



Making a Difference in *Fort Bend* County...

2nd Quarter Newsletter

April-June 2021

Special Topics for Spring 2021

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- Texas 4-H Jr. Master Photographer Program
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April-June 2021

TOTAL CONTACTS

(virtual contacts skew totals)

293 Educational Sessions
124,566 Contacts
1,271 Social Media Posts
48,592 Soc. Media Followers
57 Newsletter Editions
13,758 Newsletter Contacts
378 Volunteers Assisted
967 Volunteer Hours
370 Edu. Resources Used
Clientele Reached:
18.1% Youth
79.4% Adults
2.5% Undetermined

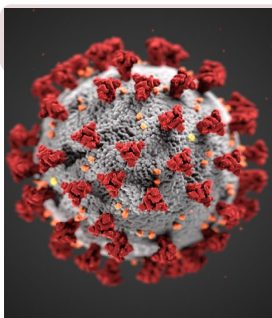
Director's Message: Texas Speaks! - A chance to speak up.

Texas Speaks is a survey that is being conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service giving communities across the state an open forum opportunity to express the strengths and needs of their communities. The survey, is being conducted online and takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

"This is an opportunity to empower and listen to the people of Texas," said Scott Cummings, AgriLife Extension program leader for Organizational Development. The survey aims to engage as many citizens as possible while gaining accurate information to help support Texas communities at both state and local levels. "Extension is a grassroots organization, and in Texas, we have held that grassroots practice since inception," Cummings said. "We serve and have a presence in every county in the state of Texas. To help identify both the issues and successes in each county, it is important to listen to the people in those counties." The anonymous survey will be looking to understand and solve issues facing Texas communities, identifying relevant issues fundamental to the program development of AgriLife Extension, and it will include an open feedback section for areas not listed within the survey.

Data from the Texas Speaks survey will be compiled at local levels and given to stakeholders. Statewide data will be made available to state agencies and decision-makers. To participate go to: <https://texasspeaks.tamu.edu>.

Timothy J. Manning



COVID-19 Research by TAMU

An enzyme inhibitor could become a new weapon in the arsenal to fight COVID-19 as a result of collaborative research by Texas A&M University, the University of Texas Medical Branch – Galveston, the University of California San Diego and others. The SARS-CoV-2 virus associated with COVID-19 is highly contagious and has led to a global pandemic. To date, more than 130 million people worldwide have been infected and more than 2.8 million have died from COVID-19.

The study, recently published on the ACS Chemical Biology website, shows that small concentrations of an enzyme inhibitor called K777 strongly impede the infection of several cell lines by SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19. It also demonstrated the efficacy of K777 in reducing the ability of the virus to infect host cell lines without causing harm to the host cells.

The study's primary author is Drake Mellott, a doctoral candidate in the Texas A&M Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The study's senior authors are Thomas Meek, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, and James Mckerrow, Ph.D., M.D., dean of the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at UC San Diego. Another key author is Chien-Te Tseng, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, University of Texas Medical Branch.

K777 has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a Phase II clinical-stage compound. Meek said while a number of vaccines can now largely prevent infection by the virus, medicines are still needed to treat those who become infected and develop severe symptoms. "We also need therapies that may be able to address the potential emergence of strains that may not respond well to current vaccines," he said. A few examples of using such a strategy have already been employed, including the FDA's approval of the antiviral drug remdesivir and an emergency use authorization for monoclonal antibodies in treating more serious cases of COVID-19.

Fort Bend County Ag Values for 2020 (year-end)

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's "Estimated Value of Agricultural Production & Related Items", otherwise known as the Agricultural Increment Report is an annual summary of the incremental revenue that is generated by each Texas county for that production year. The County Extension Ag Agent (CEA) for each county solicits production information from agricultural producers for all their crop and/or livestock production and yields then computes dollar-wise production estimates using local market year average prices.

Fort Bend County's Actual Estimates for the close of 2020 is as follows:

- Rice: 2,572 acres harvested, producing 282,920 cwt, valued at \$4,028,781
- Yellow Corn: 21,727 acres harvested, producing 3,345,958 bushels, valued at \$10,640,146
- Hay: 11,600 acres harvested, 46,400 tons, valued at \$5,104,000
- Sorghum (Milo): 14,000 acres harvested, 1,450,400 bushels, valued at \$5,656,650
- Cotton (lint): 34,794 acres harvested, 31,175,424 lbs, valued at \$17,769,992
- Cottonseed: 22,547 tons, valued at \$5,974,955
- Soybeans: 1,222 acres harvested, 36,049 bushels, valued at \$309,661
- Nursery Stock: Bedding Plants, valued at \$15,450,000; Cut Flowers, \$51,5000
Flowering Potted Plants, valued at 30,900,000; Foliage Potted Plant, \$15,450,000
Woody Ornamentals (combined), valued at \$25,750,000; Turf/Sod, valued at \$1,236,000
- Cattle: Slaughter Cattle—21,000 head, valued at \$16,800,000; Goats—325 head, valued at \$52,000
Hogs—200 head, \$50,000; Hogs (feeder)- 100 heads, valued at \$15,000
- Other: Aquaculture—60,000 lbs, valued at \$90,000; Horses—1,250 head, valued at \$650,000
- Hunting Leases (deer, dove, hogs): 6000 acres, valued at \$125,000



Texercise! An ideal program for seniors.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service collaborated with the Mamie George Senior Community Center and the Bud O'Shieles Senior Citizens Center in Fort Bend to conduct the *Texercise* program. *Texercise* included 8 weeks of both fitness and educational programs. Throughout this period of time, regular physical activity helped to reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The program is designed to help participants create a habit of regular exercise and healthier food choices.

