

Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...



3rd Quarter Newsletter

July-September 2020

Special Topics for Summer 2020

- ◆ News from College Station
- ◆ 4-H Camps Planned (virtually)
- ◆ Texas EDEN COVID-19 Info.
- ◆ Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA)
- ◆ FBC Master Gardeners
- ◆ 4-H Provides Life-Changing Experiences
- ◆ Long Acres Ranch—Living on the Edge!
- ◆ TDEM and AgriLife's Role
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ 2020—Glimpse of FBC
- ◆ Contact Information

News from College Station...

COVID-19 most commonly spreads during close contact

- People who are physically near (within 6 feet) a person with COVID-19 or have direct contact with that person are at greatest risk of infection.
- When people with COVID-19 cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe they produce **respiratory droplets**. These droplets can range in size from larger droplets (some are visible) to smaller droplets. Small droplets can also form particles when they dry very quickly in the airstream.
- Infections occur mainly through exposure to respiratory droplets when a person is in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- Respiratory droplets cause infection when they are inhaled or deposited on mucous membranes, such as those that line the inside of the nose and mouth.
- As the respiratory droplets travel further from the person with COVID-19, the concentration of these droplets decreases. Larger droplets fall out of the air due to gravity. Smaller droplets and particles spread apart in the air.

With passing time, the amount of infectious virus in respiratory droplets also decreases.

(Excerpts from *AgriLife Today*)

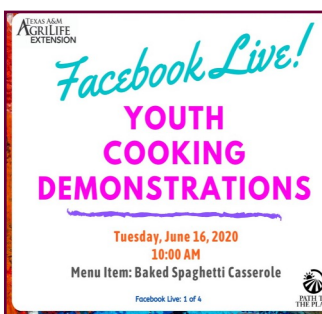
Fort Bend County 4-H Camps Planned!....but virtually

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 several youth camps which made learning fun and taught valuable skills. But, due to COVID-19 mandates most all were held virtually. Just a quick snapshot of what was offered:

July - August 2020 TOTAL CONTACTS

302 Educational Sessions
27,609 Contacts
3,013 Social Media Posts
59,983 Soc. Media Followers
36 Newsletter Editions
2,611 Newsletter Contacts
259 Volunteers Assisted
493 Volunteer Hours
772 Edu. Resources Used
Clientele Reached:
25.7% Youth
46.0% Adults
28.3% Undetermined
93% of the above is virtual

Both Pantry-2-Plate Cooking School & 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 & food preparation techniques. Cooking Camps delivered to appropriately aged children with an interest in cooking. In 2020, delivered via Facebook-Live and marketed via multiple outlets: Fort Bend County AgriLife website, FBC AgriLife Facebook, FBC Website, FBC FYI Newsletter, flyers, news releases, direct contacts. Multiple teaching methods utilized for FCH Programming: lecture, discussion, guest presenters, hands-on activities, demonstrations, games, word activities.



Fort Bend County STEM Camp - Beginning during the Fort Bend 4-H STEM Week -July 20-24. A total of 38 youth participated in each virtual workshop that utilized Zoom and posted on Fort Bend's 4-H Facebook page. Topics included Liquid Layers, Solar Power Oven, Tower of Hanoi, Calming Glitter Jar and Mentos Soda Car. In addition to the 38 participants over 450 others view the segments via Facebook - tallying a total of 350 minutes of watch time.



The Fort Bend County Health Ambassadors trained virtually and developed skills from Purdue's Choose Health Food, Fun & Fitness (CHFFF) curriculum during spring break. Topics included: Healthy Drinks, Whole vs. Refined Grains, Increasing Color in Vegetables on a Plate, and Cognitively Connecting Physical Activities to the Nutrition Lesson. The students learned how to execute a healthy program through healthy eating, self-care, and fitness.

Reminder: Texas EDEN Web COVID-19 Information

COVID-19 resources are available through the CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services, and are posted at the EDEN website at: <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/coronavirus-information-resources/>. The novel (new) coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. The first case in the United States was announced on January 21, 2020. Dozens of topics in publication forms are available to download. The main points of discussion include:

- 1) Handwashing— one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick by preventing the spread of 'bad' germs that cause disease, such as COVID-19 and influenza (the flu). Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- 2) Wear a mask! Everyone 2 years and older should wear masks in public. Cover your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin. Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head. Make sure you can breathe easily. If it doesn't fit well or fell well, try another type of mask
- 3) Stay 6-feet away from people that are not part of your household. In addition, stay 6-feet away from people within your household that are showing flu-like symptoms until a Covid-19 test is performed and results obtained. Also, try to avoid crowds in poorly ventilated areas.
- 4) Clean & Disinfect—Clean & disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Try to use products from EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19) external icon according to manufacturer's labeled directions.
- 5) Get vaccinated when they are available and as soon as you qualify.



Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA) Effected by Covid-19

TEEA of Fort Bend for 2020 is comprised of 4 clubs with a total of 38 members—most of which are life-long volunteers. The four clubs meet on a regular basis to conduct business and have educational programs. Educational programs hosted by TEEA included: "Holiday Bulbs", and "Shade Plants". Additional programs were planned but not held due to COVID-19 thus far. These included "Vitamins and Enzymes" and "Music". Additionally, Fort Bend County EEA was planning the 2020 District 9 EEA Spring Conference. TEEA met in January and February. The remainder of meetings and the Spring Conference, State Conference and Fall Training were cancelled or to be held virtually due to COVID-19.

In addition to the educational programming, they provide community service throughout the county. In 2020, community service thus far is limited due to COVID-19, including fund raisers. Thus, the 4-H Leadership Lab Scholarships were not provided. They did not donate baby items to "ASAP" at Lamar CISD or gather to make baby blankets to be given at LBJ Hospital. The volunteer time normally contributed was severely limited due to the inability to gather. Members are big supporters of the 4-H program and several volunteer throughout the year to help with projects. TEEA members participate in the county fair by entering exhibits and volunteering in the Exhibit Hall. They serve as volunteer judges at multiple county fairs, as well. As was the case for 2020, these activities were not held due to COVID-19. They have numerous committees that meet as needed to conduct the business of the Texas Extension Education Association of Fort Bend. Here's hoping for an end to the pandemic!

Fort Bend County Master Gardeners

The FBCMG program educates participants on sound horticultural practices, with the intent of creating good environmental stewards. This program is under the watchful of the FBCMG Association with 200 members strong. This program requires participants attend 50 hours or more of classroom instruction. Classroom instruction introduces the participants to the basics of horticulture including trees, perennials, landscape design, propagation, turf, entomology and pathology, and the Earth-Kind® approach. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will offer an online version and hope to have 30 registrants. which, despite the lack to time to prepare for, was quite successful. Scheduled for this Fall 2020 the topics will include 15 sessions totaling 56 hours of education and in return the new interns are expected to give fifty hours of volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to become a certified Texas Master Gardener. In addition, we offer our members 12 hours of continued education (recertification training) yearly to help our MGs expand their knowledge and confidence, and to remain current. WOW!



Sharing Knowledge

The Texas Master Gardener Program

What sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

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 - Living on the Edge!

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.



Life for many during these challenging times, have brought along a new appreciation for being outdoors and what nature has to offer. Folks are leaving their homes and seeking out parks and green spaces and experiencing the health benefits associated with the outdoors. These natural environments and the plant and animal life that constitute them offer a peaceful respite from daily stresses. As a new or veteran nature enthusiast, you might find yourself wondering about the wildlife you encounter on your outdoor adventures. You might also find yourself pondering the diverse, or maybe not so diverse plant life. "What do those animals eat?" "Are those plants from around here, or were they introduced from another region?" "Where might I look to see more and different kinds of wildlife?"

What exactly does an edge look like? An edge might be mowed versus un-mowed area, or a line of trees, or created by a fence row. Anywhere you see a transition between short and tall vegetation. Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologist, Clint Faas, who is located at the FBC AgriLife site, says this about wildlife that we may be looking to observe. "Most of the wildlife species we manage for can be described as edge species. They thrive in, and select for, those areas where one habitat type changes to another, or where one level of succession (the process by which plants mature over time) changes to another. These areas of change provide a diversity of resources to animals that they require in a particular habitat." Beyond recognizing these edges, how can we manage or create edges to promote the presence of different types of plants and animals? Edges can be created by allowing vegetative growth in areas that do not require you to keep the plant life cut short. Ground birds and small mammals can use this taller plant life for cover which serves to protect them from predators and they can also consume the seeds produced.

