend County Citizens in attendance;
- The Regional Irrigators Symposium in partnership with the City of Sugar Land educated 60 water purveyors, licensed irrigators, and homeowners on water wise evaluation and management of landscapes.

Clientele feedback indicated overall satisfaction was good, and that individuals in Fort Bend are concerned about water issues and continue to look for information on how to conserve water. Feedback indicated that most people who attended programs considered water issues to be one of the most important. Individuals were pleased with Extension’s educational efforts, but also would like for that education to extend to homeowners’ associations and other regulatory groups. It is quite evident in Fort Bend County that many homeowners’ associations are still requiring more turf, over-sized trees, and seasonal color that require more water and general maintenance than slow-growing, native plant materials.

Evaluation results from Sugar Land Regional Irrigators Symposium show adoption of practices. Notice the 100 percent adoption rate for key components such as irrigation auditing/evaluations and practicing cycle & soak in controller programming. Both are key factors to water savings.

<b>Practice or Technology that Could Be Adopted</b>	<b>Number Who Probably or Definitely Will Adopt</b>	<b>Number Who Could Adopt *</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
<i>Design or redesign landscapes to utilize lower water use plants.</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>80.0%</i>
<i>Utilize irrigation evaluations/audits to improve efficiency.</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
<i>Convert from spray irrigation to drip irrigation where appropriate.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>76.9%</i>
<i>Harvest rainwater for use in landscape.</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>58.3%</i>
<i>Install or retrofit with smart irrigation controllers.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>66.7%</i>

<i>Install rain and freeze sensor to an existing irrigation system.</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>90.0%</i>
<i>Use "cycle and soak method" to prevent water loss and runoff.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

\* Excludes 'Not Applicable' or 'Already Adopted'

## **FUTURE PLANS**

With the ongoing implementation of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension's Urban X7 Initiative, we will continue to build upon the *Texas Water Star* program. This program includes a range of educational events that aim to drastically change the attitudes and behaviors of local citizens on the impact of water use in our community and water quality in our environment. Educational methods within Texas Water Star include irrigation system evaluations, a number of site demonstrations throughout the community, several homeowner water conservation workshops, and conference programs targeting licensed landscape irrigators and landscape grounds managers examining a multitude of issues pertaining to water quantity and quality. Plans are underway to team up with several local municipalities (Cities of Sugar Land, Katy, Meadows Place, Missouri City) to partner in hosting these events.

## **V A L U E**

### **Earth-Kind® Landscaping**



The Earth-Kind® program teaches participants how to care for gardens and landscapes with environmentally friendly, research-proven techniques. Instructional topics include water conservation, responsible fertilizer application, and non-chemical options for controlling pests. Use of Earth-Kind® practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.

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# Making a Difference

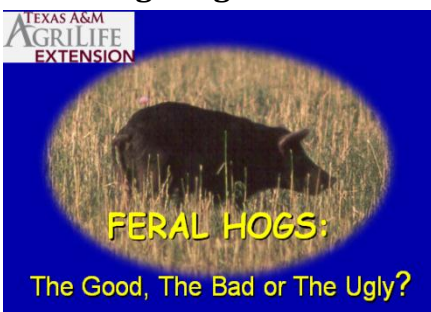
## OTHER Significant Programs in Agriculture & Natural Resources Fort Bend County

**Crop Production** - Row crops & rice production continues to play a vital role in Fort Bend County with 13,500 acres of corn, 29,000 acres of grain sorghum, 31,000 acres of upland cotton, 2,400 acres of soybeans, and 4,800 acres of rice. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented the following programs to address the relevant issues in crop production: Fort Bend Row Crops Tour on June 19 (26 attended) and the Rice Tech Field Day on, August 21 (19 attended). On average a 77.1% increase in an understanding of effective insecticide use, life-cycle of southern rust of corn, causes of Aflatoxin on corn, proper variety selections, and the legalities of moving farm equipment on public highways.

**Farm Bill Training** (Agricultural Act of 2014) - held on 10-30-14 with 60 attending was hosted by AgriLife Extension with input from our local FSA. The new Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. Those in attendance indicated a 75% increase in understanding and a 63% possibility that this training will assist them in making positive decisions, while 78% indicated that they were still a bit confused.



**Feral Hog Program** - Feral Hogs are a major problem in Fort Bend as they are throughout the state as our population increases. Efforts to assist our clientele included one major event that targeted professional animal control officers in mostly urban areas. The Feral Hog Management Workshop hosted by City of Sugar Land on Sept. 16, 2014 reached 53 officers from Fort Bend and surrounding counties. The attendees learned about Feral Hog Biology, Habitat and Habits – presented by V. Mannino, CED-FBC, as well as laws and regulations, feral hog value-added food items and the latest trapping designs.



**Gulf Coast Classic** - With the increased participation in youth livestock shows, livestock education has become vital to 4-H and FFA youth. This special program was designed to provide educational sessions on the four major livestock species, Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats, in addition to general Broiler and Rabbit sessions. Both, youth and adults were educated on industry acceptable livestock husbandry practices while implementing Quality Counts 4-H program.

Additionally, this program will gave youth and adults the necessary tools to successfully complete a

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livestock project. This year's event was held on August 2, 2014 with 592 participants (233 youth and 359 adults) that took part in multiple educational sessions throughout the morning of the event, dependent upon their specie of choice. Later in the day, participants had the opportunity to participate in an actual Steer, Heifer, Sheep, or Goat show to utilize their new-found skills. Door prizes were popular and included three sets of Andis Clippers, an iPad-mini, several gift cards and numerous species-relevant prizes. Buckles, banners and trophies will be given as awards for the prospect show hosted by Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, and Harris Counties at a later date. This event was open to all 4-H and

FFA members with interest in livestock projects.

**29<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conf.** - This 29th Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference, held Feb. 6, 2014, is a celebration of small acreage and commercial vegetable production along the upper Gulf Coast region. Counties of Waller, Wharton, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, Colorado, and Austin join with Fort Bend to put on this event each and every year - focusing on teaching sustainable practices to help producers maximize efficiencies and profitability. This event has something for every producer. Topics included organic culture of vegetables, cover crops, efficient irrigation, vegetable varieties update, pest identification & control, pesticide laws & regulations, and as always 5 continuing education credits for TDA license holders.



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# Making a Difference

## **Child Care Provider Conference Outcome Report, 2014**

*Developed by: Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences, Fort Bend County*

### **BACKGROUND**

Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest industry in the state, generating over 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans. Findings from longitudinal research have clearly established the fact that quality does matter when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care (e.g., warm sensitive caregiving, well-educated child care staff, low child-to-adult ratios, small group size) develop better language, math, and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school. Having a well-trained child care workforce is essential to providing the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

### **RESPONSE**

**Child Care Provider Conference** - On March 22, 2014, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Rosenberg, Texas for **50** child care providers and directors who provide care for **635** children enrolled in **6** child care centers or family day homes. Fifty participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of **200** clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

**Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 50)\***

Variable	Percentage*	Mean
<b>Age (in years)</b>		40.7
<b>Number of Years in Child Care Profession</b>		10.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	90.0	
Male	2.0	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African American	20.0	
Caucasian	16.0	
Hispanic/Latino	36.0	
Asian	28.0	
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School Diploma	6.0	
High School Diploma	42.0	
Associates Degree	16.0	
College Graduate	32.0	

<b>Program Type</b>		
Home Day Care	0.0	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	72.0	
Head Start	0.0	
Other (e.g., Montessori)	28.0	
<b>Program Licensed and/or Registered</b>		
Yes	94.0	
No	4.0	
<b>Attended Extension-Sponsored Training in Past</b>		
Yes	26.0	
No	54.0	
Not Sure	10.0	
*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.		

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of items related to the training. Fifty participants completed written surveys (See Table 2 for participant responses).

**Table 2. Child Care Provider Conference Outcomes (N = 50)\***

Item	% in Agreement*	% not in Agreement*
<b>Acquisition of New Information</b>		
Learned new information	98.0%	2.0%
Will utilize new information to strengthen program	98.0%	0.0%
<b>Intent to Use Information</b>		
Will use now	98.0%	0.0%
Will use in future	96.0%	2.0%
<b>Training's Influence on Provider/Program Quality</b>		
Will be more effective provider	98.0%	2.0%
Will lead to improvements in quality of care offered	96.0%	2.0%
<b>Relevancy of Training</b>		
Helped provider obtain required clock hours	96.0%	2.0%
Topics relevant to daily work	96.0%	4.0%
<b>Other</b>		
Training cost-effective	98.0%	2.0%
Plan to attend another Extension conference	96.0%	0.0%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

In addition to the above items, participants were asked to rate the quality of the conference compared to other child care trainings they have attended in the past by non-Extension organizations/agencies. Table 3 below contains the results.

**Table 3. Perceptions of Quality Compared to Other Non-Extension Trainings (N = 50)\***

Item*	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended (not provided by Extension), how would you rate the quality of today's training?	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%	38.0%	32.0%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases					

As can be seen in the tables above, child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. Over 95 percent of participants acquired new information from the conference, considered the training to be very relevant to the work they do, plan to utilize the information gained at the conference to improve their programs, and consider themselves better equipped to work with the children in their care. Moreover, **70%** of providers rated the training "Better" or "Much Better" compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

# Making a Difference

## Child Care Provider Conference Outcome Report #2

Developed by: Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences, Fort Bend County

### BACKGROUND

Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is the 16th largest industry in the state, generating over 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans.

