

# Making a Difference

## In Fort Bend County

## First Quarter Newsletter—2017

### Special Topics for Winter 2017

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### Jan.—March, 2017 TOTAL CONTACTS

935 educational sessions  
52,423 attendees  
725 Social Media posts  
23,341 Soc. Media followers  
27 Newsletter Editions  
17,399 Newsletter contacts  
895 Volunteers assisted  
3,356 Volunteer hours  
2,122 Edu. Resources Used

**Message from the Co. Extension Director** - 2017 will be an exciting year for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as we embark on our 103rd year as part of the USDA Cooperative Extension Program. We will begin this year with a new *vision*, a new *mission* and new *capabilities* statement. Our new Vision statement is a simple one – “*Help Texans better their lives*” – and that is exactly what we try to do every day. Our new Mission statement is “*Through the application of science-based knowledge, we create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting effective change.*” And, our new 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.



## What do we offer?

Extension’s greatest asset is our people. We have a statewide network of professional educators, County Extension Agents, and support staff serving every county in Texas. They live and work alongside the people they serve, offering unparalleled local knowledge, leadership, and connections in every community. Our county faculty are supported by subject-matter specialists, located at our state headquarters in College Station and at district & regional centers across the state. They hold advanced degrees and have research expertise in a variety of disciplines encompassing agriculture and natural resources, community development, family and consumer sciences, and youth development.

Across the state, more than 100,000 people volunteer in Extension programs. They extend Extension’s educational opportunities throughout their neighborhoods, helping their friends and neighbors improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of their community.

The educational programs Extension offers help people and communities solve problems, build local capacity, and make things better. These opportunities include classes, workshops, presentations, and one-on-one consulting, or instruction in subjects related to agriculture and natural resources, community development, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H and youth development.

If you or your organization would like to partner with Extension in your community, contact the [Extension office in your county](#). If you would like to be a partner at the state level, [contact our headquarters office](#) at <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/about/>.

## Our New Administrative Assistant for 4-H/YD!

Let's welcome Mrs. Alisha Holt, our new Administrative Assistant for the 4-H & Youth Development Unit! Alisha is originally a native of Fort Bend. She holds a BA in Mass Communications from Shorter University in Georgia and has experience in church ministries and mass communications relating to various media outlets. She is bilingual –Spanish, and has lived in Argentina. We truly look forward to working with Alisha and having her help us broaden our outreach efforts, especially to Hispanic audiences both youth and adults.



## 32nd Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conf.

This informative conference was held this year on February 2, 2017 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. It was deemed another huge success because of partnerships, diversity, and technology. Participants included over 235 paid participants, 16 commercial exhibitors, 9 speakers and 45 guests and volunteers.

This program was a 7-county partnership. Special guest speaker was TDA's Commissioner Of Agriculture Sid Miller speaking on the *Go Texan* program. We again included a program segment from our FCS division. Local FCS agent Dianne Gertson gave a real time *Dinner Tonight!* cooking demonstration during the lunch hour of the program. Guests learned how to take their home-grown produce and prepare something tasty and healthy out of it. Moving ahead further in responding to the needs of our diverse audience, we developed break-out sessions where guests could choose the topics that best suited their needs. As evaluation results are returned, we'll move forward with our final interpretation, but verbal comments from guests say that they all look forward to coming back next year!



## Our Agriculture & Natural Resources Program in Fort Bend Co.

The Agriculture & Natural Resources Program here in Fort Bend County emphasizes system approaches that maintain and enhance agricultural profitability through the application of sound crop and animal production on practices. The Fort Bend County Extension Service is addressing issues associated with the social and environmental impacts of food safety and quality, surface and ground water contamination, biotechnology, and natural resources management.



The natural resources and environmental management program addresses educational needs related to the management, use and sustainability of renewable and non-renewable natural resources. Drawing on a variety of disciplines, these programs typically focus on such topics as soil, water, air, plant and animal life, forests, rangelands and aquatic and other ecosystems. Most programs relate to Forage & hay production, beef cattle management, equine industries, row crops (cotton, grain sorghum, corn, soybeans), rice production, pesticide use & safety, feral hog management and alternative agricultural enterprises.

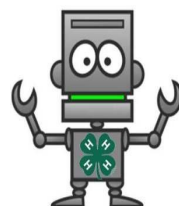
## Come In & Join Texas 4-H! It's fun!

Texas 4-H is a club for kids in 3<sup>rd</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade, with programs for K-2<sup>nd</sup> as well. Project opportunities range from food science and robotics to fashion design and photography. There's a 4-H activity for everyone. Join for \$25 or less! Texas 4-H is for kids of almost any age – grades K-2 can be in Clover Kids. From 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, you can be a regular 4-H member. Contact us at <http://agrilife.org/ftbend4h/> or complete the contact request form at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/register/> to find out what is available where you live. All 4-H members must be enrolled in at least one project. When you choose a project, you will learn everything there is to know about that topic. You will participate in various hands-on activities, learn new skills, do community service, or even make speeches about your project.

