



Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Extension in the City

October 2022
Quarterly Newsletter

 PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas



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OUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND ON THE ECONOMY.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service.”

VISION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to every Texan.”

SHARED VALUES:

“We value People, Programs, and Partnerships.”



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Urban Counties



Extension in the City

It is my honor to present this latest edition of our quarterly newsletter – Extension In The City. As you read through and discover the impactful and exceptional educational programs that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agents and educators provide, it is my sincere hope that you gain a better understanding of how we work to reach into every Texas county to address the local needs of every Texan and improve their lives.

Interpretation of what we do allows us to tell our story effectively as we build relationships at the county, state, and national levels with those legislators and officials that support Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. We strive to showcase our strengths and highlight the diligent work of our team across the state to positively impact our communities with high-quality programming and outreach.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is dedicated to working with our elected officials, community leaders, external partners, collaborators, and community members to help us identify and prioritize the issues affecting our local communities.

Sincerely,

David D. Wright
Urban Program Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

DINNER TONIGHT HEALTHY COOKING SCHOOL

The Dinner Tonight program was developed to provide busy families with quick, healthy, cost-effective recipes that taste great. Dinner Tonight has gone beyond recipes and demonstrations to provide local healthy cooking schools where attendees can not only learn by seeing, but by doing. This year's Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School was held on Saturday, August 13, 2022, at the Family Service Neighborhood Place, and featured a black bean cilantro tostada, a grape tomato and cilantro salad, and a zucchini oat chocolate chip cookie for dessert.

In addition, this year's healthy cooking school was tailored to older adults to address COVID isolation, diet quality, and financial resource constraints. Twelve agencies and organizations provided tangible resources and Victoria Rodriguez, a local Zumba instructor even got the entire audience up and moving to promote physical activity. In fact, one participant stated: "I want to thank AgriLife for having this fun event, it is nice being able to socialize and talk to other people. Since COVID I have been feeling isolated and alone. An event like this makes me feel like I am part of something."

To support this year's cooking school Senator Jose Menendez (Texas District 26) and City of San Antonio Council Member Teri Castillo (District 5) encouraged the participants to eat healthy and stay active by sharing their own personal experiences. Participants heard from Dr. William Gonzaba from Gonzaba Medical Group who sponsored this year's event during our "Talk to the Doc" segment and were able to get valuable answers to questions they had.

To find out more about Dinner Tonight, please visit us at: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>



ENTOMOLOGY SUMMER CAMPS

Entomology is the scientific study of insects. To promote the love and learning of insects, an annual three-day entomology camp was held to entice children to nurture a love for insects and nature. This year's campers engineered an insect exoskeleton, dissected grasshoppers, learned about pollinators and their importance, used physics to see how much weight a Bess Beetle can pull, painted with maggots, learned how pheromones work, assembled amazing insect collections, and held tarantulas, millipedes, Bess Beetles, and even ate insects!

Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy was the backdrop for this year's entomology camp, with its 7.5 miles of trails, lush scenery, birds, and four legged friends. Phil Hardberger, the City of San Antonio's former Mayor and a champion of nature and environmental stewardship even stopped by to partake in some creepy crawly fun.

Campers learned by doing and by simply having fun, increased their knowledge about collecting techniques, insect lifecycles, and entomology/morphology/physiology.

Keep an eye out for next year's entomology camp or contact Molly Keck, Integrated Pest Management Program Specialist at Molly.Keck@ag.tamu.edu or visit our website at: <https://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/> for more information



EXPANDING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATIONS



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Horticulture Agent Katerina Graham and Dallas County Health and Human Services collaboration kicked off in September. The series will offer seven topics and last until mid-November. Those topics include Getting Started/Volunteer, Recruitment/Fundraising, Soils & Irrigation, Veggies 101, Insects & IPM, Harvesting, Storing and Preparing for Fresh Markets, Fruits 101, and Backyard Chickens. The gardening series is offered to citizens who have applied or are applying for the HHS community garden grant. AgriLife and HHS handpick community gardens based on their level of preparedness, and three out of the seven classes are a requirement to receive the funding.

