

# Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...



3rd Quarter Newsletter

July - September 2019

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## News from College Station...

Dr. Jeff Hyde has been named director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on August 8 and began work Sept. 1. Dr. Hyde previously served as acting Associate Dean & Director of Penn State Extension, where he provided oversight of Extension programs, operations and external relations, as well as having served as a Professor of Ag. Economics. Recently he stated, "I am very excited to come to Texas A&M and look forward to establishing a strategic plan and vision for AgriLife Extension that supports its traditional audiences, allowing us to spread our impacts to all Texans."



Dr. Hyde has an extensive background in Extension education at Penn State, serving as Associate Director for programs and Assistant Director of special program initiatives, while supporting digital delivery of educational and informational content. His Extension programs have focused on helping farm businesses with core emphasis on business planning, marketing, and human resource management. Dr. Hyde also led the training of county-based Extension educators and business managers utilizing e-learning methods. Dr. Hyde has served as Associate Department Head for agricultural economics, sociology, and education at Penn State as well as serving in leadership roles for administrative and leadership professional development programs.

Dr. Hyde earned his doctorate and master's degrees in agricultural economics from Purdue University and a bachelor's degree in economics from Frostburg State University. He also earned an Associate of Arts degree in business administration from Allegany Community College.

## Fort Bend County 4-H Camps Galore!

Fort Bend County 4-H offers a wide variety of programs, activities, and events designed specifically to support and enhance volunteer participation and involvement in kids' lives. This summer as in previous summers for decades, Fort Bend County 4-H offered a number of camps which made learning fun and taught valuable skills. Below is just a quick snapshot of what was offered:



**Both Pantry-2-Plate Cooking School and Teen Chef Cooking Schools** are designed to increase knowledge of general nutrition; decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened foods & beverages; increase physical activity; and increase knowledge of food safety, cooking safety and food preparation techniques. Activities this year included a MyPlate lesson, reading a recipe, eating the rainbow colors of fruits and vegetables, blub-ber burger (fat in fast food meals), kitchen safety, and food safety. The kitchen activities were facilitated by adult helpers. The concepts taught in the camps can be used by the children to make healthier eating choices throughout their lives.

**Robotics for Beginners (Session 1,2,3)** - Starting a local 4-H Robotics Club gives youth the opportunity to participate in many 4-H events and activities, as well as apply for scholarships, travel the country, and meet new friends. But most of all 4-H is for youth, and 4-H is fun. This summer, three sessions of Summer Robotics Camps were held and each was designed to introduce youth to the 4-H Robotics Curriculum that is incorporated with our robotics project clubs and our afterschool programs. The robotics program is ideally suited to challenge our young students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



**Youth Fashion Week** - The Youth Fashion Week program was held July 16-19 at the Fort Bend County Extension Office with 17 youth and 4 dedicated volunteers participating. The program engaged youth on a 4-day exploration through the fashion, art, and beauty industry. The basis of the program included the sewing 101 workshop taught by volunteers. Youth learned skin care & make-up techniques, shopping for a cause, repurposing cloths & adding accessories, photo shoots, modeling and fashion competition.

## July - August 2019 TOTAL CONTACTS

320 Educational Sessions  
58,218 Contacts  
517 Social Media Posts  
14,729 Soc. Media Followers  
32 Newsletter Editions  
37,923 Newsletter Contacts  
870 Volunteers Assisted  
3,891 Volunteer Hours  
1,016 Edu. Resources Used  
Clientele Reached:  
51.0% Youth  
49.0% Adults

**Mindfulness 4-Health Summer Camp** - Forty-five youth took part in the 2019 Summer Health Camp held July 23-25 and hosted by the Cooperative Extension Program of PVAMU with AgriLife assisting. The 45 participants increased their personal skills in leading a healthy lifestyle and gained knowledge needed to be a health advocate in their communities. The camp focused on stress management, relationship building, nutrition, and a general understanding of mindfulness.



**EarthKind Kid's Kamp** - Fort Bend County Master Gardeners hosted their Junior Master Gardener Earth-Kind® Kids' Kamp ("EK3") on July 22-26, 2019. The 45 camp participants ranged from ages 8-12. Master Gardener volunteers mentored each group and lead daily activities. Several guest speakers were included throughout the week. Topics were related to ecology and environmental horticulture and included such activities as soils, water, beneficial insects, plant growth & development, and arts & crafts which included painting planters. The "Learn, Grow, Eat, Go!" curriculum was utilized featuring MyPlate and "Whoa! Slow! & Go!" foods. The fee for Kamp was \$75 which included an activities booklet, t-shirt, snacks, and drinks.

## Reminder: Texas EDEN Web Info

Texas EDEN is a part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is affiliated with National Extension Disaster Education Network; and is a vital part of the REBUILD TEXAS Commission. This site is intended to accommodate Texas AgriLife Extension agents and all Texas citizens by sharing educational resources to help reduce the impact of natural and man-made disasters for individuals, families and communities. Check it out at: <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/>. Featured sections include resources for Severe Weather, Disaster Prep, Disaster Recovery, etc. with detailed information for families, businesses, farm & ranch operations, pets, and more!



