

# Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...

4th Quarter Newsletter

October-December 2020

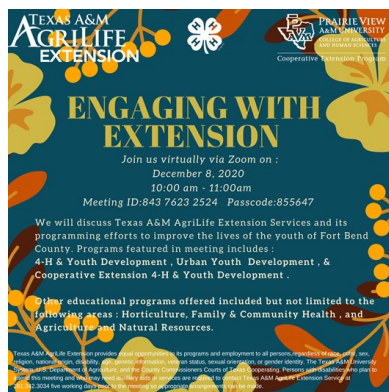
## Special Topics for Fall 2020

- Director's Message
- COVID-19 Updated Mandates
- AgriLife Extension—Helping Texans Thrive
- 84th Annual FBC Fair & AG'tivity Barn Highlights
- Earth-Kind Grow Your Own Series
- World of Science - 4-H Curriculum
- Livestock & Forage Production in FBC
- Healthy Eating at Extension Meetings
- Fort Bend County Child Passenger Safety
- Fort Bend County Statistics
- Upcoming Events
- Contact Information

## Sept.-Dec. 2020 TOTAL CONTACTS

288 Educational Sessions  
37,391 Contacts  
1,578 Social Media Posts  
53,355 Soc. Media Followers  
39 Newsletter Editions  
13,883 Newsletter Contacts  
493 Volunteers Assisted  
778 Volunteer Hours  
877 Edu. Resources Used  
Clientele Reached:  
37.3% Youth  
60.3% Adults  
2.4% Undetermined

## Telling Our Story—Highlighting 4-H & Youth Development



Accountability of our Extension programs is a priority for everyone, from the county level to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service headquarters in College Station. It allows us to *tell our story* as well as make corrections in educational programs as we attempt to address the issues we face. Interpreting evaluation results and marketing those results to stakeholders is very important. If the Extension educator does not interpret and market these results, how will the community and stakeholders know the results of our programming efforts? Anytime we conduct an interpretation event we attempt to address the “3 R’s” - Relevance, Response, and Results. Our Dec. 8 **Engaging w/ Extension** (formerly called *Brunch w/ Extension*) was held virtually with over 30 key leaders attending did just that. This fall event highlighted the youth development program and the work of the 4-H agents and their volunteers. Our Extension Agent for Urban Youth Development, Angela Romans facilitated the event with the help of the entire 4-H unit. Together, they covered the History of 4-H, Fort Bend 4-H Grows, Urban Youth Programming, Traditional 4-H Programming, and the CEP 4-H/Youth Development Program.

## COVID-19 Updated Mandates

On 9/17/2020, Governor Gregg Abbott updated Executive Order GA-28. The following restrictions apply for outdoor events: “CHECKLIST FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS:

- All individuals must wear a face covering (over the nose & mouth) wherever it is not feasible to maintain 6-ft of social distancing from another individual not in the same household or, for those engaging in physical activities outdoors, wherever the individual is not able to maintain a safe physical distance from others not in the same household.
- Individuals may not be in a group larger than 10 individuals (including those within the individual’s household). Within these groups, individuals should, to the extent possible, minimize in-person contact with others not in the individual’s household. Minimizing in-person contact includes maintaining 6-ft of separation from individuals. When maintaining 6-ft of separation is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as washing or sanitizing hand frequently, and avoiding sharing utensils or other common objects.
- Individuals should maintain 6-ft of separation from others outside the individual’s group. A group is defined as no more than 10 persons including the members of the household and those persons who traveled together to the event.
- Wash or disinfect hands after any interaction with employees, other individuals, or items at the outdoor event. Clean and sanitize any items before and after use.
- Local approval factors: Local approval for large outdoor gatherings (those with an estimated attendance exceeding 10 individuals) is appropriate in this instance because a statewide standard is unable to take into account the various factors needed to ensure such a gathering in varied locations is safe & will minimize the spread of COVID-19. Further, business parity is not an issue at large outdoor events.”

On 9/2/2020, FBC Judge KP George issued a declaration resulting in moving from a Red Status, “High Community Risk”, to an Orange Status, “Moderate - Significant Community Risk”. Mandates include: 1) Avoid and cancel gatherings of 10 or more; 2) Avoid non-essential business and personal travel; 3) Minimize contact with others, but may leave home for non-essential needs; & 4) Practice social distancing and use face coverings.”

