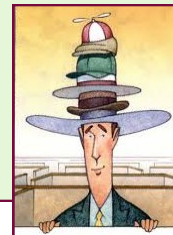




Making a Difference

In Fort Bend County

Fall 2016



Special Topics for Fall 2016

- ◆ Message from the Director
- ◆ National 4-H Week
- ◆ A Success! ...FBC Fair & AG'tivity Barn
- ◆ One-Day 4-H
- ◆ Ag Smart TV
- ◆ Master of Memory
- ◆ 2016 Vet Science Certification Program
- ◆ CEP's Financial Literacy Series
- ◆ Texas Water Star
- ◆ College Readiness Entrepreneurship Wksp.
- ◆ Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events
- ◆ Glimpse of Fort Bend County
- ◆ Contact Information

Oct.-Dec, 2016 TOTAL CONTACTS

347 educational sessions
41,310 attendees
631 Social Media posts
20,141 Social Media followers
34 Newsletter Editions
19,787 Newsletter contacts
727 Volunteers assisted
4,057 Volunteer hours
839 Edu. Resources Used

Message from the Co. Extension Director

I have been asked numerous times what exactly is the role of an Extension Agent. There is no easy answer to this question. The whole Extension process is dependent upon the Extension Agent who is the critical element in all Extension activities and the backbone of the AgriLife's outreach program. If the Extension Agent is not able to respond to a given situation and function effectively, it does not matter how imaginative AgriLife's approach is or how impressive the supply of inputs and resources for Extension work are. The effectiveness of the Extension Agent can often determine the success or failure of an Extension program.

The Extension Agent has to work with people in a variety of different ways. It is often an intimate relationship and one which demands much tact and resourcefulness. The agent inevitably works with people whose circumstances are different from his/her own. The agent is an educated, trained professional working with farmers, homeowners, businesses, elected/appointed officials, regulatory agencies, and municipalities; and, the list goes on. If I had to design a cap to describe an Extension Agent job in single-word bullets I might say: Teacher, Facilitator, Organizer, Arbitrator, Educator, Administrator, Advocate, Leader, Consultant, Enabler, Catalyst, Communicator, Intermediary, Activist, Friend, Motivator, Listener, Provider, Recorder, Interpreter, and Stimulator. *That is a lot of caps to wear!*

And just a reminder, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program of PVAMU are part of the Texas A&M System. The Texas A&M System, U.S.D.A., and the Fort Bend County Commissioners' Court cooperate as a team to provide support for Extension's educational programming in an effort to reach all Fort Bend citizens. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.



National 4-H Week!

A presentation of the National 4-H Week proclamation was held on October 4, 2016 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 A&M AgriLife Extension Service has with our Commissioners Court is essential for the growth of Fort Bend County's 4-H program. Many thanks to Fort Bend County Ambassadors Katie Hyde, Mason Stoeltje, and Alexandria Hornsby who represented Fort Bend 4-H at the Commissioner's Court to express our gratitude this year. Also pictured is Angela Romans, CEA-UYD and Justin Saenz, CEA-4H/YD.

A Success! ...Fort Bend County Fair & AG'tivity Barn!

The fair's 10-day run came to an end, but not until over an estimated 80,000 people attended the Fair. "The 2016 Fort Bend County Fair did not disappoint. "It was a celebration. The 2016 Fort Bend County Fair was 80 years in the making," commented Neil Yeldermen, 2016 Fair Board President. And, it was quite a



celebration in the AG'tivity Barn. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Fort Bend County collaborated with several local partners to form the Fort Bend County Fair AG'tivity Barn Committee. Members consist of Extension staff, Fort Bend Farm Bureau, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Southern Cotton Oil Company.