Findings from longitudinal research have clearly established the fact that quality does matter when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care (e.g., warm sensitive caregiving, well educated child care staff, low child-to-adult ratios, small group size) develop better language, math, and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school. Having a well-trained child care workforce is essential to providing the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

### RESPONSE

**Child Care Provider Conference** - On October 4, 2014, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Rosenberg, Texas for **37** child care providers and directors who provide care for **692** children enrolled in **7** child care centers or family day homes. Thirty-seven participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of **148** clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

**Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 37)\***

Variable	Percentage*	Mean
<b>Age (in years)</b>		40.9
<b>Number of Years in Child Care Profession</b>		13.8
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	94.6	
Male	5.4	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African American	27.0	
Caucasian	37.8	
Hispanic/Latino	27.0	
Asian	8.1	
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School Diploma	0.0	
High School Diploma	67.6	
Associates Degree	18.9	



College Graduate	13.5	
<b>Program Type</b>		
Home Day Care	0.0	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	86.5	
Head Start	0.0	
Other (e.g., Montessori)	8.1	
<b>Program Licensed and/or Registered</b>		
Yes	100.0	
No	0.0	
<b>Attended Extension-Sponsored Training in Past</b>		
Yes	37.8	
No	48.6	
Not Sure	10.8	
*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.		

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement with a series of items related to the training. Thirty-seven participants completed written surveys (See Table 2 for participant responses).

**Table 2. Child Care Provider Conference Outcomes (N = 37)\***

Item	% in Agreement*	% not in Agreement*
<b>Acquisition of New Information</b>		
Learned new information	100.0%	0.0%
Will utilize new information to strengthen program	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Intent to Use Information</b>		
Will use now	97.3%	2.7%
Will use in future	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Training's Influence on Provider/Program Quality</b>		
Will be more effective provider	100.0%	0.0%
Will lead to improvements in quality of care offered	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Relevancy of Training</b>		
Helped provider obtain required clock hours	97.3%	0.0%
Topics relevant to daily work	97.3%	0.0%
<b>Other</b>		
Training cost-effective	97.3%	0.0%
Plan to attend another Extension conference	94.6%	2.7%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

In addition to the above items, participants were asked to rate the quality of the conference compared to other child care trainings they have attended in the past by non-Extension organizations/agencies. Table 3 below contains the results.

**Table 3. Perceptions of Quality Compared to Other Non-Extension Trainings (N = 37)\***

Item*	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended (not provided by Extension), how would you rate the quality of today's training?	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%	45.9%	35.1%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases					

As can be seen in the tables above, child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. Over 94 percent of participants acquired new information from the conference, considered the training to be very relevant to the work they do, plan to utilize the information gained at the conference to improve their programs, and consider themselves better equipped to work with the children in their care. Moreover,

**81%** of providers rated the training “Better” or “Much Better” compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

Child Care conferences are important to the child care providers of Fort Bend County in several ways:

- 1) to gain valuable updates on a wide variety of pertinent subject matter areas;
- 2) to gain ‘clock-hours’ as a means staying current;
- 3) to network with Extension agents and specialist in the field of parenting; and
- 4) to network with cohorts in the child care industry.

Fort Bend County will continue to host a series of child care conferences and will continue to network with other professionals in the industry as needed.

V A L U E	
Parenting Education	
	Parenting programs from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are essential to a child's development. Parents who are consistent, respectful, involved, and serve as positive role models increase their children's potential for success and help prevent delinquent behavior during the adolescent and teen years.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Dinner Tonight!

*Summary developed by Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCS, Fort Bend County*

### **RELEVANCE**

The percentage of the food budget spent on away-from-home food has increased steadily since the 1970s. Consequently, the proportion of calories provided by away-from-home food has also increased. When dining out, there is a tendency to choose foods higher in calories, and large portions are increasingly common. Research shows daily calorie intake from foods eaten away from home increased 18% to 32% in the last 25 years. Many people become overwhelmed when they think of menu planning and trying to prepare healthy, cost-effective meals for their families. Providing families with healthy recipes and menu planning tips through the multifaceted Dinner Tonight! program is intended to encourage families to eat at home more often and hopefully make healthier food choices.

### **RESPONSE**

The goal for cooking healthy programs is to help families learn to how to cook quick, nutritious meals for their families in an attempt to achieve good health and cut down on diet-related illnesses. The Dinner Tonight! program encourages family mealtime by providing quick, nutritious, cost-effective recipes to consumers through weekly video webcasts. Every Monday, a new video demonstration link is emailed to distribution lists. The Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School provides an opportunity to further the mission of teaching families about healthy meal planning and food preparation.

### **RESULTS**

Weekly video demonstrations are sent via e-mail to approximately 3,500 people in Fort Bend County via distribution lists. The lists include persons who have attended AgriLife Extension programs and

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

expressed an interest in receiving the weekly emails and all Fort Bend County employees. Some who receive the weekly emails forward to their own distribution lists.

Two Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking Schools were conducted reaching 433 individuals, and 380 returned the completed pre and post evaluations. Evaluations indicate the events were highly successful in impacting family nutrition. Some of the event outcomes are noted below:

Things learned from the series that made attendance worthwhile:

- 87% have an understanding of the role of meal planning in preparing healthy meals
- 87% have an understanding of how the foods you eat impact our health
- 84% have an understanding of how meal planning can help save time and reduce stress
- 75% have an understanding of how to modify recipes to reduce calorie content
- 77% have an understanding of how to modify recipes to reduce sodium content
- 78% have an understanding of how to modify recipes to change or reduce the fat content

### **PARTICIPANT COMMENTS**

- “The meal was really good.”
- “Healthy foods can taste good and be easy to prepare.”
- “I’m going to try these recipes at home.”
- “Take time to plan, shop and prepare nutritious meals.”

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Dinner Tonight! will continue to evolve through development of partnerships. In 2015, Fort Bend County will continue to send the weekly video demonstration links and offer a Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School at the Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes

*Developed by Dianne Gertson, Fort Bend County Extension Agent-FCS*

### **RELEVANCE**

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes is a program with a curriculum covering four nutrition and five self-care management topics. The program helps people with diabetes learn the skills needed to manage their disease successfully.

#### **The Issue:**

- 9.7 percent (1.7 million) of Texans 18 years and older have a diagnosis of diabetes; another 425,157 are believed to have undiagnosed diabetes. In Fort Bend County, 8.8 percent of the population has been diagnosed with diabetes.
- In 2008, the number of people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes rose sharply.
- The number of Americans with diabetes is projected to increase 43 percent, growing to 17.4 million by 2020.
- Health care costs now average \$11,744 per person with diabetes, for an annual total cost of \$174 billion in the U.S. - \$116 billion for health care and \$58 billion in lost productivity.
- Men with diabetes miss an average of 11 work days each year; women miss about 9 work days.
- Almost \$1 of every \$5 spent on health care is for people with diabetes.
- Currently, only 7 percent of people with diabetes are at recommended levels for blood glucose, blood pressure, and blood cholesterol.
- Poor diabetes management increases health care costs.
- People with diabetes who maintain their blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers within recommended ranges can keep their costs, health risks, quality of life, and productivity very close to those without the disease.

#### **Background:**

- Diabetes occurs when the body does not make enough insulin, or the insulin it makes does not work properly.
- While diabetes is not curable, it is manageable.
- Skills needed to effectively manage diabetes are well documented.
- Diabetes education is not readily available.
- Burdens of diabetes mismanagement are disproportionately borne by those with little or no insurance coverage, lower literacy, poor or no English skills, lower educational and income levels, and poor access to transportation.



### Severity of the Problem:

- The annual cost of diabetes in Texas is estimated at over \$12.5 billion.
- An estimated 1.7 million adult Texans have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- Texas is projected to have a greater incidence rate and increased costs in the future due to the growing population of Hispanics/Latinos, who are at greater risk for the disease.

### RESPONSE


- Extension health professionals developed *Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes*, a low-cost class series covering nine self-care and nutrition topics delivered in five sessions.
- Class materials include a curriculum consistent with the American Diabetes Association Standards of Care along with overheads, videos, a complete marketing package, and an evaluation program.
- Volunteer local health professionals, with leadership by county Extension agents, use *Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes* to teach the classes.
- The primary goal of the program is to improve blood glucose management.
- A *Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes* series was taught once at the Oak Bend Medical Center in Richmond, Mamie George Community Center in Richmond and Christ Clinic in Katy. Each of the series consisted of five meetings covering 9 lessons.

### RESULTS

Outcome results are based on participants who have diabetes, attend the nine lessons and submit all forms for documentation. There were 22 participants (16 female, 6 male) who met the criteria for *Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes*. Thirty six percent were Hispanic; 23% were African American; 36% were white. The remaining 5% were Asian or an undisclosed ethnicity. Fifty percent had diabetes for less than five years. Seventy-three percent had never received any previous diabetes education. Sixty nine percent were on some type of diabetes medication. After the classes, eighty eight percent considered their ability to control their diabetes to be good to excellent. The Total Net Present Value for health care cost savings for females is \$1,120,999 and for males the savings is \$210,447. Including Total Net Present Value for Lost Wages for males and females, the total economic value is \$1,331,446.

### FUTURE PLANS

Educational programming for diabetes and cooking for people with diabetes will continue to be offered in Fort Bend County. Dianne Gertson has received a grant from the Gulf Coast Medical Foundation to support this diabetes education.

V A L U E	
Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes	
	This diabetes education program teaches participants about lifestyle changes and disease self-management, enabling them to improve their quality of life and lower their health-care costs close to the non-diabetes level. These reduced health-care costs are key to the program's public value.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Food Protection Management – Food Handler Program Ft. Bend County

*Summary Developed by Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences*

### **RELEVANCE**

Each year, an estimated 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Common symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. While some people may view this as a mere case of “food poisoning,” foodborne illness has serious health and economic consequences. In fact, foodborne illnesses from five pathogens alone (Campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli O157:H7, and E. coli non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$6.9 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. All of us are at risk for foodborne illness, but older adults, pregnant women, young children, individuals with chronic disease, and those with a compromised immune system are at an increased risk. Because nearly half of our food dollars are spent on foods eaten away from home, it is imperative that employees who work in retail food service handle food safely.

