

Special Topics for Fall 2016

- ◆ Message from the Director
- ◆ Sugarcane Aphid
- ◆ Master Wellness Volunteer Program
- ◆ Passenger Safety Seat Project
- ◆ Dinner Tonight!
- ◆ Robotics in Fort Bend
- ◆ Gardening with Confidence
- ◆ Quality County for 4-H and FFA Livestock Projects
- ◆ HLSR Results—FBC Winners
- ◆ Ag Demonstration Handbook Online
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Glimpse of Fort Bend County
- ◆ Contact Information

April—June, 2016 TOTAL CONTACTS

244 educational sessions
40,387 attendees
674 Social Media posts
47,929 Social Media followers
25 Newsletter Editions
12,876 Newsletter contacts
574 Volunteers assisted
2,410 Volunteer hours
1,433 Edu. Resources Used

Message from the Co. Extension Director - Cooperative Extension Service offices across the entire United States and Puerto Rico are conveniently located in courthouses, post offices, or other local government buildings to improve the quality of people's lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities and agriculture enterprises. Extension experts focus on, among other subjects, food safety and quality, plight of young children, revitalizing rural America, sustainable agriculture, and waste management. Despite what the outward appearance may be, every office has the same thing in common—*Extending Knowledge, Providing Solutions!*

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.

Plant Pest and Diseases

Invasive species constitute one of the most serious economic, social, and environmental threats of the 21st century. Nearly every terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic ecosystem in the United States has been invaded by non-native species, with economic losses estimated at \$137 billion per year. Invasive plants, animals, pests, and diseases are often introduced organisms that impact both natural and managed lands. As the volume of global travel and foreign imports grows, so does the threat of invasive species.

Here in Fort Bend we have many of the same issues including the sugarcane aphid. This new aphid pest has infested grain sorghum (a first cousin of sugarcane) in South and East TX southern Oklahoma, eastern Mississippi, northeastern Mexico, and central, northeast, and southwest Louisiana. In 2013, large populations of sugarcane aphids (*Melanaphis sacchari*) developed on sorghum plants. They produced large amounts of honeydew, which choked combines and caused lost grain in northeast Texas and Louisiana. Growers lost up to 50 percent of grain sorghum yield in infested fields during 2013. To address this problem in Fort Bend County, our ag unit under the direction of Mr. John Gordy, CEA-ANR is actively discussing and monitoring infestations across the county.



AgriLife Extension's Master Wellness Program

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) is committed to help Texans better their lives. Through the application of science-based knowledge, we create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting and effective change. And, one of AgriLife Extension's high-priority issues is helping Texans improve their health. Research shows at least 50% of health status is due to lifestyle factors such as not using tobacco, being physically active, maintaining a normal weight and good nutrition, among many others.

To take part as a Master Wellness Volunteer simply contemplate on the following: 1) I would like to become a Master Wellness Volunteer; 2) I understand that should I be selected for the training program, I will be required to complete 40 hours of training.; 3) Upon completion of the training, I will be required to return 40 hours of volunteer service by the end of the year under the direction of the county AgriLife Extension agent; 4) I also understand that as a volunteer, I will represent Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and will be called upon to provide educational programs and disseminate educational materials; 4) I also understand that in this capacity I cannot use my status as a volunteer to promote any personal opinions, business, or services or the opinions or services of other companies or agencies; and 5) I must present the research-based information on which Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's educational programs and services are based. If this all sounds good, give us a call at 281-342-3034 and ask for Leticia Hardy,



Passenger Safety Seat Project!

The Passenger Safety Project, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation provides valuable traffic safety information and education to people throughout Texas. The goal of the project is to reduce motor vehicle fatalities and injuries and their associated costs. The project's primary focus is on increasing child restraint and safety belt usage. All team members are certified child safety seat technicians and/or instructors. In addition to programming in traffic safety, Passenger Safety conducts the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's standardized child passenger safety certification trainings. The training provides individuals the opportunity to become certified as child passenger safety technicians or instructors. Our FCS unit provide safety seat checks, replacement seats, and specific instruction on fastening and fitting. Call us for more details.

