

Extension Education — Making a Difference in Fort Bend County 2019 Executive Summary



Extension Faculty



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Agriculture and Natural Resources

- **Master Volunteers** - These volunteers are local people with an interest in a particular subject. Extension provides extensive training that increases their knowledge and skills in that area. Volunteers use what they have learned to facilitate Extension educational programming in their communities. Master Volunteers may teach youth or adults, train other volunteers, and work on projects in support of Extension. Master Volunteers in Fort Bend include:
 - ◇ Master Gardeners - 31 interns trained in 2019 for a total of 199
 - ◇ Master Gardeners - 20 members of speakers' bureau for 61 presentations reaching 2,312
 - ◇ MG Volunteer hours totaled 23,734 for a value of \$603, 462 (11.41 FTEs)
 - ◇ Master Naturalist - 81 certified, 17 interns trained in 2019 for a total of 111
 - ◇ Master Naturalist - 23 member speakers for 27 presentations reaching 1,473
 - ◇ MN Volunteer hours totaled 13,393 for a value of \$340,531 (6.44 FTEs)
- **Multi-County Pesticide Education** - Fort Bend, Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, and Harris Counties have a combined total of 2,659 pesticide applicators licensed (FBC=551) with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Private pesticide applicators are required to acquire 15 CEUs every five years and both commercial & non-commercial applicators are required to acquire 5 CEUs every year in order to renew their licenses. A total of 44 hours were offered at 12 different events throughout 2018. Programs offered included:
 - ◇ Vector Mgmt. CEU Program (Dr. Swiger) 2/19/19— 65 attendees for 5 Ag., 3 PCO CEUs
 - ◇ TDA Pesticide Safety Training (2/21/19) for 30 Homeowners receiving 1 CEU
 - ◇ Recertification Training (12/19/19) - 65 attendees with 5 CEUs offered
 - ◇ Winter Row Crops Meeting—117 attendees received 5 CEUs (1 AgriLife, 4 Crop Adv.)
 - ◇ Mandatory 2,4-D Auxin Training (3/19/19)—9 attendees received 1 CEU
 - ◇ Worker Protections Standards Training—65 received, 3 CEUs received.
 - ◇ SE Texas Town & Country CEUs (12/12/19) —61 attended with 5-CEUs offered
 - ◇ Ag/Structural Pest Control applicators' training—17 attended for 5 CEUs
 - ◇ Two quarterly private applicator trainings for licensing (1-24, 3-22-19) - 7 attendees.
 - ◇ Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conf. (2-7-19) - 103 of 274 attending receiving 5 CEUs
 - ◇ Needville Crops Field Day, 6/20/19—54 receiving 3 CEU
- **Sustainable Small Acreage Enterprises** - As crop land in Fort Bend County becomes transferred to residential use and increases in large acreage land prices continue, small acreage operators may find their niche in the region. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, working in coordination with the Texas division of Southern SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Extension), has brought forth efforts to assist in identifying and evaluating diversification strategies for risk mitigation and improved economic sustainability using a variety of small acreage crops. Program examples for 2019 include:
 - ◇ Regional Vegetable Conf. - 274 growers gained commercial insight on growing/marketing
 - ◇ Orchard Grafting Clinic - 25 attended to learn valuable grafting/budding skills
 - ◇ Soil Testing Campaign—12 samples submitted as part of a concerted effort
 - ◇ Earth-Kind Grow Your Own series of 6 classes—a total of 135 attending (70 attending all)
 - ◇ Beekeepers' hosted 11 educational meetings with an average of 59 attendees each.
 - ◇ Pecan Harvest Festival - 500 of 2,500 attendees visited Extension's Pecan Show displays
 - ◇ Micro-loan educational programs were conducted in 2019 resulting in 42 applications submitted with hopes of receiving some level of funding to start new farming operations.



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- **Feral Swine** - Fort Bend Co. feral swine damage is an ongoing and increasing issue among our producers, and landowners. On average, the Fort Bend Extension Office conducts at least 15 site visits per month in rural development communities to meet with farmers and ranchers about feral swine damage prevention. Fort Bend County has approximately 567,000 acres of land, and of this amount there is a considerable amount of undeveloped acreage which allows feral hogs to reproduce at an uncontrollable rate. On 11/16/19 a Controlling Feral Hog Workshop was conducted with 34 in attendance. Topics included Feral Hog Biology, Demonstration of Trapping Systems, Feral Processing & Field Dressing, and New Advancements in Trapping Technology.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- **Dinner Tonight! (DT)** - The goal of DT is to help families learn how to cook quick, nutritious meals and cut down on diet-related illnesses. Weekly video demonstrations are sent via e-mail blasts to approximately 10,000 people/month. In addition, three DT Cooking Schools were conducted - one during the 2019 Commercial Vegetable Conf. that reached 274 individuals and two at the Mamie George Community Center for a total of 40 contacts.