### **RESPONSE**

To meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments, the Food Protection Management (FPM) program was developed. Our two-day certified food manager program prepares food service workers to sit for the state Certified Food Manager exam. Our 2-hour food handler program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services, trains front-line food service workers on the basic principles of food safety. Both programs are conducted at the county level by Extension agents.

### **RESULTS**

During 2014, 36 people in Ft. Bend County participated in the FPM program and completed the food handler program. Change in knowledge (pre vs post) was used to evaluate the food handler program. In addition, client (customer) satisfaction surveys were collected from participants.

#### **A. Food Handler Course – participant characteristics**

- Most (78%; n=28) of the participants were female and half were white.
- A large percentage of the participants (89%; n=32) identified English as their preferred language.
- Level of education ranged from high school or less (41%) to a college degree (55%).
- More than 41% reported having food service experience, and a similar percentage acknowledged they had received training over food safety in the past.

The following table records the responses of participants (Table 1). There **was a** statistically significant increase in test scores (comparing pre vs post) suggesting an increase in food safety knowledge. Table 2 provide basics customer satisfaction results.

**Table 1. – Responses to pre and post-test.**

Question	% correct pre*	% correct post
1. Which of the following statements about serving food is true?	83	89
2. Which of the following best describes proper hand and arm washing?	94	97
3. The removal of dirt, soil, food or grease is known as:	75	92
4. Which of the following statements about a hand washing sink is true?	94	97
5. Which of the following people is most likely to contract a foodborne illness?	36	78
6. Which of the following foods would not be considered potentially hazardous?	72	89
7. Cross contamination happens when safe food comes into contact with:	89	86
8. Which of the following statements best describes the temperature danger zone?	58	86
9. Which of the following is an example of cross contamination?	89	94
10. All of the following are acceptable tools for handling ready-to-eat foods except:	69	86
11. Which of the following food service employees must wear a hair net/restraint?	78	89
12. Which of the following is the best example of maintaining personal hygiene?	69	83
13. A food service employee should immediately tell his/her supervisor if he/she has:	67	78
14. Generally speaking a foodborne outbreak involves how many people?	50	72
15. Food can be contaminated by:	83	92

\**Mean score and % score were both rounded to the nearest whole number, where:*

- Mean score pre: 74
- Mean score post: 87

\**Percentage of respondents who answered survey questions correctly, pre and post.*

**Table 2: Client satisfaction with Food Handler course instruction**

Indicators	Average Score (n=35)**
Client satisfaction with instructor's knowledge of the subject.	1.3 ± .44
Client satisfaction with instructor's presentation of course material.	1.2 ± .41
Client satisfaction with instructor's response to questions.	1.2 ± .41
Client satisfaction with instructor's involvement in discussion and questions regarding course material.	1.2 ± .41
Overall client satisfaction with instructor performance.	1.2 ± .43
Overall client satisfaction with the program.	1.2 ± .41

\*\* Based on participant surveys received and entered as of 10/1/2014. The client satisfaction survey was given at the end of the training while the survey that assessed client characteristics was given separately (at the beginning).

Instructor satisfaction scores are based on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied). In other words - *the lower the number, the more satisfied the participant*. Scores of 0 (not applicable) or 6 (no response) were not included in the analysis.


Summary: The food handlers program was successful in helping participants (foodservice employees) increase their knowledge about food safety as it pertains to the retail setting.

**B. Food Protection Management**

During 2014, 13 people in Ft. Bend County participated in the food manager certification program. In addition, client (customer) satisfaction surveys were collected from participants. The food manager program requires passing a standardized test to receive a five-year certification. Ten of the thirteen participants passed with the required 75% rate. Classes were taught at the Extension office.

**FUTURE PLANS**

Food Handlers, Cottage Food Handlers and Food Manager Certification classes will be taught in 2015.

V A L U E	
Food Safety Education	
	Both those who work in food-service establishments and those who simply cook in their own kitchens benefit from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension’s food-safety education programs. The resulting improvement in safe food handling benefits consumers by helping prevent food-borne illnesses and the public health care costs they cause.

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# Making a Difference

## ***Get the Facts - Evaluation of Curriculum on Nutrition Label Reading***

*Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences*

### **RELEVANCE**

Health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. These health conditions can be improved thru consumption of a healthy eating plan as affirmed in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. However, dietary behavior change can be difficult and requires knowledge, skills, motivation and an environment conducive to change.

### **RESPONSE**

Basic food buying skills enable clients to consider more healthful food choices when shopping. *Get the Facts*, a three-lesson series on the Nutrition Facts food label, was developed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists to enhance participant skills necessary for positive dietary behavior change. The skills-building series focused on comparing serving size, fat and sodium information when selecting food choices. These three items were specifically selected as they relate to obesity, heart disease and hypertension.

Session goals were:

- Serving size: To understand the difference between a serving and a portion; estimate common serving sizes; use serving sizes to create healthy, balanced meals using the plate method.
- Fat: To gain knowledge of the basic components of the Nutrition Facts label; understand the health consequences of consuming saturated and trans fat; compare food labels to select products lower in saturated fat and trans fat.
- Sodium: To explain that most (more than 70%) of the sodium in the American eating plan comes from processed foods; understand the effects of sodium on blood pressure; compare food labels to consistently select products with less sodium.

### **RESULTS**

The evaluation of knowledge and intent to change behavior among *Get the Facts* participants was accomplished thru the use of pre/post/follow-up survey instruments. *Get the Facts* participants could opt out of the evaluation process if desired. Nonetheless, 124 *Get the Facts* pre/post survey sets, of which 90 included the follow-up survey, were received.

The typical *Get the Facts* participant (n=124) was not Hispanic (56%) and female (79%). Participants described themselves as white (71%), black (22%) or Asian (9%). Many participants (45%) had a high

school diploma, GED or less. Many participants (29%) had been told by a health professional they needed to lose weight. The typical household had 2.9 members, of which 0.8 were children. Participants reported other program use: food stamps (15%), free or reduced price school meals (10%), WIC (5%), and food banks or pantries (5%). Many participants (57%) reported Better Living for Texans (BLT) was the first AgriLife Extension program they had attended. Most participants (77%) rated the *Get the Facts* lesson series as excellent.

There was a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) increase in mean knowledge during the time *Get the Facts* was taught. This was noted for the pre/post/follow-up data sets (Table 1).

**Table 1. Mean correct knowledge scores (out of 6) Pre/post/follow-up survey sets (n=90)**

Pre-survey	Post-survey	Follow-up survey
1.6a	2.2b	2.3b

a & b are statistically different at  $p < .001$

More participants reported label reading during the time the session series was taught (Table 2).

**Table 2: Percentage of *Get the Facts* participants who reported always or almost always checking the food label while shopping for food. Pre/post/follow-up survey sets. (n=90)**

Behavior question	Pre Survey %	Post Survey %	Follow-up Survey %
How often do you use the information about <u>SERVING SIZE</u> on the food label to determine the amount of food you will eat?	16	45	42
How often do you use the information about <u>FAT</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	37	64	54
How often do you use the information about <u>SODIUM</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	36	67	53

Self-reported behavior improved ( $p > .001$ ) regarding serving size, fat and sodium food label usage during the time this lesson series was taught (Table 3).

**Table 3. Mean food label usage scores (5=never thru 1=always) Pre/post/follow-up survey sets (n=90)**

Behavior question	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Follow-up Survey
How often do you use the information about <u>SERVING SIZE</u> on the food label to determine the amount of food you will eat?	3.3a	2.5b	2.6b
How often do you use the information about <u>FAT</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	2.9a	2.1b	2.4b
How often do you use the information about <u>SODIUM</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	3.0a	2.1b	2.4b

Answers coded: 5=never; 4=almost never; 3=sometimes; 2=almost always; 1=always

a and b are statistically different at  $p > .001$

Positive behavior change was reported by participants in response to the question: "What changes have you made?"

- Always reading nutrition labels, and we're including our children in the process.



- I now check the amounts of salt in food that I buy.
- Shop for healthier foods.
- I prepare menus and a shopping list that include more produce.
- I read all nutrition labels of food.
- I check the nutrition label for calories and don't eat as much as I did.

*Get the Facts* is a Texas SNAP-ED approved curricula available to help meet the needs of local county Extension agents. Evaluation results suggest *Get the Facts* curriculum was effective ( $p > .001$ ) at improving participant knowledge and enhancing behavior related to nutrition label reading for both the pre/post ( $n=2888$ ) and the pre/post/follow-up ( $n=1597$ ) data sets. At the end of the series, an additional 44% of Get the Facts clients reported label usage while grocery shopping.

Because label reading skills are necessary for clients to make healthful food choices, the Food and Drug Administration has proposed significant changes to the Nutrition Facts panel to enhance consumer understanding when evaluating and selecting food items. The revised food labels may be released during 2015; food manufactures will have two years to comply with revised labeling regulations.

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**EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE**  
***Providing Solutions***

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Master Wellness Volunteers

*Developed by: Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences*

### **RELEVANCE**

This is a plan for the recruitment, training and management of Master Wellness Volunteers. The Master Wellness Volunteer Program provides volunteers with 40 hours of health and nutrition education. In return, the volunteers give back 40 hours of volunteer service. Volunteers can contribute greatly to the FCS program and can extend education further in the community.