How to choose your 4-H project: 1) Select a project you like; 2) Consider the money and time it will take and check to see if parents, guardians, and/or grandparents can help; 3) Consider the space and equipment that you have at home in support of large animal projects; 4) A 4-H project should be fun, serve a purpose, and be worth the effort; 5) Select only the number of projects you can realistically complete.

Then locate a 4-H Club near you and contact the club manager. Club meeting locations & times are noted on the following website: <http://agrilife.org/ftbend4h/clubs/>. Choose which would be more convenient for your family and contact the manager to confirm their next meeting date. Attend a meeting to see if it's right for you. If not, check around, find one that fits. Once you find your club, you will then need to Enroll via 4-H Connect.

Last step is to enroll online in 4-H Connect: <https://texas.4honline.com/Login.aspx?4079444C6D387A6E595A2F6F3D>. 4-H Connect was introduced in 2005 and was uniquely designed to allow 4-H members and adults to register online while maintaining contact with the county, district, and state offices through the certification process.



## 2017 Gardening with Confidence Series

Fort Bend County Extension and the Fort Bend Master Gardener, 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 2017. Classes will combine indoor and outdoor lessons (including tours of our famous Master Gardeners' demonstration gardens) that will prepare participants to garden more successfully and sustainably. For information on each class and registration forms, please visit [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org) or contact Brandy Rader at (281) 342-3034 or [brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu). The class lineup includes:

- Rose Selection, Care & Pruning, February 18, - easy care varieties of roses for Fort Bend County and their proper planting, care and maintenance. An outdoor rose pruning demonstration is included.
- Perennial Color for all Seasons, March 18, - how to select perennial plants that add color to each season. Plants featured will include Earth-Kind® & Texas Superstar plants.
- Warm Season Vegetable Gardening, April 8, - the best vegetables that produce in our Southeast Texas summer heat, when to plant them and how to care for them, including pest management.
- Butterfly Gardening Made Easy, May 20, teaches about the life cycle of butterflies, plants and conditions that attract butterflies to the garden, and common butterflies in Fort Bend County. A visit to our beautiful butterfly demonstration garden will highlight host and nectar plants.
- Shade Gardening, June 24, teaches about the plants that thrive in the shade, either under large shade trees or in a shady corner, and how to brighten up a gloomy area in your garden.
- Fruit Trees in Fort Bend County, July 15 – teaches about the fruiting trees that are recommended for Fort Bend County and how to maintain them.





## What's for Dinner Tonight!

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 (men included) 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 get you started on preparing your dinner tonight. To learn more about Dinner Tonight! In Fort Bend County check out our website for quick and easy meals at: <https://fortbend.agrilife.org/fcs/healthy-cooking/>. Did you know that on Feb. 2, 2017 *Dinner Tonight!* was featured at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference with nearly 300 in attendance. County Extension Agent, Dianne Gertson and her FCS team demonstrated the cooking of a complete meal while at the same time that same meal was served by Ben's Chuck Wagon as their actual lunch. Yum!

## 2016 Agriculture Result Demonstrations—new at our website!

If you were at the Winter Row Crops meeting in January, 2017, 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. For electronic copies of 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:

- Financial Planning for Generations X & Y! - April 18 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
- Agricultural Field Day - April 28 @ 7:00 am - April 29 @ 4:00 pm
- Mini Childcare Conference - April 29 @ 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
- Financial Planning for Generations X & Y! - May 2 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
- Pond Management Workshop - May 5 @ 8:30 am - 1:00 pm
- Big Time in D9 - May 11 @ 8:00 am - May 13 @ 5:00 pm
- Walk Across Texas Fun Run - May 20 @ 7:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Food Handlers Course - May 22 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- Private Pesticide Applicator Training - May 25 @ 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
- Microloan Program - May 31 @ 8:30 am - 12:00 pm
- Ambassadors Lunch & Video Shoot - June 2 @ 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- Pantry2Plate Cooking Camp - June 13 @ 9:30 am - June 15 @ 12:00 pm
- Youth Livestock Workshops - June 17 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- Child Care Providers Education - June 17 @ 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Teen Chef Cooking Camp - June 20 @ 9:00 am - June 21 @ 2:00 pm
- Garden w/Confidence: Shade Gardening - June 24 @ 8:30 am - 11:00 am

For all of the above programs visit [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org) or email us at [fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu](mailto: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 result 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/](http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/).



**Vincent J. Mannino**

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

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