Dinner Tonight!...for real help in the kitchen.

Have you ever wondered what is for dinner after a long day of work, errands, or afterschool activities? We know we could drive through another fast-food restaurant to save time, but is that meal meeting the nutritional needs of your family?

The Dinner Tonight program was developed to provide busy families with quick, healthy, cost effective recipes that taste great. Not only does the Dinner Tonight program provide recipes, it also gives you weekly video demonstrations on cooking tips and techniques, nutrition topics, menu planning basics and information on healthy living.

Our goal for the Dinner Tonight program is to improve the health and wellness of Texans through nutrition education. We are so excited to help you get you started on preparing your dinner tonight. Here in Fort Bend we offered a Dinner Tonight Cooking Class to over 200 attendees at the Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference. Not only did the participants see the actual preparation of an entire meal including dessert, they ate a catered lunch of the very same thing . Wow!



Robotics in Fort Bend County

Robots are all around us. From the food we eat to the cars we drive, robots help make our lives easier, more efficient, and simply more fun! The field of robotics is expanding at a rapid pace, and Texas 4-H is poised to help lead young people into this exciting field. You will learn how to design, build, and program robots in an exciting and hands-on project. To learn more about the 4-H Robotics program here in Fort Bend County, call us at 281-342-3034 and ask for Angela Romans. Angela is planning a fun-filled Robotics Camp this summer at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. Give us a call.



2016 Gardening with Confidence

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 creating and maintaining beautiful low maintenance landscapes through a six-class program in 2016. Classes will combine indoor and outdoor lessons that will prepare participants to garden more successfully and sustainably. For information on each class and registration forms, please visit fortbend.agrilife.org or contact Brandy Rader at (281) 342-3034 or email Brandy at brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu. The class lineup includes:



- The Kitchen Garden held Saturday, February 13 provided planning, design and instruction on building a raised bed for growing herbs and vegetables, and selection of varieties based on season of the year was covered.
- Landscape Plants for Fort Bend held on Saturday, March 19 talked about site selection, choosing native and/or well-adapted varieties for our area, and trouble-shooting the 'whys' behind stunted plant growth.
- All About Soil will be held on Saturday, April 16. Healthy soil is the foundation of beautiful gardens. Soil management is the natural way to prevent garden diseases and pest issues. The biology of soil will be covered in detail.
- Insects in the Garden—Friend or Foe! This class is set for Saturday May 14 and will help gardeners identify beneficial insects. Problem pests will be addressed using integrated pest management practices—a safer way to garden.
- Irrigation System Efficiency to be held on Saturday, June 25 will focus on landscape irrigation systems and how to evaluate, update and modify your existing system to improve plant performance, save money and conserve water.
- The Healthy Lawn will be held Saturday, July 16 and will teach how to maintain a healthy & attractive lawn. Turf maintenance (mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and pest management) will be covered in detail.

To date 32 gardeners attended the Kitchen Garden program in February and 24 attended the Landscape Plants in March. Evaluations indicated that 96.9% plan to make positive changes, and 68.8% plan to benefit economically to help curb food costs.

Quality Counts Verification ...for all major livestock shows!

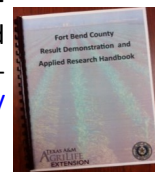
Quality Counts is a curriculum, targeted to 4-H and FFA members, that teaches young people the importance of good character and ethical behavior in caring for and exhibiting animals. Many youth livestock projects enter the food supply, so quality assurance is the responsibility of these young people and the adults who work with them. The "Quality Counts" curriculum contains a wealth of lesson plans, teaching materials, handouts and images. Quality Counts verification is required for all youth exhibiting livestock (market and/or breeding) at major livestock shows in Texas (including the Ft. Worth Livestock Show, San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Star of Texas Fair in Austin, San Angelo Livestock Show, Sandhills Stock Show in Odessa, State Fair of Texas in Dallas, and Heart 'O Texas Fair in Waco). The verification process will require junior exhibitors to pass an online test that measures their knowledge on quality assurance and character education content items. Since the Quality Counts program has been in existence statewide, it has reached an average of 30,000 youth per year through the 4-H and FFA programs. The program outcomes clearly demonstrate youth being more knowledgeable of best management practices associated with livestock projects. More importantly, the program's impact has demonstrated positive changes in personal character attributes as well as adoption of livestock best management practices. To learn more, simply call us and ask for Mr. Justin Saenz, County Extension Agent for 4-H & Youth Development.