### **RESPONSE**

Master Wellness Volunteers were involved in Do Well Be Well with Diabetes classes, Pantry to Plate and Teen Chef camps, Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School, Preserving the Bounty and Giving the Bounty programs.

### **RESULTS**

Nine volunteers were trained in 2014 making the total of trained volunteers in Fort Bend County 19.

- Volunteers planned and marketed DWBW as well as taught selected lessons of the series.
- Volunteers served as group leaders and facilitated group activities and educational components of Teen Chef and Pantry to Plate camps.
- Volunteers with Dinner Tonight assisted with food preparation, assisted participants in completing the pre and post surveys, and served food to attendees.
- Volunteers were involved in the water bath and pressure canning of products for the Preserving the Bounty and Giving the Bounty workshops.
- Volunteers assisted with AG'tivity Barn in preparing the bags for each participant.

### **FUTURE**

In 2015 Master Wellness Volunteers will be trained. Volunteers will continue to assist with FCS-related programs.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Pantry to Plate

*Summary developed by Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCS, Fort Bend County*

### **RELEVANCE**

"Obesity is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. As obesity increases among all age groups, we are seeing chronic diseases in much younger adults compared to a few decades ago", said Dr. William Dietz, director, CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. The prevalence of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 more than doubled in the past 20 years, going from 6.5% in 1980 to 17.0% in 2006. The rate among adolescents aged 12 to 19 more than tripled, increasing from 5% to 17.6%. Obesity is the result of caloric imbalance (too few calories expended for the amount of calories consumed) and is mediated by genetics and health. Obese youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. In a population-based sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, 70% of obese children had at least one CVD risk factor. In addition, children who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. Obese young people are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults, and therefore more at risk for associated adult health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases. According to DSHS, 43% of 4th graders in HSR 6/5S are at risk or overweight.

### **RESPONSE**

Pantry to Plate is a 3-day camp offered to kids 8 to 12 years old. Registration is limited to 15 due to space and the hands-on activities. Goals of Pantry to Plate include increased knowledge of general nutrition, decreased consumption of sugar foods and sugar-sweetened beverages, increased physical activity and increased knowledge of food safety, cooking safety and food preparation techniques. This year a self-paced learning environment was implemented. Attendees visited learning stations and completed a worksheet based on the stations. Station topics included hand washing, portion control, label reading, physical activity, MyPlate, water conservation and kitchen chemistry. The kitchen activities were facilitated by adult helpers. The concepts taught in the camp can be used by the children to make healthier eating choices. The day began with self-paced learning via stations for the entire group. Adult helpers then worked with small groups on food and kitchen safety and food preparation. Each small group prepared a recipe. Prior to eating the large group participated in physical activity. By learning about nutrition and being

able to prepare healthy foods, kids can make better choices and avoid high calorie non-nutritive foods and

snacks with less than optimal nutrition. Each day recipes around a different theme were prepared by the campers. Themes were Breakfast, Taco Day and Cookie and Ice Cream Day.

## **RESULTS**

A pre- and post-test were given to Pantry to Plate participants. Overall test scores increased by 22%. The pre and post-test included questions regarding nutrition, hand washing, food safety, and physical activity. Most questions showed an increase in knowledge. All questions were multiple choice. The question regarding the food groups which should make up  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your plate showed an increase in knowledge of 42% to 92%. The question regarding the serving size of cooked vegetables showed an increase in knowledge of 17% to 77%. The question regarding ways to conserve water showed an increase in knowledge of 75% to 77%.

Participant comments regarding:

“What I liked best about Pantry 2 Plate.”

- Cooking!
- I liked cooking the best!
- Eating what we cook!
- Homemade Ice Cream!!


“What I liked least.”

- The worksheets!
- Nothing!

## **FUTURE PLANS**

Pantry to Plate will be offered again in 2015. The station concept will again be utilized for education in a relaxed learning atmosphere. Educational topics and recipes change from year to year.

### Obesity Prevention and Reduction



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service engages children and adults in programs that teach them how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to promote health and reduce their risk for obesity. The Texas public benefits through a healthier population, reduced health care costs, and increased productivity.

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# Making a Difference

## 2014 Preserving the Harvest – Food Preservation Workshops (Ft. Bend County)

*Developed by: Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences*

### **RELEVANCE**

In recent years, the interest in home food preservation has seen tremendous growth as evidenced by the increased availability of home food preservation supplies, the increase in home food preservation questions fielded by Extension educators, and the growing number of web sites that feature recipes and information. Although people have been preserving food at home for decades, there are recommended practices that should be followed to keep the food safe and to prevent foodborne illness. These practices include following tested recipes as well as safe food preservation methods.

### **RESPONSE**

With a growing number of requests for home food preservation information, Agents began offering workshops on canning, freezing, and drying. These workshops (*Preserving the Harvest*) often include hands-on experience so participants are actively engaged in the process and are able to take home with them a jar of preserved food.

### **RESULTS**

In 2014, thirty participants in Ft. Bend County participated in the workshop and completed pre and post surveys which allowed us to assess the “intent to adopt” targeted behaviors.

#### **Participant Characteristics**

As shown in Table 1, most participants were female, white, and 60 years of age. Ten of the 33 participants had used a boiling water bath canner to process jams, jellies, and salsa in the last 12 months. This is a safe method for food preservation of high-acid foods. Interestingly there were a number of participants who reported using methods of home food preservation that are considered **unsafe**. For example, 9 of the 30 participants used a boiling water bath canner to preserve vegetables such as green beans.

Family and friends were the most popular sources of information participants used for their home food preservation questions. 46% identified this workshop as their first exposure to AgriLife Extension.

# Making a Difference

## ***Step Up and Scale Down – 2014 (Ft. Bend County)***

*Summary developed by Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCS, Fort Bend County*

### **ISSUE**

Obesity continues to be a critical issue throughout Texas. Long-term consequences of being obese are many and include increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and several forms of cancer.

### **RESPONSE**

*Step Up and Scale Down* is a 12-week weight management program that was designed to address two factors behind the obesity issue: physical activity and diet. Targeted towards adults, the program was offered in a group setting which allows participants to support and encourage each other. Many counties pair this program with *Walk Across Texas* to emphasize the role of physical activity in maintaining health and preventing chronic disease.

### **RESULTS**

During 2014, 33 people from Ft. Bend County enrolled and completed the *Step Up and Scale Down* program. Evaluation of the program was conducted using a pre and post survey.

- **Participant characteristics** - Overall, participants were mainly female (n=32; 97%) and white (22; 67%). Starting weight was reported for 12 of the 33 participants. Mean body mass index (BMI) was 29.6; 4 of the 12 participants were overweight and 4 were classified as obese. Most (85%) indicated they had tried to lose weight in the past using a variety of methods.
- **Change in targeted behaviors** - Table 1 shows the extent to which targeted diet and physical activity behaviors were being followed at the beginning of the program, immediately after the program ended.

**Table 1. Change in targeted behaviors**

Behavior	Beginning of SUSD Number (%)	After SUSD ended Number (%)
Eat breakfast 5-7 days a week	15 (46)	20 (61)
TV/video viewing 2 hours per day or less	23(70)	25 (76)
Use calorie information at fast food restaurants “always or most of the time”	8 (24)	22 (67)
Plans meals and snacks “always”	2 (6%)	9 (27)
Fills 1/2 of lunch and dinner plates with fruits and vegetables	5 (15)	15 (45)



As noted in Table 1, more participants were eating breakfast 5 or more days a week at the end of the program compared to entry. The use of calorie information at fast food restaurants also was increased (post compared to pre). In addition, more participants were filling 1/2 of their plates with fruits and vegetables. The percentage who watched television or videos for 2 hours or less each day increased slightly.

Physical activity also trended upwards during the program. Initially, participants reported being physically active for 30 minutes or longer an average of 3.9 days per week. At the end of the 12-week program, that number had risen to an average of 4.6 days. Although the increase was not statistically significant, the upward trend is encouraging.

**Table 2. Perceptions about health**

Behavior	Beginning of SUSD Average number	After SUSD ended Average number
Out of the past 30 days, the number of days that one's physical health was not good.	2.2 $\pm$ 4.5 <sup>a</sup>	1.6 $\pm$ 2.9 <sup>a</sup>
Out of the past 30 days, the number of days that one's mental health was not good.	5.0 $\pm$ 7.0 <sup>a</sup>	1.3 $\pm$ 1.9 <sup>b</sup>
Out of the past 30 days, the number of days that poor health kept one from doing usual activities.	2.2 $\pm$ 4.9 <sup>a</sup>	1.5 $\pm$ 3.1 <sup>a</sup>

Note - rows with the different letters represent statistical significance

Overall, perceptions about participants' own health varied. Initially, participants reported that out of the past 30 days, their physical health was not good for nearly 2 days. That average dropped slightly immediately after the program ended. Mean number of days that self-perceived mental was not good was 5.0 when the program began and dropped significantly to 1.3 days immediately after the program ended. There was no significant change in the number of days that poor health (physical or mental) prevented a participant from doing usual activities, although the downward trend is encouraging.

### **Change in BMI**


As a group, participants lost an average of 2.8 pounds during the initial 12 weeks (range of 1 to 4.4 pounds). On average, BMI was 29.0 at the beginning of the program and 28.5 immediately after the program ended. Although this change in BMI was statistically significant, it was likely not meaningful clinically.

### **SUMMARY**

Weight loss is a long and challenging process for most adults. While participants who completed the Step Up and Scale Down program did not lose a significant amount of weight overall, there was evidence of the adoption of several habits (including eating more fruits and vegetables, eating breakfast, and increasing physical activity) that may lead to more positive health benefits down the road.

**VALUE**

**Obesity Prevention and Reduction**



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service engages children and adults in programs that teach them how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to promote health and reduce their risk for obesity. The Texas public benefits through a healthier population, reduced health care costs, and increased productivity.