Most impressive was the variety of events going on daily to entertain the crowd. One of which was AG'tivity Barn in which local youth were exposed to various agriculturally-oriented educational activities during the annual Fort Bend County Fair. Approximately 1,100 students and 90 teachers and chaperones participated in hands on activities during guided school tours such as Crop Production (Corn, Cotton, Soybeans, and Rice), live animal exhibits (Beef Cattle, Chickens, Sheep, Goats, and Swine), Natural Resources (Rainwater Harvesting), Horticultural Production (Earth Kind Gardening), Bees, Fish and much more. Also during the ten day event the AG'tivity barn is opened to the general public that comes through the gates. We estimate that sixty percent of the total people that came to the fair actually visited the tent, and in 2016 that equated to 49,500 visitors who came and learned something in the AG'tivity Barn. To get more youth involved in Agriculture during the county fair we also offered a coloring contest to youth in grades K-5. We design an Agricultural theme coloring sheet and this year and distributed them in all Fort Bend County Libraries as well as all Fort Bend County Tax office locations. We had 409 sheets submitted in with 258 girls and 128 boys participating in the contest. Winners are selected in each grade level with 1st and 2nd receiving prizes. Way to go!

One Day 4-H!

This year, the Fort Bend 4-H County Council voted to serve Fort Bend County Animal Services by painting the facilities and beautifying their gardens, as well as collecting donations of pet supplies. Throughout the months of September and October kennel and pet food donations were accepted. We had a great turn out for our national day of service, One Day 4-H on October 8th. A total of twenty-four Fort Bend 4-H members gave up their Saturday morning in support of Fort Bend County Animal Services. Way to go!



AgSmart.TV

Now you can watch videos from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the comfort of your home using the Roku Streaming TV & Media Player! If you have a Roku, install the AgSmart.tv channel, open the channel, and then navigate to the AgriLife Extension video block. Video categories include: AgriLife Today News, Animal Science, Dinner Tonight, Horticulture, Meat Science, Rangeland Management, Soil & Crop Sciences, Texas 4-H & Youth, Water, and Wildlife & Fisheries. Since 2012, over 35,000 people have installed the AgSmart.tv channel on their Roku. There are over 340 AgriLife Extension videos and they have been watched over 650,000 times! Don't have a Roku? You can still watch our videos on the InternetTV.tamu.edu website or by going to the AgSmartTV Youtube channel. For more information about AgriLife Extension videos on InternetTV, please visit <http://internettv.tamu.edu/>.



Master of Memory Program

Studies show that 80 percent of older adults complain about memory problems, but only 15 percent report them to their health professional. People of all ages complain about forgetting, but older people tend to worry more about forgetting and memory loss. While there are changes in memory as people grow older, most people can improve their memory with training and practice. Improving memory, however, requires a belief that change is possible. Studies have shown that older adults were less likely than younger adults to attribute memory function to controllable factors such as using effective strategies. Those elders who did make attributions to these factors demonstrated better performance than their peers who did not see memory as being under their control. Other research demonstrated that older adult memory performance can be improved through external and internal strategy training.

2016 4-H Veterinary Science Certificate Program

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 learn and 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. The program follows an established curriculum that allows students and adults to work together to achieve success. Since the establishment of the Veterinary Science Certificate Program in Fort Bend in 2012 highlights include:

- We have a total of 10 clubs servicing 86 youth with 36 adult leaders assisting.
- We had seven vet science 4-H members take part in the Vet Science Skill-a-thon at State 4-H Roundup. We had 11 youth participate in the Veterinary Science Career Day hosted by Texas A&M University.
- Texas 4-H held their second Veterinary Science Camp during the Texas 4-H Roundup. Of the 30 youth participating, 4 were from Fort Bend County. During the four-day camp, youth completed 33 out of the 78 required Certified Veterinary Assistant Level 1 Skills.



Financial Literacy Series

To address the issues of financial literacy several activities were implemented throughout the county that focused on bettering the lives of Fort Bend County residents. The Home Buyer's Workshop series was implemented throughout the county. This workshop held on 10/7/16 for nearly 100 participants was designed to increase the amount of home buyers in the county area, provide adequate information for residents looking to purchase homes, and decrease the fear associated with first time home buyers. The workshop addressed topics such as down payment assistance, the loan and application process, and credit issues. Financial Literacy was also presented within the Tackling Tough Skills Curriculum which was presented to the Fort Bend County Jail. These topics addressed the importance of managing family resources, developing shopping budgets, and formulating a resume. Financial literacy was also a component of the Etiquette and Leadership Camp which helped students identify the importance of money management, develop new skills such as writing and balancing of checks, the sale and exchange of real estate, and the benefits of investing.