## Better Living for Texans Program Overview — BLT

The Better Living for Texans (BLT) program is a cooperative endeavor among the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC), and USDA's Food & Nutrition Services (FNS). BLT was begun by Extension in the Fall of 1994 and today includes 210 counties – every county in Texas that is served by a County Extension Agent for Family and Community Health as well as Extension Agents for Healthy Texas.

- **Vision:** *Creating opportunities, changing lives*
- **Mission:** *We provide research and evidence-based nutrition, health and wellness knowledge to empower individuals, families, and communities to make positive changes for healthier lives.*
- Identifying BLT audiences: The target audience for BLT includes SNAP participants and low-income individuals eligible to receive SNAP or other means-tested Federal assistance program benefits.
- BLT provides educational programs to SNAP recipients and those eligible to receive SNAP benefits and other approved audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, become more physically active, stretch their food dollars, and prepare and store food safely.
- BLT is delivered through a variety of teaching methods that reflect audience needs. Teaching methods include in-person lesson series, single education events, food & physical activity demonstrations, establishing community gardens, and tours. With the presence of BLT in almost every county in the state, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is poised to reach all areas of Texas, both rural and urban, and increase the likelihood of meeting the nutrition education needs of under-served Texans.

## The Hype About Hemp



AgriLife Extension has assembled a *Hemp Education Team* in preparation of possible legalized production of industrial hemp. Interim State Program Leader Todd Swift and Southeast Region Program Leader Erika Bochat are assembling the team along with Dr. Larry Redmon, Associate Department Head for Soil & Crop Sciences, serving as the point of contact for agents as well as media requests. The education team will be charged with educating agents, producers, and general consumers about new regulations for producing industrial hemp. The team includes representation from Soil & Crop Science, Agricultural Economics, Texas Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Communications, and county extension agents representing Agriculture & Natural Resources. Other AgriLife Extension members include Dr. Calvin Trostle of Lubbock, Dr. Reagan Noland of San Angelo, and Regional Program Leader Dr. Brent Batchelor of Stephenville; economists Dr. Joe Outlaw & George Knappek of College Station; communications staff Kay Ledbetter of Amarillo; and county agents David Graf of Wichita Co., Bryan Davis of Wilson Co., Jason Ott of Nueces Co., Zach Wilcox of Nolan Co., and Megan Eikner of Potter.

## 4-H Provides Life-Changing Experiences

4-H brings youth and adults together to learn everyday skills with hands-on learning. 4-H in Fort Bend offers a wide array of project opportunities from animal & plant sciences to life-skills to robotics. 4-H'ers learn problem-solving skills that make a positive impact in their lives and their community. 4-H helps youth meet the diverse challenges of today's world, build self-confidence, learn responsibility, and make positive decisions. A research project entitled "4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" is the first of its kind. The decade-long study, completed by a team of researchers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, Medford, MA, is influencing additional research and practices around the world. The report shows that 4-H youth excel beyond their peers. 4-H'ers are:



- Four times more likely to make contributions to their communities (Grades 7-12);
- Two times more likely to be civically active (Grades 8-12);
- Two times more likely to make healthier choices (Grade 7);
- Two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Tech. programs during out-of-school time; and
- 4-H girls are two times more likely (Grade 10) and nearly three times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school activities.

These pivotal opportunities help build a foundation of leadership and skills for success in their future careers. To learn more about 4-H in Fort Bend County, call us at 281-342-3034.

## Long Acres Ranch, Richmond, TX - Prairie Grass Restoration Project

Long Acres Ranch (LAR) is a privately-owned venue spanning 768 acres and 2.5 miles of undeveloped land along the Brazos River near Richmond in Fort Bend County, Texas. The peaceful, natural venue of Long Acres Ranch is available by reservation to organized groups with mutual missions as the primary criteria for engagement. All ages are able to experience, learn, and embrace nature in the heart of our growing county for experiential education in natural science, environmental stewardship, wellbeing, & overall enjoyment.



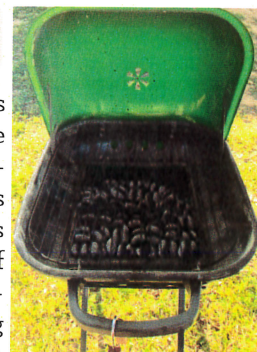
In the past year, LAR has improved pastures and installed native bunch grasses—not only to reestablish native habitats, but to harbor ground nesting birds as well. But it hasn't been an easy row to hoe! One challenge to restoration was dealing with competing non-native grasses, so step one was to prepare the demonstration field for planting. That started with an herbicide application to kill Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*), a native to South America. A mix of Texas natives, including Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and wildflower seeds were no-till drilled in our demonstration field and we caught timely rainfall to kick off germination. No-Till planting practices are useful for planting seeds in the

ground without disturbing the soil through tillage. You can find more information about no-till seed drilling in a YouTube video by Larry Pierce of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and C.S. Johnston titled "Preparing a Wildlife Food Plot with a No-Till Seed Drill". Bunch grasses like Little Bluestem can provide cover for ground-nesting birds; and although the plant response does not look like much now, we will hold our vision of introducing young people to land stewardship at Long Acres Ranch.