Weight Management - Preventable illnesses make up 80% of the burden of illnesses and 90% of all U.S. healthcare costs. Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates have tripled with nearly 33% of children being overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher among African Americans and Hispanics where nearly 40% of the children are overweight/obese which may lead to diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. Educational programs conducted in conjunction with CEP's Expanded Food and Nutrition Program, Community Health Choice, and Attack Poverty Organization included:

- ◊ **Walk Across Texas** - 286 participants (40 teams) took part in this 8-week exercise event by walking (a total of 46,769 miles) to create a healthy habit of walking everyday. The ultimate result was not only weight loss, but also a delay of the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- ◊ **The Texercise program** - an 8-12 week fitness and educational program that provided education & opportunity for regular physical activity to reduce the risk and minimize the impact of disease. The 54 seniors gained knowledge of portion size, label reading, food groups, and application of physical activity for healthier lifestyles.

- **Childcare Provider Conferences** - Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of childcare on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. There are over 100,000 childcare providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated childcare facilities in the state of Texas. In 2019, a total of 156 providers representing 42 centers caring for 4,201 youth gained valuable knowledge, skills, and tips while earning a total of 624 clock hours offered by AgriLife agents. One hundred fifty-six attendees completed an evaluation indicating at the 95% or greater level that valuable skills were gained and the training was cost-effective.
- **Food Protection Management** - Each year, an estimated 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Common symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. Five pathogens alone (*Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli* O157:H7, and *E. coli* non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$7 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. To meet the need for quality food safety education, a Food Handlers Program, Certified Food Managers' Program and several food preservation classes were held in 2019:
 - ◊ **Food Handlers Program (2 hours)** - 26 participants learned the basics of food safety.
 - ◊ **Certified Food Managers Program (2 days)** - 66% of 27 students passed the exam.
 - ◊ **Home Food Preservation (9 classes)** - 12 at each learned preservation techniques.
- **Financial Literacy Series** - Statistics show 38.1% of the American families have low financial gain, 48.9% are low-income minorities, and 42% have no high school degree/GED. To address the issues of financial literacy several workshops were implemented that focused on bettering the lives of our residents. These workshops addressed several factors including spending, investing, career readiness, and how to communicate about finances within



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- a relationship. The financial literacy curriculums *Marriage Survival*, *the National Education Financial Education*, and *Personal Finance Activities Booklet* were utilized. A total of 506 participants through AgriLife and 653 through Cooperative Extension programming efforts showed an increased knowledge in creating budgets together with their families and an understanding of their partner's personality style and financial infidelity.
- **Better Living for Texans (BLT) - Be Well Live Well!** - More than 3.7 million individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Studies show that individuals who live in poverty are not aware or adhere to current USDA dietary guidelines. In 2019, 61 adults completed the BLT "Be Well Live Well" series that offered food & nutrition education to help improve meal planning, increase fruits & vegetable intake, and increase physical activity and reducing food-borne illness. Of the 61 completing the series, 49 completed follow-up surveys that indicated the largest gain in knowledge was greater effort to eat more fresh vegetables.

4-H and Youth Development— 2019 Club Statistics

4-H Clubs in Fort Bend County - 35
4-H Adult Leaders - 89
Special Interest/Enrichment - 12,886
County Project Validations—168

4-H Club Members - 621
Youth Leaders - 97
Contests: Co. - 334, Dist. - 122, State - 34
Major Show Entries—115

- **2019 Agricultural Literacy** - It is essential that AgriLife Extension takes an active role in educating youth about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Fort Bend is unique in its demographic makeup with the north & east portions of the county being urban, while the south & west half remain rural. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented educational programming for youth (as well as adults) to address the relevant issue of Ag Literacy. *AG'tivity Barn* was conducted during the FB County Fair and involved nine sponsors/ collaborators to reach over 967 elementary school students, 85 teachers & parents/ chaperones, and 274 youth who entered the coloring contest. A total of 15 exhibits were utilized to promote the agricultural industry in Fort Bend with 76 volunteers & 15 agencies and organizations assisting. In addition, it was estimated that 52,500 fair visitors (60% of 87,500) attended *AG'tivity Barn* during the 10-day run.
- **Hatching in the Classroom** – This project is designed to provide background information and experiential activities in life science for use in the school classroom while meeting TEKS and STAAR objectives. Students have the opportunity to develop skills related to science such as qualitative and quantitative measurement of data, scientific method, and critical thinking. Major partners in 2018 were:
 - Arrendondo, Don Carter, Hubenak, Jane Long, Quail Valley, Velesquez and Walker Station Elem. Schools as well as two private schools—WIDE and Riverbend Montessori.
 - In 2019 we reached 523 students including partnership with Pegasus classrooms within LCISD. Agents provided educational talks to all schools participating in the project.
- **ROBOTICS** - The nation is facing declining proficiencies in science, engineering, & technology, as well as workforce shortages in these critical fields. In an attempt to address these deficits, Fort Bend 4-H Robotics Program is focused on 4-H project growth, community outreach, and school enrichment throughout Fort Bend County. Several planning meetings have taken place with Robotics project leaders, community partners, and interested parents to discuss programming and activities to increase awareness of STEM related careers.