Encouraging diversity in plant life, leads to diversity in animal life. This is due to the varying needs of different animal species for different types of cover and food. If you have one type of plant, as you might find in a well-manicured Bermuda grass lawn, you would find very little or no animal life as the Bermuda grass does little to provide cover or nutrition for wildlife. If you maintain a rich variety of native plants however, you can help bring in wildlife that can use those plants to thrive. There is room for both however. Well maintained and manicured lawns or paths can be great neighbors to areas that have been left to grow tall. Clint Faas says creating these edges through a method of outdoor space management called "strip shredding" can create the following advantages for plant and animal life. "By shredding in strips rather than shredding an entire area at once, you are increasing the benefits gained from this practice because you are increasing the amount of edge along these strips. The mowed areas will have fresh new growth that are more palatable to browsing or grazing animals. An increase in forb growth may also become evident due to more sunlight reaching the soil. Forbs not only serve as a direct food source for but attracts more insects than grass alone for birds. In contrast the un-mowed areas maintain the taller vegetative component that can serve as cover for various wildlife species. Whether it's a ground nesting bird that needs old-growth vegetation to build a nest, a doe hiding a fawn while she feeds nearby, or a field mouse escaping the dive of a nearby hawk, having cover next to food sources or travel corridors increases the value of a habitat to many species of wildlife". For more information and resources, go to: https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_w7000_0792.pdf and <https://nri.tamu.edu/learning/>.

Texas Dept. of Emergency Management



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



Chief Nim Kidd

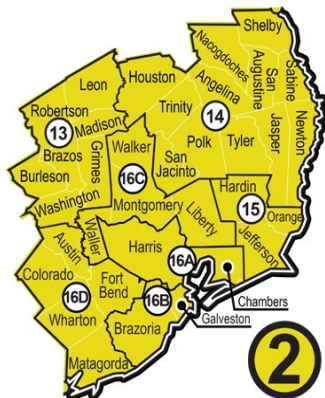


Asst. Chief S. Miller



Officer Ed Norman

TEDM has networked with AgriLife in responding to FEMA's needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. TDEM serves the State of Texas by managing the all-hazards emergency management plan for the state.



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.

TDEM works closely with local jurisdictions, various state agencies, and many federal partners in ensuring Texas becomes more resilient for future disasters. Here at AgriLife Extension in Fort Bend County, agents have been given the charge to assist where needed including: CARES Act Infoshare to local jurisdictions, PPE Deliveries to Extension Offices, Hand Sanitizer Delivery to Voting Sites, Contact Tracing Data Training segment/hours, PPE deliveries to Child Care Providers, Binax Test Kits deliveries and COVID-19 test collections/deliveries.

Snap-Shot of (virtual) Upcoming Events:

- Child Care Providers Education Class, Oct. 17 @ 8:00 am - 12:00 noon
- Grow Your Own – Fruit Trees, Oct. 17 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- FBC Landowner Agricultural & Wildlife Appraisals Webinar, Oct. 20 @ 10:00 - 11:00 am
- Weed & Brush Control in Forages, Oct. 22 @ 6:00 - 7:00 pm
- Gardening for Hummingbirds (Gardening on the Gulf Coast), Nov. 4 @ 10:00 - 11:00 am
- FBC Landowner Agricultural & Wildlife Appraisals Webinar, Nov. 5 @ 10:00 - 11:00 am
- Food Handler Course, Nov. 12 @ 8:30 am - 11:00 am
- Grow Your Own – Composting, Nov 14 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am
- Food Manager Certification Course, Nov. 17 @ 8:00 am - Nov. 18 @ 5:00 pm
- Controlling Feral Hog Virtual Workshop, Nov. 17 @ 10:00 - 12:00 pm
- Food Manager Certification Course, Nov. 17 @ 8:00 am - Nov. 18 @ 5:00 pm
- Homeowner Chemical & PPE Safety, Nov. 18 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am
- Pecan Show 2020, November 18, 2020 @ 3:00 pm
- Winterizing the Cattle Herd, November 18, 2020 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- Cover Crops, November 19, 2020 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Home Food Preservation: Jams & Jellies, Nov. 20 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

For all of the above programs visit us online at fortbend.agrilife.org;
or call 281-342-3034 or email us at fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu.

A Glimpse of Fort Bend Co.

In 2020, the population of FBC has reached 811,688 of which 41.4% are college educated, 88.5% are high-school graduates and the average household income is \$119,536.00

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.fortbendcountytexas.gov/.

Vincent J. Mannino, County Extension Director Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Fort Bend County

1402 Band Rd. Suite 100, Rosenberg, TX 77471

Phone: (281)342-3034; Fax: (832)471-2400

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

www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension

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.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.