## Beef Grilling 101 Offered to AgriLife & CEP Agents



Our 2019 Program Planning Conference for both County Extension Agents with AgriLife and Extension Agents with CEP was held on Sept. 4 & 5. The two-day event was packed with educational program implementation ideas for the 2020 program planning year. One great presentation was offered by the Texas Beef Council team along with Extension specialists on Grilling 101. All 150 agents from 36 counties in the Southeast Region of Texas gained valuable information relating to choosing cuts of beef, understanding beef package labeling, best uses for certain cuts, and storing beef. Food safety measures were highlighted and included avoiding cross contamination, defrosting guidelines, and storage of cooked beef products. All 150 agents were able to grill their own flat iron steaks on two dozen small barbecue pits. Agents learned the best and most effective ways to start a charcoal fire, and the grill cleaning demonstration using a wad of aluminum foil and one-half of a bulbing onion. Next came the use of a handheld thermometer and where to place it as well as how deep. After the home-cooked meal was served, agents reconvened to learn the nutritive benefits of eating beef. The final segment of this workshop dealt with misconceptions regarding beef that agents may need to address from time to time.



# Texas Dept. of Emergency Management transitions to the TAMU System



On September 1, 2019, the start of Texas A&M System's new FY2020 budget year, Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) joined the TAMU System as the 8th state agency and is headed by Chief Nim Kidd.

TDEM has networked with AgriLife in responding to FEMA's needs and the needs of the General Land Office as well as addressing the needs of those impacted by Hurricane Harvey and wildfires across the great plains of Texas. TDEM serves the State of Texas by managing the all-hazards emergency management plan for the state. TDEM works



Chief Nim Kidd



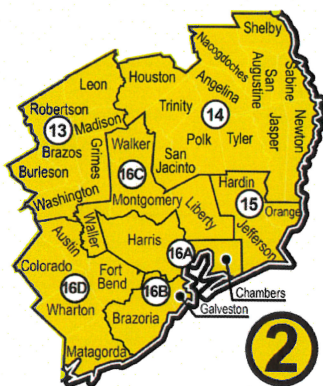
Asst. Chief S. Miller



Officer Ed Norman

closely with local jurisdictions, various state agencies, and many federal partners in ensuring Texas becomes more resilient for future disasters. As Governor Abbott once said - "future-proof". TDEM's staff are strategically stationed statewide and serve six different regions: North, Northwest, South, Southeast, West and Central Texas. Whether natural or man-made, TDEM is prepared and ready to respond to all future disasters.

Fort Bend County is listed in Region 2 which is the Southeast Region under the watchful eye of Assistant Chief Shaun Miller. Chief Miller is responsible for the delivery of the state's emergency management program within the 35 counties which comprise the Southeast Region (Region 2). The State of Texas is then divided into 24 Disaster Districts across the six regions. Fort Bend County is in Region 16-D along with Austin, Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda Counties. Officer Edward Norman takes the lead for Region 16-D, based out of Rosenberg's OEM office to oversee the needs of the County Judges and directors of county OEM departments.



## Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- Fall & Winter Garden Color—Oct. 19; 8:30—11:00 a.m.
- Parenting Workshop Registration DEADLINE —Oct. 25; 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
- Parenting Connections Workshop—Oct. 30; 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
- Seabourne Nature Fest—Nov. 2: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Food Mgrs. Cert. Class POSTMARK DEADLINE—Nov. 13; 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
- Food Preservation—Jellies/Jams—Nov. 14; 9:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
- Food Handlers' Class—Nov. 22: 9:00 a.m.—11:00 p.m.
- Winter Row Crops Meeting—Jan. 17, 2020: 8:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

For all of the above programs visit us online at [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org); or call 281-342-3034 or email us at [fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu).

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

[www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension](https://www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension)

## A Glimpse of Fort Bend Co.

In 2018, the population of FBC has reached 764,828 of which 41.4% are college educated, 88.5% are high-school graduates and the average household income is \$118,558.

For over 20 years, we have 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 (>250,000 or more in 2015), Fort Bend was the fastest growing as we climbed 4.3% between 2014 and 2015, to 741,237".

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.

For more information, you may visit: [www.fortbendcountytx.gov/](http://www.fortbendcountytx.gov/).

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension activities are encouraged to contact the Fort Bend County Extension Office at 281-342-3034 for assistance five working days prior to activity.