



Making a Difference

In Fort Bend County

Second Quarter Newsletter—2017

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April—June, 2017

TOTAL CONTACTS

291 educational sessions
57,096 attendees
1,313 Social Media posts
48,820 Soc. Media followers
22 Newsletter Editions
29,354 Newsletter contacts
1,012 Volunteers assisted
2,245 Volunteer hours
19,864 Edu. Resources Used

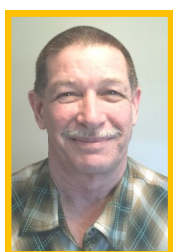
Message from the Co. Extension Director

- Please take a few minutes to read



through some of our highlights for this second quarter of 2017. We are continuing to strive and meet the expectations of our new *vision*, new *mission* and new *capabilities* statement. Our Vision statement is a simple one —“*Help Texans better their lives*” — and that is exactly what we try to do every day. Our Mission statement is “*Through the application of science-based knowledge, we create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting effective change.*” And, our Capabilities statement explains how we do what we do — “*We provide programs, tools, and resources (local & statewide) that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and enrich our youth.*”

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.



James Kidda at Long Acres Ranch

Mr. Jim Kidda is an Extension Program Coordinator stationed at Long Acres Ranch in Richmond. The ranch, owned by the Henderson-Wessendorff Foundation (HWF) is composed of 768 acres located on the Brazos River in Richmond, TX in Fort Bend County and offers a natural outdoor laboratory that will undoubtedly link children and nature. Through a long-term agreement between H-W Foundation and AgriLife Extension (TAMU System) the Foundation will provide the venue and the means, while AgriLife will provide the knowledge.

Mr. Kidda offers educational programs relating to natural resources including water, soils, wildlife, plant life, habitat and the environment — and how one affects the other. His job duties are quite broad, but basically he coordinates the needs of the students through the independent school districts’ curriculum coordinators with that of the Ranch’s available resources and AgriLife programmatic abilities. The results are a win-win situation for all. Kidda has a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and a bachelor’s degree in petroleum engineering from Louisiana Tech University. He is an avid nature enthusiast and has served as a senior scout leader, a camping committee chairman for over 100 clubs, a den leader and Scoutmaster. He is well-connected with youth in Fort Bend County and perfect in his role as Extension Program Coordinator.

Cooking Camps for Kids & Teens



Obese young people are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults, and therefore are 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.

In June AgriLife Extension in Fort Bend County hosted two cooking schools—the 3-day long Pantry-2-Plate Cooking School for 8-12 year olds and the 2-day long Teen Chef Cooking School for 13-16 year olds.



The goals of each of these two camps were to increase knowledge of general nutrition, food safety, cooking safety and food preparation techniques. In addition, campers were paired in teams to actually prepare complete meals that were nutritious, easy, fun and festive.

Lamar CISD's STAAR Blitz day at Long Acres Ranch



Long Acres Ranch in Richmond teamed with the Fort Bend Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Lamar Consolidated ISD to create the STAAR Blitz Day for eighth grade students from St. Mark's Episcopal School, Lamar Jr. High and George Jr. High. The program ran for 5 days, both mornings and afternoons, and consisted of five learning station in rotation to reach more than 950 youth and nearly 30 teachers. Thirty volunteers assisted including AgriLife Extension agents, Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists, USDA—NRCS, Lamar CISD and LAR employees.



Students were given a pre-test prior to arrival at LAR to test their current knowledge of nature in general and a post-test after leaving LAR to gauge their level of knowledge gained.



Each was given a journal with permanent bits of information including vocabulary and definitions and reading material that supported the standardized test questions that all students should be familiar with.

Over a 5-day period, approximately 130 students attended each morning and afternoon session, moving from station to station every 15-20 minutes. The five stations included: Dichotomous Keys of Trees; Topography & Satellite Imagery; Food Webs; Environmental Changes & Effects on Organisms; and Wildlife & Habitats. Knowledge gained is a prime indicator of our success in providing educational programs to our youth that was captured from the results of the post-test; however, the “real” test is how well the students will score on their STARR exam. *Good luck, kids!*

Fort Bend 4-H Photography Project—gaining speed!

Camera time! In the 4-H photography project members learn to use cameras, lighting, and other photography equipment to get great shots and everlasting memories. Like many 4-H projects this project will afford members a lifetime of usefulness and enjoyment. Members learn to review and evaluate photos for quality and appearance and learn about techniques in editing and developing photographs for display, competition, or personal enjoyment.



The 4-H photography project in Fort Bend County is growing. In fact, of all county roundup entries photography was the highest with a total of 223 photos submitted by 34 youth—11 seniors (81 entries), 7 intermediate (19 entries), 13 juniors (111 entries) and 3 clover kids (10 entries). Wow! Categories included Domestic Animals, Wildlife, catch-all, Details & Macro, Digital Darkroom, Dominant Color, Elements of Design, Food, Marine/Aquatic, Nature & Landscape, Night Photography, People, Plant & Flora, Storyboard, and Theme. All first-place seniors in each of the above categories were eligible to enter state roundup. Go Seniors!