## AgriLife Extension - Helping Texans Thrive!...statewide yearly highlights

Since 1915, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has been delivering valuable, engaging education and services to every part of Texas. These programs cover a wide swath of crucial topics, including Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Community Health, and Youth Development. As Texas continues to evolve, and we remain dedicated to responding to the needs of Texans, we have increased our abilities to respond to natural disasters of all sorts, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, for example, we responded to more natural disasters than ever—hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, and a record number of tropical storms. To assist during the pandemic, we joined with other state agencies as part of Texas' COVID-19 response, delivering PPE, testing kits and other medical supplies. In 2021, we began delivering vaccines throughout the state. These efforts help communities respond quickly and appropriately when disasters of any kind strike.

### Through our efforts, we helped generate in a single year:

- Economic gains of more than \$486 million for agricultural producers.
- Savings of \$107 million (and conserving 3.1 billion gallons of water) through wildlife/ecosystem management for 1.3 million managed acres.
- Involvement with 550,000 4-H youth through programs like STEM.
- Interactions with 18.4 million educational contacts via nearly 128,000 educational events.
- Savings of \$79.8 million in lifetime healthcare costs by educating residents on diabetes, nutrition and physical activity.
- 5.5 million hours of volunteer time (valued at \$139.3 million) by engaging 93,600 volunteers.

*(excerpts from the 2021-25 Strategic Plan)*

## 84th Annual Fort Bend Co. Fair & AG'tivity Barn....a different animal!



### To Our Fair Family,

Due to concerns about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Fort Bend County Fair Board of Directors and Staff are saddened to announce the cancellation of the 2020 Fort Bend County Fair: the first cancellation since World War II. The Fort Bend County Fair was scheduled for September 25 – October 4. After careful consideration for the health and safety of our community and fairgoers, the difficult decision was reached after months of discussions and planning with board members, staff, and committeemen, as well as with County and City officials. The Fair Association will faithfully and respectfully follow the City and County's recommendation. We will be honoring our mission of: "Benefiting Youth, Promoting Agriculture, and Supporting Education" by holding a modified livestock show and auctions and the queen's scholarship contest pending approval of the COVID-19 mitigation plan. It is our intention that Grand Champions will be named, Scholarships will be awarded, and a Fair Queen will be crowned. The Fair Association sincerely appreciates the community partnership and support. We will continue to work hard in bringing you the best fair experience...please join the longstanding tradition scheduled to run next year from September 24 – October 3, 2021. Stay safe and watch for updates on our website and social media platforms connected with our fair.

*(Sean Gutierrez, 2020 FBC Fair President & the FBC Fair Association Board)*

**AgriLife Extension Service's AG'tivity Barn has gone virtual!** It is essential that AgriLife Extension takes an active role in educating urban/suburban youth and their parents 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. Since the cancellation of the 84th Annual FBC Fair the AG'tivity Barn was conducted virtually using video clips of selected subject matter to reach over 2,037 elementary school students and 168 teachers & parents that registered to view the topics (a 60% increase over face-2-face programming). In addition, 62 youth entered the annual coloring contest.

## Earth-Kind—Grow your Own Series!

AgriLife Extension in Fort Bend Co. and the FBC Master Gardeners, have developed a Grow Your Own program series based on Earth-Kind Landscape principles. Earth-Kind Landscaping uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum garden and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting the environment. The objective of Earth-Kind Landscaping is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles to create a horticultural system based on real world effectiveness and environmental responsibility. The Earth-Kind Landscaping encourages Landscape Water conservation, the Reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use, Landscaping for energy conservation, and the Reduction of landscape wastes entering landfills.



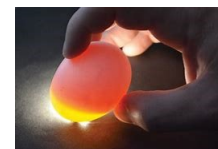
The Grow Your Own series consisted of six classes aiming to attract participants to attend the complete series. The first of these six courses was conducted face-to-face prior to COVID-19 restrictions. The remaining five were conducted virtually through the use of Microsoft Teams. *Aggie Horticulture Facebook Live* and *Gardening on the Gulf Coast* were utilized, marketed and delivered to registrants. Over 300 registered guests participated in 2020 *Grow Your Own*, 29 of which attended the complete series of 6 classes. Results gained through formal customer satisfaction evaluations and verbal feedback confirm that these programs were well received and that people are eager to see continued efforts and new offerings in the future. The below evaluation results from *Grow Your Own* shows the need for and success of these courses.