Texercise promoted healthy muscles, bones and joints, improves flexibility, improves balance and coordination, increases stamina, and reduces the cost of medical care. The goals were to provide adults with relevant nutrition education and access to available food resources, increase consumption of vegetables and fruits, and engage in regular physical fitness activities. This program helped enhance fitness by making it fun and competitive at the same time. Additionally, participants become aware of diet related diseases.



RESULTS- This year's results were skewed do to the effects of Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic happened at the beginning of the program and all programming was cancelled as a result. All senior centers were closed down due to the seniors being at an increased risk. As a result of this event 30 participants enrolled for an online version of *Texercise*, where exercises were demonstrated and nutrition class were presented virtually. The evaluation summary is as follows: self-assessed sample Pre-test taken (50%) were overweight, out of the post-tests taken, (30%) said that they did some form of physical activity daily. The post-tests revealed that (40%) improved flexibility, (50%) were able to identify food groups. (50%) reported that they would continue exercising after the program. (50%) reported that they would make an effort to eat healthy and exercise daily. The estimated cost analysis and public value for the *Texercise* program is \$441.66 per person.

The Value of the Master Gardener Program in FBC

The Master Gardener program educates participants on sound horticultural practices, with the intent of creating good environmental stewards. This program requires participants attend fifty hours 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 participated in an online pilot program which, despite the lack to time to prepare for, was quite successful. A total of 31 individuals enrolled in the Fall 2020 virtual Master Gardener class, consisting of 15 sessions totaling 56 hours of education and in return are expected to give fifty hours of volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to become a certified Texas Master Gardener. Beyond the annual training of new master volunteers, we build better value into keeping Master Gardeners as active volunteers within the program. With an ongoing attrition rate of 88%, we continue to hold a complete active membership of 197 Fort Bend Master Gardeners. Each year, we typically offer our members 12 hours of continued education (recertification training) to help expand their knowledge and confidence. Due to COVID-19 limitations we were only able to offer 5 hours for 2020. We continued a Lunch & Learn program series of recertification training for our members, but COVID-19 impacts only allowed us to offer 3 hours in 2020. Topics for these programs range from taxonomy to plant research and data collection. Though we decreased our county-based programming, we were able to offer continuing education for our members totaling an estimated 550 hours from partner programs including Gardening on the Gulf Coast, Water University, Harris County Home Grown, Native Plant Society, Urban Harvest, Bexar County Backyard Basics, Texas Master Naturalist, among others.



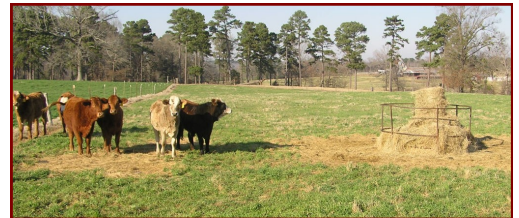
Texas 4-H Jr. Master Photographer Program

Texas 4 -H Junior Master Photographer (JMP) program head-up by Angela Romans(CEA-4-H/YD and Amber Foster (EA-CEP-4H/YD) is designed to develop youth in 7th through 12th grade as leaders in the 4 -H photography project through a series of in -depth workshops and hands -on practice events. The Texas 4 -H Junior Master Photographer program provides advanced instruction to photography enthusiasts. Becoming a certified JMP is a prerequisite to becoming Photography Ambassador. Program requirements include: 1) Active 4-H member in grade 7th through 12th; 2) Be enrolled in the photography project; 3) Have a DSLR camera to use during workshops as well as training led by 4-H members; 4) Willing to serve as a teen leader at the county and/or district level to lead others in the photography project; and 5) Complete the Texas 4-H Junior Master Photographer application by the due date. Once awarded, the Texas 4-H Junior Master Photographer certification does not expire nor does it require renewal. The Cost: 2 mandatory workshops with \$30 registration fee for each. Fee includes all materials and lunch for the day-long workshops. Contact the Fort Bend County 4-H unit at 281-342-3034.

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



Howdy! A word from Phillip Thielemann, Co. Ext. Agent—Agriculture

Whether you are an agricultural producer, landowner or just have an interest in Fort Bend Agriculture, here is hoping your 2021 is off to a great start. We can all agree that 2020 saw some unprecedented times. From shopping to travel, to just visiting with friends and family, the pandemic has done a lot to change the way all of us conduct our daily lives. The Fort Bend County AgriLife Agriculture and Natural Resources Department has certainly encountered its fair share of unprecedented times as well. For many of you, the only way you have heard from us may have been through social media, phone, and periodic emails. Actually, that has been the only avenues we have been allowed to use. At this point we are still, "may I say" in a hold position as far as face-to-face meetings are concerned. Being safe is priority, so we will continue to follow any county mandates until such time allows for more face-to-face interaction.