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# Making a Difference

## 2014 Texas Extension Education Association of Fort Bend

*Developed by Dianne Gertson, Fort Bend County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences*

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Texas Extension Education Association is to work with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development and community service.

### **RESPONSE**

Texas Extension Education Association of Fort Bend is comprised of 4 clubs with a total of 42 members. The four clubs meet on a regular basis to conduct business and have educational programs. Educational programs hosted by TEEA included: "Homemade Pizza", "Speed Cleaning", and "Crème Puffs". An educational tour to the Czech Heritage Museum in LaGrange was organized in February. At their annual meeting, they were trained to teach the lessons: "Safe Medication Disposal", "iPad 101", "To Toss or Not To Toss" and "Diversity".

In addition to the educational programming, they provide community service throughout the county. They provided a 4-H Leadership Lab scholarship. In addition to the monetary donations, members donate materials to Activities Supporting Adolescent Parents (ASAP) at Lamar CISD and Ronald McDonald House. Members also make baby blankets to be given away at LBJ Hospital.

### **RESULTS**

They contributed over 1,000 hours of volunteer service valued at \$21.79 per hour (\$21,790.00) to educational programming and community service. Members are big supporters of the 4-H program and several volunteer throughout the year to help with projects.

TEEA is able to support their educational and community service programming through an annual Garage Sale held in August. Members donate to the Garage Sale that has become a notable event for the Rosenberg area.

TEEA officers and council delegates attend seven council meetings each year, as well as a fall District Officer Training and a District Spring Conference that was held in Harris County this year. Additionally, members attended the annual state meeting held in Wichita Falls this year.

TEEA members participate in the county fair by entering exhibits and volunteering in the Exhibit Hall. They have numerous committees that meet as needed to conduct the business of the Texas Extension Education Association of Fort Bend.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Teen Chef

*Summary developed by Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCS, Fort Bend County*

### **RELEVANCE**

“Obesity is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. As obesity increases among all age groups, we are seeing chronic diseases in much younger adults compared to a few decades ago”, said Dr. William Dietz, director, CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. The prevalence of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 more than doubled in the past 20 years, going from 6.5% in 1980 to 17.0% in 2006. The rate among adolescents aged 12 to 19 more than tripled, increasing from 5% to 17.6%. Obesity is the result of caloric imbalance (too few calories expended for the amount of calories consumed) and is mediated by genetics and health. Obese youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. In a population-based sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, 70% of obese children had at least one CVD risk factor. In addition, children who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. Obese young people are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults, and therefore more at risk for associated adult health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases. According to DSHS, 43% of 4th graders in HSR 6/5S are at risk or are overweight.

### **RESPONSE**

Teen Chef is a 2 day camp offered to kids 13 to 16 years old. Registration is limited to 10 due to space and the hands on activities. Goals of Teen Chef include increased knowledge of general nutrition, increased knowledge of food safety, cooking safety and food preparation techniques. A brief lecture format with activities was utilized for learning. Topics included MyPlate, healthier fast food, grill safety, water conservation and kitchen chemistry. The kitchen activities were facilitated by adult helpers. The concepts taught in the camp can be used by the campers to make healthier eating choices. Kitchen chemistry experiments included solar ovens, slime, and colored cabbage leaves. Adult helpers then worked with small groups on food and kitchen safety and food preparation. Each small group prepared a recipe. By learning about nutrition and being able to prepare healthy foods, kids can make better choices and avoid high calorie non nutritive foods and snacks with less than optimal nutrition. Each day recipes around a different theme were prepared by the campers. Grill day included taco burger packets, grilled corn on the cob and campfire banana splits; Party day included BBQ wings, layered pizza dip and potato bites.

## **RESULTS**

A pre and post-test was given to Teen Chef participants. Overall test scores increased by 22%. The pre and post-test included questions regarding nutrition, hand washing, food safety, and water conservation. Most questions showed an increase in knowledge. All questions were multiple choice. The question regarding nutrients provided by citrus fruits showed an increase in knowledge of 50% to 80%. The question regarding the temperature reached by coals showed an increase in knowledge of 50% to 90%. The question regarding the amount of water used by a family of 4 for brushing their teeth showed an increase in knowledge of 40% to 50%.

Participant comments “What I liked best about Teen Chef.”

- The experiments!
- The people and the food. I love it!
- Eating!

“What I liked least.”

- Tin foil!
- Fruit and vegetable fear factor!
- Worksheets!

## **FUTURE PLANS**

Teen Chef will be offered again in 2015. Learning activities and recipes will be identified to challenge campers. Educational topics and recipes change from year to year.

# Making a Difference

## ***Three Easy Bites* – Evaluation of a Curriculum Promoting Healthy Weight**

Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences

### **RELEVANCE**

Two-thirds of the adult population is either overweight or obese. Certain breakfast, snacking and dinner behaviors are associated with achieving and maintaining a healthier weight. Research supports eating breakfast, planning snacks and dinner, as well as having enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of a dinner plate are associated with healthy weight.

### **RESPONSE**

A three lesson series, *Three Easy Bites*, was developed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists. The curriculum promoted diet-related best practice behaviors related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. *Three Easy Bites* session goals were as follows. Families would:

- Plan to eat breakfast, include foods from at least two MyPlate food groups, and include breakfast items on their weekly grocery list;
- Plan which snack foods they will eat, eat their snacks away from the television, and compare their snack portion relative to the Nutrition Facts serving size; and
- Plan their dinner meal, include fruits and/or vegetables with every dinner, and include fruit and/or vegetables on their weekly grocery list.

Participants could opt out of the survey evaluation process if desired. Nonetheless, 23 pre/post survey sets were received from Fort Bend County.

Some participants (20%) reported that Better Living for Texans (BLT) was the first AgriLife program they had attended. The typical *Three Easy Bites* participant was female (87%), described herself as Hispanic or Latino (96%) and was 41 years of age. Some participants identified themselves as white (17%). Educational attainment for most participants (84%) was high school/GED or less. Many participants (32%) had been advised by a health professional they weigh too much.

### **RESULTS**

The leader-facilitated learner-centered *Three Easy Bites* lesson approach may have helped clients internalize information and enhanced skills necessary to improve best practice behaviors associated with healthier weight. This curriculum was especially relevant given 24 percent of participants had been told by a health professional they weigh too much. Research confirms consistent improvements in eating patterns can help clients achieve and maintain healthier weight.

Some self-reported behavior improvement was noted during the time *Three Easy Bites* was taught. (Table 1).

**Table 1. Percentage of *Three Easy Bites* participants who answered always or almost always: pre/post data sets (n=23).**

<b>Behavior Questions</b>	<b>Pre-survey (%)</b>	<b>Post-survey (%)</b>
How often do you plan breakfast ahead of time?	19	19
How often do you include at least two breakfast items from different food groups?	43	65
How often do you use a shopping list which includes breakfast items when you go to the grocery store?	23	52
How often do you plan snacks ahead of time?	14	23
How often do you snack in front of the television?	0	9
How often do you use the Nutrition Facts serving size information to determine how much of your snack to eat?	22	50
How often do you plan dinner ahead of time?	50	68
How often do you have enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of your dinner plate?	60	65
How often do you use a shopping list with fruits and vegetables when you go to the grocery store?	68	74

County results (n=23) suggest the *Three Easy Bites* curriculum may have been effective at improving participant behavior related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. Best practice behaviors with the greatest participant improvement were:

1. Using a shopping list that includes breakfast items
2. Using the Nutrition facts Label to determine snack serving size
3. Planning dinner ahead of time

Statewide results (n=1095) indicate the *Three Easy Bites* curriculum was effective ( $p > .001$ ) at improving participant behavior related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. All curriculum goals were met by participants. Interestingly, self-reported behavior improvement extended thru the follow-up period suggesting participants continued to adopt best practice behaviors. Best practice behaviors with the greatest participant improvement were:

1. Using the Nutrition Facts label to determine portion size of snacks
2. Using a shopping list which includes breakfast items
3. Eating enough fruits/vegetables to cover half of the dinner plate

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Three Easy Bites curriculum was a very effective curriculum in educating our clientele to manage weight gain and the problems associated with obesity and/or chronic diseases. For 2015, we anticipate even greater interest in this very important program.

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# Making a Difference

## 2014 Fort Bend County Walk Across Texas

*Developed by Dianne Gertson, Fort Bend County Extension Agent-FCS*

### **RELEVANCE**

*Walk Across Texas!* is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. *Walk Across Texas!* is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity program by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

### **The Issue:**

- Approximately 30% of Texas adults are obese and 19% of Texas children.
- Only twenty-five percent of adults and twenty-seven percent of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- Twenty-nine percent of American adults are not physically active at all.

### **Background:**

- Regular physical activity is associated with a longer, healthier life.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure & depression.
- Chronic diseases account for seventy percent of deaths and seventy-five percent of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- Estimated direct costs of obesity and inactivity together account for approximately 9.4% of U.S. health expenditures.
- With regular physical activity, fifty-eight percent of all people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Community-wide programs like *Walk Across Texas!* have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

### **Severity of the Problem:**

- Texas ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 12<sup>th</sup> as the state with the highest obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 6<sup>th</sup> as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.

### **The Educational Program:**

- Teams of eight people, school classes or individuals walk 830 miles across a map of Texas during the eight-week period.
- Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.

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- The program begins by an Extension agent forming a community task force with members from targeted groups such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- Plan Kick-Off, Half-Way and Recognition activities.
- Train site managers, captains, teachers and other volunteer helpers.
- Register participants.
- Walk for eight weeks.
- Enter mileage on the website.
- Provide recognition for the team walking the most miles and the team reaching the destination (830) miles first.