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Results...for Fort Bend 4-H

Hunter Bean (Blue Baron 4-H) 3rd Place—Charolais Steer; Reagan Cooper (Wild West) Reserve Champion— Red Angus Heifer Calf ; Jessica Flores (Lamar) Awesome Participant—Open Rabbit Show Special Merit in the School Art Program; Logan Gilbert (Needville) Reserve Champion—ABC Steer Niya Holster, Abigail Navarre, Madilyn Navarre, Trypp Reed (Journey) Top 40 Team—Agri Product Id.; Jenna Le Blanc (Wild West) Breed champion— Red Brahman Heifer *Shown under East Bernard FFA; Layton Meyer (Big Creek 4th Place—Limousin Steer ; Abigail Navarre (Journey) 8th Place—Agri Science Fair; Madilyn Navarre (Journey) 10th Place—Agri Science Fair ; Hayley Patton (Big Creek 4-H) Hi Point Individual—Junior Livestock Judging Contest Obtained 436/450 points! Awarded calf scramble certificate for 2017 show; Annie Rule (Big Creek) Calf Scramble Winner Awarded calf scramble certificate for 2017 show; Alexis Smith (Needville) 1st Place—Cross Barrow 4th Place—Broilers *Broilers shown under Needville FFA; Cade Teykl (Big Creek) 11th Place—ABC Steer; Caitlyn Wesneski (Needville) 4th Place Market Barrow; Journey 4H 10th Place—Landscape Challenge; Missouri City 4-H Participant—Landscape Challenge

Agriculture Result Demonstrations—new at our website!

2015 Result Demonstrations and Applied Research Plot Results: If you were at the Winter Row Crops meeting in January, we had hard copies of the Fort Bend County Result Demonstration and Applied Research Handbook—they are now available on-line. We have information on yield data from the county Corn, Sorghum, and Cotton plots, fertility results, corn-aflatoxin results, sugarcane aphid management in sorghum, cotton defoliation, and pasture weed management. To find electronic copies of these reports, please go to: <http://fortbend.agrilife.org/agriculture-natural-resources>. For a printed copy call us at 281-342-3034 X 7029.



Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- Robotics Camp—July 5, @ 9:00 am—3:00pm, July 7, 9:00 - 3:00 pm
- Barrel Racing and Poles Clinic—July 8-10, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- 4-H Vet Science Info Meeting—July 11, 2016 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- Fashion Camp—July 19-22, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm
- 4-H Discovery Camp—July 27, 2016 @ 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Do Well Be Well with Diabetes—August 1, 2016 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Master Gardener Specialist Training—Aug. 3-5, 2016 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Earth Kind Kids' Kamp Date: August 8-12, 2016 Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
- The Art of Living Camp—August 11 & 12, 2016 @ 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
- TEEA Garage Sale- Aug. 13, 8:00 am—12 noon
- Food Handlers Course—August 19, 2016 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- FREE Booster Seats! (by appt. ONLY) - August 25, @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Private Pesticide Applicator Training—August 26, @ 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

For all of the above programs visit fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu or call us at 281-342-3034



Vincent J. Mannino

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

www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension



A Glimpse of Fort Bend County:

The 2015 Population has reached 716,087 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.

"Among the largest counties (those with populations of 250,000 or more in 2015), Fort Bend, Texas, was the fastest growing, as its population climbed 4.3 percent between 2014 and 2015, to 716,087".

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/.