At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were able to ask questions to deepen their understanding of the material presented. Data from the surveys indicate that the knowledge of the home buying process was provided in a clear manner and the participants felt as though their knowledge of the process had increased. The Financial Literacy component included from the Tackling Tough Skills curriculum also proved to be a success and a great motivator for many participants. Individuals expressed that they were even interested in pursuing higher education as a result of this portion of the life skills series.

Urban X7—Texas Water Star

Water conservation, low water-use landscaping, rainwater harvesting and similar topics were added to a range of educational programs throughout 2015. Some key programs included:

- Advanced training of Master Gardener volunteers in Irrigation Efficiencies. We further developed our water conservation topic given during our 2016 Master Gardener training;
- Rainwater Harvesting Workshops in Sugar Land that focused on methods to capture and use rainwater in the landscape;
- Collaboration with the City of Richmond and Keep Richmond Beautiful on several new demonstration garden sites.
- We teamed with the City of Sugar Land, the North Fort Bend Water Authority, the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigators Association, and the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association to organize a committee to help develop programming aimed at teaching local landscape professionals, water districts, and licensed irrigators about issues around water.



2016 - College Readiness & Entrepreneurship Workshop

According to USDA and Purdue University in 2020 we are expected to witness 57, 900 average annual openings for graduates with a bachelor's or higher degrees and of those 27% positions will be in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). To address this need we implement a summer at Pilgrim Journey Baptist Church in Richmond called the Youth Enrichment Program (YEP) that focused on math, robotics, physical education, history, college/career, and many other subject areas. From July 18-August 4, 2016, one hour college and career sessions three times a week were held. These sessions covered long term and short term educational pathway goals, financial aid information, interest and talent awareness, careers in STEM, college planning checklist, entrepreneurship awareness, and a first day of college assimilation. Sixty students attended, ranging in age from 13-18 years. Included the Step by Step, College Awareness and Planning, Making a Job: A Basic Guide to Entrepreneurship Readiness curriculums. Based on survey results - 100% of the limited resource youth are aware of or interested in pursuing a college degree in a STEM-related field; 84% had increase in knowledge of financial aid and 72% had increase of knowledge of career path and college application process.



Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- Jan. 15 - MG Fruit Tree Pre-Sale Wksp., 7:00-9:00 pm
- Jan. 19 - Winter Row Crops Meeting, 8:00 am -1:00
- Jan. 21 - Child Care Providers Ed., 8:00 am-12:00 pm
- Jan. 23 - Do Well Be Well w/ Diabetes, 8:00 am-5:00 pm (Monday for 8 weeks)
- Jan. 27 - Food Handlers Course, 9:00 -11:00 am
- Jan. 28 - Mind, Body & Soul Wksp., 10:30 am-12:30 pm
- Feb. 2 - Vegetable Conference, 7:30 am-3:30 pm
- Feb. 9 - Private Pesticide Applicator Trng., 8:30 am-12:30 pm
- Feb. 18 - Garden w/ Confidence: Rose Selection, Care & Pruning, 8:30 -11:30 am
- Feb. 22 - Food Handlers Certification, 9:00 am-11:00 am
- Vegetable and Herb Plant Sale Preview Program
- Feb. 23 - Veg. & Herb Plant Sale Program, 6:30-8:30 pm
- Mar. 4 - Feral Hog Program, 8:30-2:00 pm



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<http://fortbend.agrilife.org/>

www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension



A Glimpse of Fort Bend County:

The 2015 Population has reached 685,345 of which 40.4% are college educated and earn a mean household income of \$112,893. For over 20 years, Fort Bend has been in the top 20 counties in the U.S. for economic excellence and population growth - and that is by design and not by accident.

Excellent schools, affordable housing, planned communities and extensive recreational facilities have attracted families with impressive demographic profiles. These actions results in a local employment base that provides companies with a diverse mix of professional, technical, skilled, and unskilled labor with the highest educational levels in the region. To learn more go to: www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/.