Robotics Curriculum Enrichment

 - Garcia Middle School—volunteer/member interest meeting on 4/18/19 w/ 43 attending
 - Dulles HS—Summer Volunteer Interest meeting on 4/25/19 w/ 21 attending
 - FBC 4-H Beginners' Robotics 3-day workshop in July & August w/ 45 attending
 - STEM Civil Engineering Workshop on 3/4/19 with 37 attending
 - Fort Bend Co. Robotics Camp w/23 youth—Lego EV3 Mindstorms, Coder Kids & drones

4-H Robotics Project Club - A total of 68 youth and 23 adults were enrolled in our Robotics program in 2019/20. All youth completed the Robotics 1: EV3 curriculum and we were able to provide EV3 LEGO Mindstorm kits to all clubs due to the grants received.



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Expanded F & N Program

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Comm. Partnership Specs.
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Clint Faas
Wildlife Specialist
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- **4-H Veterinary Science Project/Certification Program** - This project deals with techniques and procedures involved in caring for animal, and consists of 100 lessons, 50 activities, and 500 clinical hours of on-the-job training in which participants have five years to complete. Since the establishment of the Vet. Science Certificate Program in Fort Bend in 2012 we've created ten 4-H clubs. Highlights for 2018 include:
 - ◇ Two youth are working to completed the 5-year curriculum in 2020 for a total of 18 in the past 5 years and received a Texas 4-H Vet. Project Completion Certificate at the FB Annual Awards Banquet.
 - ◇ Two Vet Science 4-H members took part in the Vet Science Skillathon at the 2019 State 4-H Roundup - a competitive event designed to test knowledge and skills.
 - ◇ Hosted a Vet Science Informational meeting for 32 on 7/9/19 to expand program interest.
 - ◇ FBC has a total of 3 Vet Science Clubs, 60dedicated youth and 4 adult volunteers.
- **Fashion, Art & Beauty (FAB) 4-H Club** - High quality youth programs help to generate positive outcomes for youth including improved academic performance, social skills, classroom behavior improvement, and self-love as well as improvement in general health. The FAB 4-H Club, with nine members, was created as a safe and productive way to spend their time learning new skills. Our mission is to inspire fashion creativity, explore new interests, and make new friends. Our goals are to share, explore, and expand ideas about the fashion industry, beauty industry, and art industry as it relates to fashion through field trips, fundraisers, workshops, competitions, and events. Our objectives are:
 - ◇ Learn responsibility, teamwork, set & achieve goals and plan & execute fundraisers
 - ◇ Learn about the different aspects of fashion, art, and beauty, and related careers
 - ◇ Learn the basics of sewing, craft making, and product creation.
 - ◇ Increase poise, self-assurance & confidence, and to speak in public.
 - ◇ Seventeen youth, 26 adult leaders and one youth volunteer reach 152 participants.

Community Economic Development

- **Rebuild Texas (RT) Commission-** Major flooding occurred twice in 2016; however, nothing can compare to the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey in August 2017 with an average of 48" of rainfall within the coastal bend counties. The National Hurricane Center now reports that Hurricane Harvey was "the most significant tropical cyclone rainfall event in U.S. history, both in scope and peak rainfall amounts, since reliable rainfall records began around the 1880s." As a result, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott appointed TAMUS Chancellor John Sharp Commissioner of the RT Commission with AgriLife serving as his lead liaison in each of the 40 affected counties. Fort Bend County AgriLife Extension's response included:
 - ◇ Clientele Inquiries - Responded to incoming calls regarding crop loss, cattle loss, mold/mildew issues, invasive weed contamination, cattle diseases and elevating homes.
 - ◇ Rebuild Texas Commission -Relayed valuable information from Gov. Abbott, Chancellor Sharp and Rebuild Texas AgriLife team to over 70 key leaders in Fort Bend County as needed and responded to the needs of our 19 jurisdictions.

Total Educational Contacts

Educational Sessions Conducted - 1,607
Contact Hours via Ed. Programs - 149,504
Extension Education Club Members - 39
Total Volunteer Hours - 94,492
Direct Contacts (office/site/phone) - 5,599
Newsletter/Email/Mail Contacts - 132,667
Social Media Followers - 221,532

Ed. Contacts - 63,839 adults, 85,665 youth
Master Volunteers - 309 (certified)
Total of Volunteers - 1,097
Volunteer Value - \$2,402,932
Indirect Contacts (mass media) - 62,040
Social Media Posts - 6,005
eXtension - Ask the Experts - 847

Contact Information

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<http://fortbend.agrilife.org>; www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension

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Dr. Jeff Hyde, Director, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.