## World of Science! - 4H/YD

Most elementary schools use textbooks to teach science in the classroom, but hands-on science curricula have become very popular over the last decade and growth continues, although COVID-19 has slowed things down a bit. It has been a major focus of the National Science Education Standards. Hands-on learning has been proven to decrease behavioral issues as well as help students begin to develop critical thinking skills. The students not only learn about science, but they also gain reasoning and research skills. Programs related to World of Science included:

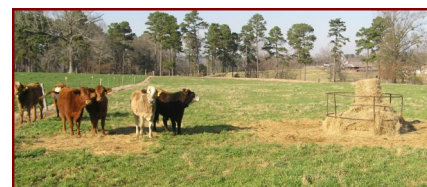
- ◊ Hatching in the Classroom – 407 students at Quail Valley Elementary of Fort Bend ISD hatched chicks and studied such topics as breeds, incubation, parts of the eggs, candling, and stages of embryo development.
- ◊ Junior Master Gardener – Our Fort Bend Co. Master Gardeners' Youth Activity Committee has reached 1,170 contacts through their educational programs and community events. They have contributed 3,905 volunteer hours to the Junior Master Gardeners program.



## Livestock & Forage Production in FBC Vital!...even during COVID-19

To meet the needs of FBC Beef & Forage Producers, Phillip Thielemann, our CEA-ANR promoted several Coronavirus Food Assistance Programs for producers. These webinar presentations provided an overview of the CFAP and offered clarification on eligibility, pay limits, and payment calculation examples for the ranchers affected by COVID-19. They learned what was needed to sign up to receive assistance and when to expect receipt of funds. They also received information regarding farm loans available through FSA and conservation programs through NRCS. As the COVID Pandemic persisted. Some of the outcomes included.

- Over 225 calls, emails & in-house visits address livestock, forage production & landowner inquiries
- 15 site visits were performed by Mr. Thielemann since employment in March, 2020.
- 258 people reached as a result of programs such as IPM, range/pasture mgt., livestock mgt., & landowner liability issues
- Over 70 members of our ANR clientele participated in our Livestock/Forage and Landowner Programs including:
  - \*Winterizing the Cattle Herd
  - \*Southeast Weed and Brush Control in Forages
  - \*Landowner Liability Protection
  - \*Land Tax Appraisal Part 1 – Agricultural
  - \*Land Tax Appraisal Part 2 - Wildlife

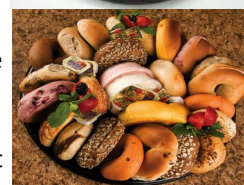


## Healthy Eating @ Extension Meetings!....What?

AgriLife Extension is nearly 106 years old, aside from four name changes. One thing we are known for statewide is meetings, meetings & more meetings, and at most all of these meetings we eat. Often times we do not necessarily follow our own teachings with regards to foods and nutrition. We all know that great educational programs geared towards healthy eating include MyPlate, Dinner Tonight, Cooking Well With Diabetes, Better Living for Texans, Plugged-In to Nutrition and many more. Yet when we conduct meetings and educational lectures we often include food—kolaches, kolbasnikys, donuts and the like. Perhaps our New Year's resolutions should be "healthy eating" at all Extension events. *What?*

According to USDA recommendations we should do the following:

- Healthy beverages: cold water, low-fat or fat-free milk, coffee/tea (with simple cream & sugar) and 100% fruit juices.
- Healthy snacks: Trail mix, pretzels, baked chips, veggie platter, fruit (whole or cut), peanut butter, whole grain crackers, popcorn
- Healthy desserts: yogurt, granola bars (assorted), protein bars, fruit tray w/yogurt-based dip.
- Healthy breakfast: Fruit, whole grain bagels/muffins, granola, oatmeal. For protein: hard boil eggs, yogurt smoothies, protein bars
- Healthy lunch: Fruit,/veggie tray, veg. soup, whole-grain breads/crackers. Sandwiches: turkey, chicken, hummus, low-fat cheese; Salads w/ side dressings



**Tips:** 1) Two of five items served should be fresh fruit or veggies; 2) Follow MyPlate recommendations; and 3) Pay attention to allergies.





## Fort Bend's Child Passenger Safety

One of the greatest achievements in child injury prevention has been in child passenger safety. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County, in conjunction with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Passenger Safety in cooperation with Safe Riders, operated a child restraint fitting/inspection station at the Fort Bend County Extension Office. These were one-on-one, face-to-face events even during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, virtual meetings involved child passenger safety technicians and volunteers to teach families how to transport children safely and correctly. They also stressed that everyone in the vehicles were buckled up properly. The Booster Seat Campaign was also conducted as a culminating activity. Listed below are the results of the 2020 Fort Bend County Child Passenger Safety Program/ Booster Seat Campaign:

- 756 contacts were reached
- 26 new child safety seats were installed
- 2 old/unsafe seats were collected and destroyed
- 26 inspections were conducted