## **RESPONSE**

The departments of Fort Bend County government comprise the teams. A planning meeting is scheduled with the site coordinator at Fort Bend Employee Health and Wellness Center. A starting and ending point is determined. The site coordinator publicizes the program through the county newsletter. A total of 15 teams registered for the event. The site manager held a Kick-Off meeting at the Wellness Center. The website was explained to the team captains with the understanding that the Extension office would be inputting all information. Forms were distributed to captains. Captains were encouraged to turn in all forms at the end of the event. Teams who turned in the wrap-up forms and the mileage logs were entered into a special drawing at the Celebration Event. A weekly report was submitted to the county newsletter and distributed to employees via e-mail.

## **RESULTS**

A total of 165 people in Fort Bend registered to participate in the *Walk Across Texas!* activity. Potential Economic Impact for 2014 is based upon the activity of participants. The average age for participants was 43. It is estimated that 39 females and 5 males could delay the onset of diabetes if they continue their physical activity routine.


Comments were:

- Feeling better physically and emotionally. I also learned how much I really need to walk in order to get in 10,000 steps per day.
- My kids enjoyed the evening walks with the dog. They also enjoyed exercising with me.
- I became more active everyday. And I began to feel better, and more fit.

The Net Present Value for health care costs savings for females is estimated to \$2,626,497 and for males, \$318,504. The total savings for Net Present Values including calculating savings for lost wages is \$2,945,002.

### **Future Plans:**

*Walk Across Texas!* will continue its relationship with Fort Bend County Departments and will encourage community groups to join in the activity planning as well as the Walk. It is planned for March.

V A L U E	
Walk Across Texas	
	<p>This eight-week fitness and health program challenges participants to adopt a habit of regular exercise. Research indicates that a walking routine of this duration is more likely to lead to continued moderate exercise, which improves quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease (including type 2 diabetes). This program yields public value in the forms of reduced public health care costs and a healthier, more productive workforce.</p>

# Making a Difference

## 2013 4-H Program Administration in Fort Bend County

*Developed by: Joe W. Mask County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development (previous)*

*Supported by: Angela Bosier, County Extension Agent – Urban Youth Development and  
Justin Saenz, County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development (current)*

### **RELEVANCE**

4-H is a youth development program that began over 100 years ago. The goal of 4-H is to “grow” and promote confident, capable and caring kids with the life skills to thrive in today's world and succeed in their boldest dreams for tomorrow. 4-H programs are research-backed and offer life-changing experiences to youth in Fort Bend, in Texas, and around the world. 4-H is the youth development program of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and USDA.

4-H is the youth development program of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service that focuses on the needs, concerns & interests of youth. Its aim is to help youth gain a positive self-concept, rational social behavior, knowledge and problem-solving capabilities through planned individual projects, meetings, group activities and participation in different events. Members develop new skills, learn cooperation, develop leadership abilities, improve their citizenship and have fun.

### **RESPONSE**

Fort Bend County agents work diligently to oversee the 4-H and youth development program including management of 4-H clubs/groups as a whole, 4-H members, club managers, volunteer leaders, coordination of Youth Board/Council, and work with partners & collaborators to ensure effective functioning of the 4-H and youth development program. In addition, the effective use of projects and activities while developing participating youth into contributing members of society is constantly reviewed.

The many facets of the Fort Bend County 4-H program include:

- The management of 21 clubs (community, project & SPIN)
- The management of FBC Parent Leaders Association (25 members)
- The management of over 500 members, 110 adult/project leaders, 94 youth volunteers
- Club monthly meetings with a total attendance of 478 (average)
- Club office trainings with a total attendance of 49
- County contests – Roundup with 42 participating
- County contest – photography with 110 attending
- County contest – record book judging with 61 books submitted and judged
- District contests - Roundup with 42 entering

- State contest – Roundup with 39 entering
- One-Day 4-H – 41 participants
- Camps:
  - 4-H Day Camp with 71 attending
  - Camp Corral with 10 attending
  - Duds to Dazzle Camp with 15 participating
  - JMG Kids Kamp with 20 participating
  - Pantry to Plate Cooking School with 13 participating
  - Teen Chef Cooking School with 10 participating
- County Shows
  - Fashion – 6 participants
  - Food Show/Challenge – 9 participants
  - Consumer Decision Making – 10 participants
- Career Days at 6 local schools with 619 attendees to learn about Extension & 4-H employment
- Major Show participation
  - Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo – 39 participants
  - San Antonio Livestock Show – 44
  - Fort Worth Livestock Show & Rodeo – 8
  - Star of Texas - 11
- Livestock Coaches' Clinics – 4 held for 160 total participants
- County Livestock Validations
  - Horse – 7
  - Steer – 28
  - Heifer – 135
  - Sheep/Goat – 43
- Special Interest
  - Robotics Meeting - 69 participants
  - Robotics Camps – three with a total of 81 participants
  - Robotics Career Investigations – 87 participants
  - Hatching in the Classroom – 98 participants
  - Gardening & Eat 4-Health – 330 participants
  - Take A Stand anti-bullying program – 389 participants

As a result of the diligent efforts to meet the needs of our youth in Fort Bend County the club statistics in Fort Bend include:

- |                                     |                                                   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| • 25 clubs                          | • 94,417 special interest/short term participants |
| • 585 club members                  | • 392 livestock mentors                           |
| • 110 adult leaders                 | • 30 youth board members                          |
| • 94 youth volunteers               | • 25 members of FBC Parent Leaders Assoc.         |
| • 892 Curr. Enrichment participants | • Fastest growth: Vet Science & Robotics          |

### **FUTURE PLANS**

In 2015 the 4-H unit in Fort Bend will strive to increase overall membership and to promote non-traditional projects, particularly in the more urbanized sectors of this county.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 4-H National Youth Science Day – Rockets to the Rescue

*Developed by Angela Bosier County Extension Agent – Urban Youth Development – Fort Bend County*

### **RELEVANCE**

4-H National Youth Science Day (NYSD) supports the National 4-H Science Initiative. The focus of 4-H NYSD activities is a single science experiment designed to engage young people across the nation. By encouraging youth, adult mentors, partners and influencers to participate in 4-H NYSD, we can help all to experience science in a fun, constructive manner, increase interest in the sciences and encourage participation in support of 4-H programs.

### **RESPONSE**

Thirty sessions, either dedicated to activities relating to robotics, an awareness of robotics or careers related to robotics were highlighted in 2014. Activities were conducted at Quail Valley Middle School, Pink Elementary and Seven Lakes Jr. High.

Major activities included:

- 4-H National Youth Science Day at Quail Valley Middle School - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services partnered with Operation Military Kids and were able to supply 17 Rockets to the Rescue kits to be used by their 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade science classes. The science teachers were able to take the “Rockets to the Rescue” projects and incorporate them in the already existing Science curriculum.
- Robotics series at Seven Lakes Jr High on February 5<sup>th</sup> - We gave each group a certain robot to build and to program. On Feb. 19 we completed our Robotics series with the basic setup of the cow bot and let the students program the bot to do whatever they wanted.
- Robotics Camp was a two-day camp held 7-1,2-14. A total of 36 youth participated each day.
  - The first day utilized the Junk Drawers Robotics curriculum. The definition of a robot, robot design and building activities were included. Supplies were simple starting with an array of office supplies. The kids completed a catapult and tested them out using a marshmallow. Afterwards, we incorporated the NXT Lego Mindstorm robotics kits by instructing them to build a robot with a moving part. The younger kids were given a paper box to incorporate into their robots. The older kids were given a motor as well as a paper box to incorporate into their robots. Lunch was sponsored by Domino’s Pizza.

- Day two of the robotics camp - the kids started off programming each using a worksheet from the Virtual Robotics curriculum. A maze was created by three volunteers. Participants were put into teams of three to four; one was the robot, one was the programmer, and the other was the relayer. After this activity the kids were instructed to build the cowbot and program it to go through the same maze they went through. Both the EV3 and The NXT kits were used this day. Lunch was sponsored by Domino's Pizza. The kids began building the core set robots for the EV3 kits and also a variety of robots from the NXT program. The camp was covered by Randall Williams from SMETV-16; him and his assistant filmed footage that was later used for a broadcast featured on YouTube.
- Robotics Career Day – Held at Wessendorf Middle School on 5-13-14; investigated the careers relating to robotics. A total of 87 youth participated.
- Robotics Interest Meeting - Held at the Extension office on 12-4-14 to introduce and discuss the Robotics curriculum, previous events and future plans for the Robotics program in Fort Bend. Two clubs were formed at the meeting one in Needville and one in Katy.

## **RESULTS**


The 4-H National Science Day project was done with 400 students and implemented by 5 science teachers at Quail Valley Middle School. The teachers were surprised of how easy it was to implement in the classroom, and the students were engaged and enjoyed doing the experiment.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Fort Bend County 4-H would like to thank Quail Valley Middle, Wessendorff Middle, and Seven Lakes Jr. High schools for allowing us to participate and incorporate this very exciting 4-H project. We would also like to thank Domino's Pizza for providing food, SMETV-16 for filming our activities, and Operation Military Kids for supporting our efforts.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

Continue to provide guidance and instruction in the development of this very exciting 4-H project.

V A L U E	
Character and Leadership Development	
	<p>Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.</p>



# Making a Difference

## 2014 Take A Stand – Anti-Bullying Fort Bend County

*Developed By: Angela Bosier – County Extension Agent-Urban Youth Development*

### **RELEVANCE**

Take A Stand is an anti-bullying program that has been implemented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service across the state, with major emphasis in urban counties including Fort Bend County.