Periodically, we receive information that may be beneficial to you. The information may be important dates, articles written by our Extension specialist or just announcements of upcoming educational programs & events. We will use the format that you see in this publication, but still be on the lookout for occasional emails regarding specific pertinent announcements as well.

Fort Bend County still commands a large presence in terms of agricultural production such as Cotton, Sorghum, Corn, Rice, Soybeans and Livestock. As well, Fort Bend County population is growing at a very rapid rate, so we will also provide helpful information for landowners "new" and "not so new" in this newsletter. Here's hoping this information will be beneficial and valuable to you.

The FBC Equine 4-H Program is Back Up & Running

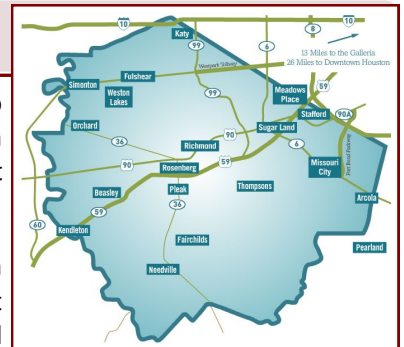
After a hiatus for several years the 4-H Equine program is back. Damion Turner, County Extension Agent for 4-H/Youth Development had planned, reorganized and implemented a new horse program that has proved to be quite successful thus far. The plan includes:

- Turner's Tuesday Tips—pre-taped video-related segments ideally suited for virtual audiences.
- Monthly educational videos beginning in May, 2020 in which various topics related to equine/livestock project education. The use of various social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube). Over 1500 individuals were reached and impacted through online platforms.
- Equine Project Member Highlights
 - ⇒ 25 FBC 4-H horse project members participated in the event. Members were asked to submit photos of active involvement with their horse project. The photos and write-ups were posted online weekly through our social media and online platforms. Over 1,000 individuals were reached through online platforms.
 - ⇒ Equine Project competition trainings and clinics In person training were held in the months of August-February on the Second Tuesday of Every Month in which approximately 10-20 participated monthly. In conjunction with monthly competition trainings. Horse project clinics and education events were given through the months of August to March on the first Sunday of every month at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. Approximately 10-20 were in attendance, with the efforts lead by club leaders and extension staff.
 - ⇒ 2020 Fort Bend County Horse Show (First)
 - ⇒ Coordinated and organized the first Fort Bend County Horse Show. This was a multi-county event with Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. Event was held in Fort Bend County at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. There were 10 FBC 4-H horse project members that participated in multiple: Speed, English and Reining events. Buckles and awards were donated by Bob Berg Buckles in the monetary amount of \$2500. Efforts lead by club leaders and extension staff.

Fort Bend County Continues Growth!

Once a small community with a couple hundred thousand residents, Fort Bend has grown to nearly 900,000 people at the end of 2020, and projections are growth will continue. Growth projections estimate the county will exceed 1 million residents by 2027, and by 2050, the Fort Bend County is expected to have 1.8 million residents.

Growth is not new to Fort Bend. From 2010 to 2020, the population in Fort Bend grew from 590,253 to an estimated 857,324. Comparing the past 29 year growth with the expected next 29 year growth demonstrates that, although the growth won't be as massive as the initial growth phase, the numbers are still significantly impactful. From 1992 to 2021, Fort Bend grew by 239 percent, and from 2021 to 2050, that increase is expected to be about 144 percent.



To view upcoming programs visit us online at fortbend.agrilife.org;

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

- * Food Handlers Course, July 16, 9-11:00 am, online/virtual
- * Youth Fashion Week, July 20-22, 10-12:15 p.m., online/virtual
- * Facebook Live—All About Shrimp, July 20, 11-11:30 am, online/virtual
- * Booster Seat Campaign, July 27, 8, 8:30 – 12:00 noon, online/virtual
- * Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conf., July 29, *, 30-12:00 noon, online/virtual
- * 4-H Enrollment Opens for the 2021-22 4-H Program Year, online
- * Master Gardener Fall Class Registration Deadline, Aug. 16, 5:00 p.m.
- * Food Manager Certification, August 19 & 20, 8:00-5:00, online/virtual
- * Grow Your Own—Cool Season Vegetables, Aug. 21, 9-10:30 am, online/virtual
- * 4-H Food & Nutrition Program, Aug. 31, 6-8: 30 pm, FBC Office
- * Food Handlers Course, Sept. 10, 9-11:00 am, online/virtual
- * Grow Your Own—Fruit Trees, Sept. 18, 9-10:30 am, online/virtual
- * Fort Bend County Fair Day (office is closed)
- * AG'tivity Barn Exhibits open—FBC Fair, Sept 24– Oct 3, during fair hours.

List of Upcoming Events



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