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI**LIFE  
EXTENSION

***Does your  
child need a  
booster seat?***

***Statistics show less than half of Texas  
children are using booster seats***

***By Appointment Only***

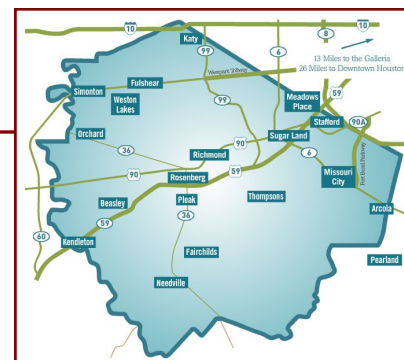
A young girl with dark hair, wearing a white dress with a yellow floral pattern and sandals, is sitting in a red and black booster seat. She is smiling at the camera. The booster seat is a high-back model with a grey harness.

## Fort Bend County's List of 2020 Statistics

- ◆ **2020 Populations Estimates:** 811,688 (Population estimates (2010) =584,699) , that is a +38.8% change
- ◆ **Population Age:** 6.7% under 5 years, 27.3% under 18, 54% between the ages of 18-65, 11.6% over 65 years of age
- ◆ **Race:** 31.9% white alone, 24.9% Hispanic, 21.3% Black/African Amer., 20.9% Asian, and 1% other
- ◆ **Housing:** 269,362 housing units, 77.2% owner occupied, \$265,900 median home value, 22.8% rental units
- ◆ **Living Arrangements:** 237,883 households, 3.19 persons/household, 60.5% English speaking, 39.5% other lang.
- ◆ **Computer/Internet Use:** 96.6% households with computer, 92.6% households with internet
- ◆ **Education:** 90.6% high school graduates or higher (training/certifications), 46.2% Bachelor's degree or higher
- ◆ **Health:** 4.6% living w/a disability under the age of 65, 13.2% living without health insurance under the age of 65
- ◆ **Labor Force:** 66.9% population in civilian labor force of which 59.6% female,
- ◆ **Income & Poverty:** Median household income = \$97,743, Per capita income = \$39,994, persons in poverty = 6.6%
- ◆ **Businesses:** 13,982 establishments, 176,213 persons employed, annual payroll = \$8,064,962,  
Men-owned = 31,087, Women-owned = 24,234, Minority-owned = 36,256, Veteran-owned = 4,818
- ◆ **Geography:** Population/sq.mi. = 679.5, Land area = 861.48 sq.mi., Rural = 73.3%

For more information, you may visit:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fortbendcountytexas/PST045219>



### List of Upcoming Events:

To view upcoming programs visit us online at [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org);

For more info: Call 281-342-3034 or Email us at [fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu).

- ◇ **2021 Mast. Gardeners' Fruit Tree Sale—Jan. 18 - Feb. 6 @ 8-5 online**
- ◇ **Winter Row Crops Meeting—Jan. 28 @ 8:30 am - 12:30 pm**
- ◇ **Keys to Success in FBC Fruit Production—Feb. 6 @ 10:00 - 11:00 am**
- ◇ **Gardening on the Gulf Coast—Citrus, Feb. 17 @ 10:00-11:00 am**
- ◇ **Parenting Connections Workshop, Feb. 18 @ 10:00-11:00 am**
- ◇ **Walk Across Texas Virtual Info Meeting., Feb. 22 @ 12:00-1:00 pm**
- ◇ **Landowner 1-D-1 Wildlife Tax Valuations Trng., Feb. 23 @12:30-3 pm**
- ◇ **Living on Less BLT Workshop, Feb. 24 @ 4:00-5:00 pm**
- ◇ **Gardening on the Gulf Coast—Vegetables, Mar. 3 @ 10:00-11:00 am**
- ◇ **Pond Mgmt. for Private Pond Owners (Pt.1), Mar. 3 @ 12:30—2:00 pm**
- ◇ **Parenting Connections Workshop, Mar.4 @ 10-11:00 am**
- ◇ **Soil Testing Campaign Deadline, Mar. 5 @ 5:00 pm**
- ◇ **Car Seat Safety Event, March 8 @ 8:00 am—5:00 pm**
- ◇ **Pond Mgmt. for Private Pond Owners (Pt.2), Mar. 11 @ 12:30-2:00 pm**
- ◇ **Walk Across Texas Kick-Off Event, Mar.15 @ 8:00 am—5:00 pm**
- ◇ **Child Passenger Safety Program, March 15 @ 8:00 am—5:00 pm**



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