Path to Plate! ... coming soon to Fort Bend County

Path to the Plate is a concept that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is promoting to help consumers understand where their food comes from (from the very beginning to the very end) where & how it was grown, how it was processed, how it was prepared, what nutrients it contains and the cost of preparing the finished product – the plate. In a nutshell *Path to the Plate* helps consumers make the connection between agriculture and health. Many similar programs were created over the years but *Path to the Plate* seems to be more inclusive. This program is in reality an agriculture-awareness program, designed to help primarily urban and suburban dwellers understand where their food comes from and how it was prepared for consumption. Using research-based information, *Path to the Plate* aims to dispel popular myths and misconceptions about food production practices.

The concept is not limited to fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs, but also row crops, rice, ranch and fisheries, as well as value-added commodities such as processed foods - honey, wines/beers, jellies/jams, pickled products, dried fruits/vegetables/meats and others as well. In addition, other worthy bits of valuable information are included as part of *Path to the Plate* including food safety, nutrient value, and MyPlate portion sizing – all to help maintain a healthy weight and ward off or manage health related issues. Stay tuned for upcoming programs in Fort Bend County tagged *Path to the Plate*.



2017 Spring Crops Tour for Area Farmers

The Fort Bend Row Crops Committee hosted the Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Waller Counties Crops Tour on 6/22/17. Although many folks were working hard to stay caught up with spraying and other field work because we anticipated a fair amount of rain from Tropical Storm Cindy, we still had a great program. Information provided by Dr. Robert Bowling, Dr. Tom Isakeit, Dr. Muthu Bagavathianan, Dr. Don Renchie, Mr. Jeff Nunley, and our industry partners was great, timely and to the point. Highlights included:

- We are not seeing much Southern Rust at treatable levels in Corn .
- Bacterial blight in corn needs to be monitored.
- Sugarcane aphid in grain sorghum is a hit & miss issue with many fields requiring insecticide application.
- The sorghum seed-feeding complex (worms, stinkbugs) - very active this year . Use the following calculators:
 - ⇒ Stinkbug calculator for monitoring damage: <http://bug.tamu.edu/apps/sorghumricestinkbug/index.html>
 - ⇒ Sorghum Headworm Calculator: <http://bug.tamu.edu/apps/sorghumheadwormcalculator/index.html>

Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)

EDEN is a collaborative educational network dedicated to educating citizens about disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Texas EDEN is a part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is affiliated with National Extension Disaster Education Network. This site is intended to accommodate Texas AgriLife Extension agents and all Texas citizens by sharing educational resources to reduce the impact of natural and man-made disasters for individuals, families and communities. Check it out at: <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/> .

Fort Bend County Beekeepers....keep buzzin!



The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association (FBBA) has represented and assisted beekeepers locally for 30+ years by promoting beekeeping to the public; providing advice and assistance to beekeepers; and also providing educational programs through talks, schools, shows and demonstrations. The FBBA consists of commercial beekeepers from small scale hobbyists to beginners.

Public meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., excluding December, at the Bud O'Shieles Community Center located at 1330 Band Road in Rosenberg, Texas. Association members will provide you with all necessary information and will assist you in any way. You may also visit bee yards to see what is involved in working with bees. Please visit the FBBA at: <http://fortbendbeekeepers.org>



Ask the Experts !

Ask an Expert has always offered one-to-one expert answers from the USDA's Cooperative Extension/University staff and volunteers from across

the United States. The latest version expands that one-to-one relationship via the ability to make questions and answers publicly available, on an opt-in basis. To check out *Ask the Expert!* go to any AgriLife Extension website in the state and click on *Ask the Expert*. <https://ask.extension.org/groups/1278/ask>

Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- Summer Robotics Class – Univ. Library - July 6 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- Earth Kind Kids' Kamp Registration DEADLINE - July 10 @ 5:00 pm
- Garden with Confidence: Fruit Trees - July 15 @ 8:30 am - 11:00 am
- Earth Kind Kids' Kamp - July 17 @ 9:00 am - July 21 @ 3:00 pm
- Youth Fashion Week - July 18 @ 8:00 am - July 21 @ 3:30 pm
- Food Handlers Course - July 20 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- Food Manager Cert. - August 3 @ 8:00 am - August 4 @ 5:00 pm
- Gulf Coast Classic- August 5 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Private Pesticide App. Training - August 11 @ 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
- Food Handlers Course - August 18 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- Do Well Be Well w/Diabetes - September 7 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

For all of the above programs visit <http://fortbend.agrilife.org/> or email us at fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu or call us at 281-342-3034

A Glimpse of Fort Bend Co.

The 2016 Population has reached 741,237 of which 41.4% are college educated, 88.5% are high-school graduates and earn an average household income of \$118,558. 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: <http://www.fortbendcounty.com/>.

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

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