What is bullying? As a starting point, there are elements that are included in most definitions of bullying. Although definitions vary from source to source, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when:

- The behavior hurts, humiliates, or harms another person physically or emotionally.
- Those targeted by the behavior have difficulty stopping the action directed at them and struggle to defend themselves.
- There is also a real or perceived “imbalance of power” which is described as when the student with the bullying behavior has more “power” either physically, socially, or emotionally, such as a higher social status or is physically larger or emotionally intimidating.

Conflicts among youth and bullying have been increasing. School districts have been mandated by the Texas Legislature through two bills (House Bill 212 and 283) to adopt and implement a dating violence policy and a discipline management policy. Both bills require training for teachers/staff as well as training/curriculum for youth to address these issues. Currently, there is no standard curriculum being utilized by school districts. Texas 4-H has developed, in partnership with the Texas Rural Mediation Services, a curriculum called Take A Stand! This curriculum addresses both of these issues.

### **RESPONSE**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County developed and implemented educational programming for youth to address Bullying to satisfy the expectations of the Urban X 7 initiative. Lessons from the curriculum were taught at Wessendorff Middle School – Lamar CISD during Anti-Bullying month. We had a total of 423 students go through the lessons that were taught. Fort Bend County had 335 respondents to the post survey; a total 79% of the participants

concluded the program with completed evaluations.

## **RESULTS**

Wessendorff Middle School offered us an opportunity to come in once a week every Tuesday or Thursday during the last period of class for five weeks to teach the Take A Stand lessons to the student body. The lessons were held in the gym with teachers and staff to help with control of the 423 students. All lessons were taught by Extension staff. We had a 79.3% respondent rate on the post survey given at the conclusion of all five lessons. 79.5% of the respondents indicated they had a change in behavior due to the program, with 76.7% giving positive feedback on the overall program.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

Fort Bend County will continue to provide the Take A Stand curriculum to the surrounding schools focusing on doing programming during Anti-Bully Week.

## **VALUE**

### **Character and Leadership Development**



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.

# Making a Difference

## 2014 4-H Veterinary Science Certificate Program

*Developed by Joe W. Mask County Extension Agent – 4-H & YD (previous) – Fort Bend County  
Angela Bosier, County Extension Agent – Urban Youth Development*

### **RELEVANCE**

The 4-H Veterinary Science Certificate Program is a 5-year curriculum-based program that includes 100 lessons and 50 activities that give young people interested in veterinary medicine the opportunity to work with professionals in the field. The program is career-oriented and provides on-the-job training for students to prepare them for a career in veterinary medicine. Students who participate in this program work closely with licensed veterinarians or registered veterinary technicians in their veterinary practices for a minimum of 500 clinical skills hours. This hands-on training provides them with an opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become a veterinary assistant. This training and experience is a valuable addition to a student's resume and will help them prepare for a professional degree program at an accredited university. The program follows an established curriculum that allows students and adults to work together to achieve success.

### **RESPONSE**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County maintains active clubs intended to teach the curriculum. There are also county activities to help support and enhance the program. Each year we are seeing significant growth.

Three clubs were established to implement the Vet Science Certificate Program in Fort Bend in 2012: Ready-Set-Vet; 4-H Homeschool Vet Assistant; and Heart to Tails. Four clubs were established in 2013: Animaniacs; Blue Jay Vet Science Club; Katy Tigers Vet Science; and Paws for a Purpose. In 2014 another club was added: Animal Doctors. This brings our total number of Vet Science project clubs to eight with a total active membership of over 100, including five independent members in 2014.

### **RESULTS**

- In 2014 three commercial visits were made to local veterinary clinics to promote the Fort Bend County Vet Science Certification Program and to solicit programmatic and sponsorship support. All three clinics agreed to serve as co-sponsors.
- During 2014 one Vet Science Certificate Program informational meeting held in Fort Bend County, conducted by Dr. Buddy Faries and Agent Joe W. Mask. There were a total of 86

members and parents in attendance with 47 youth committing to join the five year program by joining either of the eight existing clubs.

- In 2014 we had two Vet Science 4-H members take part in the Vet Science Skillathon at State 4-H Roundup. The Veterinary Science Skillathon is a competitive event designed to test the knowledge and skills that a 4-H member can gain through his or her involvement in a Veterinary Science project.
- Monthly meeting were held for each of the eight clubs which consisted of a learning experience as well as general business. An average of 97 youth out of 105 participated. Wow!



### **FUTURE PROGRAM PLANS**

Fort Bend County is committed to grow the Vet Science Program in the coming years. There are plans in place to have the second Vet Science Day at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. We also have a running list of calls with new students that want to start the program in September 2015 as well as new start-up clubs as interest increases in a given area. Of course, independent members may participate under any community club's guidance.

**EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE**  
*Providing Solutions*

# Making a Difference

## 4-H & Youth Development – Other Significant Programs Fort Bend County

**ONE DAY 4-H!** This event was started in 2009 with the purpose of allowing Texas 4-H'ers to thank their communities, counties, and state for more than 100 years of support for 4-H, its members and leaders. This event has become the largest organized day of community service by 4-H in the nation. Here in Fort Bend County for the fifth year in a row, One Day 4-H! was held. This year One Day 4-H occurred on Saturday, October 11, 2014 with 30 youth and 10 adult leaders taking part. For One Day 4-H!, our County Council held a highway cleanup and a food drive. We had help from Fort Bend Road & Bridge and the Needville Police Department with the safety measures that were needed. The event began at 4pm and ended when the sun started to go down around 7 pm. Members were able to clean five miles of road-way with one group on each side. The event was a great success, the 4-H'ers had fun and a lot of cool items were discovered during the clean-up.



**2014 Agricultural Literacy** - It is essential that AgriLife Extension take an active role in educating youth about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Fort Bend is unique in its demographic makeup with the north & east portions of the county being urban, while the south & west half remain rural. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented educational programming for youth as well as adults to address the relevant issue of Ag Literacy. AG'tivity Barn was conducted during the FB County Fair and involved 23 collaborators to reach over 990 elementary school students and 178 teachers & parent/chaperones. In addition, 573 youth entered the coloring contest. A total of 20 educational exhibits were utilized to promote the Ag industry in Fort Bend with 83 volunteers & 11 agencies and organizations assisting. In addition, it was estimated that 60% of the 200,000 fair visitors attended AG'tivity Barn during the 10-day run.



**4-H Day Camp** - The 4-H Day Camp was developed to give primarily non-4-H members a chance to experience a day full of 4-H activities. This camp was started years ago as a recruitment event to expose youth from 6-10 years of age to 4-H. Each summer the event is held in July at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds with participants involved in a wide range of hands on activities and enjoying a hot dog lunch, snacks, and




door prizes. This event was a great time for our volunteers to conduct the learning sessions. We utilize Master Gardeners, 4-H Parents/Leaders as well as County Council Officers and Teen Leaders. This year's camp included sessions relating to garden art and animal encounter dioramas, arts & crafts and community service project ideas. Each participant received a 4-H Day Camp T-shirt as a memento. The 2014 camp was attended by 51 participants with the average age of 7.8 years and resulted in three joining a 4-H club for the 2015 4-H year. One hundred percent of the participants indicated that they enjoyed the day and were excited about what they were able to learn and accomplish.

**Fort Bend County 4-H Annual Awards Banquet** - This very important "4-H year-end" event was held on Sunday, August 10 at Fort Bend County's beautiful Gordon Ranch in Richmond. This year's Mistress of Ceremony was 4-H member Cameron Anderson. The event opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the 4-H motto, then the "Welcome" and invocation. Everyone enjoyed a BBQ meal and afterwards the fun began. The special recognitions included the Clover Kids Recognition for participation followed by the Veterinary Science Recognition. The awards included: District/State Awards; County Awards; District Awards; State Awards; Rising Star Awards; Bronze Star Awards; Silver Star Awards; I Dare You Awards; Gold Star Awards; Hall of Fame Award; and the A. P. George Scholarship. The current Volunteer Youth Leadership Council was recognized followed by the installation of new Council officers. The banquet concluded with a performance from Share the Fun followed by closing remarks and the 4-H Prayer. A total of 415 individual awards were given with some very active members receiving as many as fifteen items of recognition, which included plaques, certificates, paper weights, pen/pencil sets, and trophies.

**National 4-H Week in Fort Bend County** - A presentation of the National 4-H Week proclamation was held on October 7, 2014 at a regular FBC Commissioner's Court meeting. We are very grateful for the



support of our county commissioners Richard Morrison (Prec. 1), Grady Prestage (Prec. 2), Andy Meyers (Prec. 3), and James Patterson, (Prec. 4), and particularly County Judge Robert Hebert. The relationship Texas AgriLife Extension Service has with our court is essential for the growth of Fort Bend County's 4-H program. Many thanks to Sheridan Reid and Jenna LeBlanc who represented Fort Bend 4-H at the Commissioner's Court to express our gratitude this year. Just a note: in 2014, Fort Bend chartered 25 4-H Clubs, registered 585 4-H Club Members, registered 110 4-H Adult Leaders, with 892 curriculum enrichment participants and 94,417 special interest/short term participants.

VALUE	
Character and Leadership Development	
	<p>Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.</p>

## Community Economic Development

### 2014 Fort Bend County Community Development Plan

*Developed by Vincent J. Mannino, CED-FBC*

#### **RELEVANCE**

Fort Bend County, Texas boasts excellent schools, affordable housing, and extensive recreational facilities which have attracted families with impressive demographic profiles. This results in a local employment base that provides relocating companies with a diverse mix of professional, technical, skilled and unskilled labor with the highest educational attainment levels in the region.

Glimpse of Fort Bend County:

- 2014 Population: 652,365
- College Educated: 40.40%
- Mean Household Income: \$112,893
- Percent of Families: 83%

While quality of life in Fort Bend County is high, with an ever-increasing population, parks and green-spaces are becoming more of concern as time moves forward.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is strategically placed to provide educational programs in community resources and economic development to enhance the quality of life for the residents in Texas and in Fort Bend County. Community development programming efforts will include the creation of a task force to address CRED interests which includes creating and growing businesses, jobs, wealth, and quality of life for all in Fort Bend County as it relates to ag & nature tourism.

#### **RESPONSE**

- The Upper Gulf Coast Ranch Expo was held on 5-13-14 in Simonton, TX with 79 attending.
- Conducted an orientation to 31 new Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists on 8-23-14.
- On 10-26-14 sixty-eight FBC Master Gardeners visited this CED's personal backyard as an illustration on how and why fruit/vegetable production can be maximized.
- AgriLife Extension and FSA presented an explanation of relevant changes to agricultural policy in the 2014 Farm Bill to 78 attendees on 10-30-14.
- Met with 84 eighth graders at Sartartia M.S. in Sugar Land to talk about careers in Extension on 12-5-14.
- Interpreted our Ag awareness activities and Ag tourism possibilities to 88 at Sartartia Middle School in Sugar Land, TX on 12-5-14.



A survey instrument was used at both the Upper Gulf Coast Ranch Expo and at the Farm Bill Training to determine the clientele's knowledge gained on a specific topic as well as their ranking of the overall effectiveness of the program. All evaluations were conducted post program and are included in ANR Output & Outcome plan results based on subject matter.

### **Monthly Summaries Included:**

- January 2014 - CRED catalog shared on our FBC Webpage and Facebook.
- February 2014 - Began planning for the 2014 Gulf Coast Expo with agents from 6 surrounding counties (Harris, Waller, Austin, Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda) under the direction of Dr. Greg Kaase, Extension Ag Economist.
- April 2014 - Attended and participated in a meeting of the Gulf Coast Ranch Expo organizers.
- May 2014 - Supported the Gulf Coast Ranch Expo by attending planning meetings and participating in the event. Obtained FBC Judge Robert Hebert to "welcome" the 95 in attendance.
- June 2014 - Worked with Paul Pope to run the Customer Satisfaction forms and to send the results to Dr. Greg Kaase.
- July 2014 - Met with Miles Phillips, Assoc. Dept. Head for Parks and Tourism regarding possibilities at Long Acres Ranch in Richmond. Created brochure to promote activities at the site.
- August 2014 - Worked with a joint venture between AgriLife and Long Acres Ranch in Richmond along with Fort Bend Green. Conducted orientation for the new Master Naturalist interns.
- September, October 2014 - Promoted AgriLife to 96,000 fair attendees by utilizing the 100th Centennial Celebration Exhibit and hosted Farm Bill Training for local farmers with 76 attending.
- November 2014 - Received and analyzed the Upper Gulf Coast Ranch Expo evaluation data from Paul Pope. Visited with two members of the committee to plan a possible Third Expo.
- December 2014 - Visited with Miles Philips, Project Coordinator for Long Acres Ranch Nature Center and met Mr. James Kidda, newly hired program coordinator; participated in a day-long career investigation event at Sartartia Middle School in Sugar Land, TX.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County works closely with Twinwood US. Inc., Texas AgriLife Extension Service State Headquarters, AgriLife Extension Parks & Tourism and Fort Bend County Commissioners' Court to provide educational opportunities that lead to increased awareness of varied agriculture and nature-related tourism possibilities.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Plans are underway to host the Third Annual Gulf Coast Ranch Expo as well as expand agriculture-related attractions to educate the citizens of the Houston metropolitan area. Plans are to move forward in search of external funding sources to provide 5 years of personal support and program support here in Fort Bend County, TX.

## Community Economic Development

# 2014 Fort Bend County Emergency Management Plan

*Developed by Vincent J. Mannino, CED-FBC*

### **RELEVANCE**

Texas is subject to numerous disasters, whether they are natural, accidental or intentional. These hazards are somewhat unpredictable. During 2005, Texas experienced the effects of two hurricanes, drought, and numerous wildfires. During 2006 wildfires were the main threat, while in 2007 flooding was widespread and in the news, and in 2008 Hurricane Ike devastated the upper Gulf Coast. In 2009 and 2010 we experienced relatively calm conditions. While in 2011 the effects of heat and drought took its toll on Texas resulting in massive wildfires and property losses, 2013 was relatively uneventful with minor bouts of heat and flooding during infrequent storms. This past year (2014) was relatively uneventful. What will 2015 bring?

Emergency Management is an organized analysis, planning, decision making, and assignment of available resources to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from the effects of all hazards.

The Fort Bend Emergency Management Output Plan will support the State of Texas Emergency Management Plan in local cities and surrounding counties. Local emergency management plans provide guidance for the employment of emergency resources under a local incident commander. While local emergency management plans include specific provisions for requesting and employing state resources to aid in managing and resolving situations for which local resources are inadequate, AgriLife Extension excels in providing outreach education to families, communities, businesses, and producers that will help them reduce their risk as they prepare for, mitigate for, and recover from disasters.

### **RESPONSE**

In 2014 the major avenues of providing outreach information to our citizens were:

- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Emergency Preparedness Workshop held in May with 68 participants;
- 2014 Fort Bend County Fair educational exhibit with 60,000 viewers & 1,654 acquiring "After a Storm" publications;
- 2,100 "After A Storm" publications were shared with Fort Bend Office of Emergency Management as part of their programming efforts.

### **Monthly Summaries Included:**

- January 2014 - Updated the FBC Office Prep Plan.

- February 2014 - Two planning meetings were held this month. One focused on AIC and the other on planning the 8th Annual Emergency Preparedness Workshop.
- March 2014 - Distributed EDEN publications through FBC Office of Emergency Mgmt, met with the County Emergency Mgmt. committee to plan the 8th Annual Emerg. Mgmt. Workshop in May.
- April 2014 - Attended a 2-day meeting in College Station to update the state Emerg. Mgmt. Plan
- May 2014 - Supported the 8th Annual Emergency Prep. Workshop.
- June 2014 - Delivered 1500 After a Storm publications to FBC OEM.
- July 2014 - Updated the 2014 County Emergency Preparedness plan.
- August 2014 - Attended and participated in a phone-bank training conducted by FBC OEM.
- September 2014 - Distributed "After a Disaster" publications at the Fort Bend County Fair.
- October 2014 - Provided 'After a Storm' publications in English & Spanish to FBC OEM.
- November 2014 - Met with Dustin Wright, Director of FSA regarding upcoming ag increment report and meeting opportunities that might involve emergency declarations.
- December 2014 - Distributed 600 "After a Storm" publications in English & Spanish to FBC OEM

## **RESULTS**

Results from the face-to-face evaluations indicated:

- 100% believe the information provided is valuable in protecting life and property; and
- 84% will have an emergency kit on standby.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management provides leadership and direction for all emergency preparedness programming efforts. Local jurisdictions and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend offer support in this unified effort.

## **FUTURE PROGRAM PLANS**

Plans are underway to host the 2015 Preparedness Workshop in May, at the Rosenberg Civic Center in Rosenberg. In addition, the EDEN exhibit and its accompanying publications will again be utilized at each of the 10 Fort Bend public libraries.

# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - FORT BEND

## 2014 Extension Agents & Staff



**Vincent J. Mannino**  
County Extension Director  
vmannino@ag.tamu.edu  
(Adm. Mgr. – Cheryl R. Wasicek)

**POSITION  
VACANT**

**Vacant**  
Extension Agent –  
Family & Consumer Sci. (CEP)  
(Admin. Assistant – Jacque Gerke)



**Angela Bosier**  
County Extension Agent  
Urban Youth Development  
Angela.Bosier@ag.tamu.edu  
(Adm. Assistant—Victoria Zwahr)



**Dianne Gertson**  
County Extension Agent - FCS  
Better Living for Texans Coord.  
dlgertson@ag.tamu.edu  
(Admin. Asst. – Jacque Gerke)



**Leticia Rolland Hardy**  
County Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences  
lvrolland@ag.tamu.edu  
(Admin. Assistant – Jacque Gerke)



**James "Boone" Holladay**  
County Extension Agent  
Horticulture  
JB.Holladay@ag.tamu.edu  
(Admin. Asst. – Brandy Rader)



**Justin Saenz**  
County Extension Agent  
4-H & Youth Development  
Justin.Saenz@ag.tamu.edu  
(Admin. Assistant – Victoria Zwahr)

**POSITION  
VACANT**

**Vacant**  
Program Assistant  
Better Living for Texans  
(Admin. Assistant – Jacque Gerke)

**Vacant**  
Extension Agent  
4-H & Youth (CEP)  
(Admin. Assistant – Victoria Zwahr)

**POSITION  
VACANT**

**Vacant**  
Extension Agent  
Agri. & Natural Resources (CEP)  
mwstevenson@ag.tamu.edu  
(Admin. Assistant – Brandy Rader)

**POSITION  
VACANT**

**Vacant**  
County Extension Agent  
Agriculture & Natural Resources  
(Admin. Assistant – Brandy Rader)

**POSITION  
VACANT**

**Krystal J. Wilcox**  
Expanded Food Nutrition Ext. Prg.  
Cooperative Extension Program  
kjwilcox@ag.tamu.edu



**Contact Us:** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Fort Bend , 1402 Band Rd, Suite 100, Rosenberg, TX 77471  
Ph. 281-342-3034, Fax. 281-633-7000, Email: [fortbend@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:fortbend@ag.tamu.edu) , Web: <http://fortbend-tx.tamu.edu> ,