Early this fall, Dallas County Health and Human Services and the Family Community Health Agent Liz Espie provided "Do Well Be Well with Diabetes" to Dallas County employees and residents. Dallas HHS marketed a series through social media, emails, and local events such as health fairs and farmers' markets. Do Well Be Well was delivered in four sessions with assistance from Dallas County HHS staff and Dallas County Master Wellness Volunteers. Attendees had the option to participate in person or virtually. Participants received curriculum notebooks and diabetes cookbooks to supplement class instruction. Plans are being made to host a Cooking Well with Diabetes with Dallas County Health and Human Services in November.

Members of Central Christian Church have welcomed a new collaboration with Dallas County Extension Family & Community Health Agent Liz Espie offering a hands-on class on herb preservation. They received a general presentation on food preservation, and participants were able to create their own herb butter and herb oils. Plans are being made to continue food preservation classes with this group.



A successful collaboration between Prairie View A&M University/Cooperative Extension Program continued with Baylor Scott & White at Juanita Craft Health Center to present the Oldways nutrition program, "A Taste of African Heritage." Under the leadership of Ms. Siquem Amador and Marvin Young (PVAMU-Family & Community Health), the collaboration remains strong. All three entities (Prairie View A&M, Baylor Scott & White, and Juanita Craft) continue to serve individuals, families, and all residents of Dallas County. As a result, this collaborative effort managed to garner and serve 110 contacts throughout the southern sector of Dallas County, one of the neediest areas regarding nutrition and health disparities.



In addition, the Dallas County EFNEP youth program worked with Grawuylar, Hiawatha Williams, Walnut Hill, K. B. Polk, Backman Lake, and Martin Weiss recreation centers, where over 100 youths were reached. Our adult program worked with Catholic Charities, West Dallas Multipurpose Center & Advance. EFNEP will continue to address critical societal concerns by providing research-based information to all our participants.

As Dallas County Extension continues to develop and sustain these collaborations, we can better understand what makes our audiences unique, therefore creating and executing the best possible programs.



4-H AT COMMISSIONERS COURT



On October 4th, County Director Xiomara N. Diaz- Vargas and 4-H County Extension Program Agent Kristen Wells received the National 4-H Week "Opportunities 4 ALL" Resolution presented by Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniels and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia. Dallas County Commissioners Court designates October 2-8, 2022, as National 4-H Week in Texas and commends the 4-H Youth Development Program of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the many men and women who have made the program a success. The 4-H Development Program offers a myriad of innovative positive youth development programs that offer access and opportunities for all.

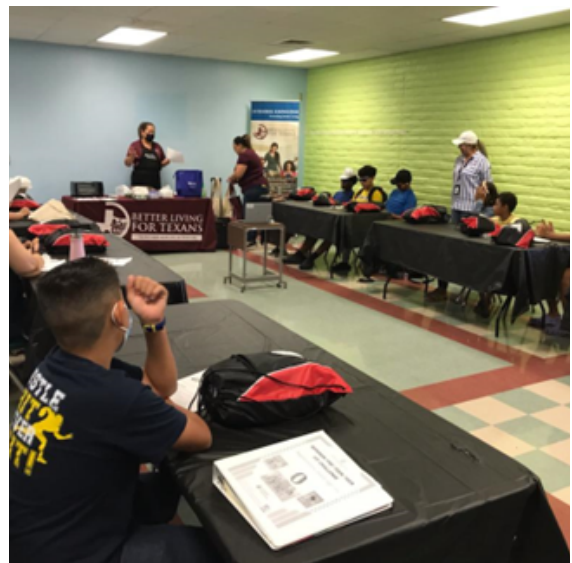
NEW PARTNERSHIPS - BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

Lorena Iverson and Ingrid Macias

Better Living for Texans Extension Agents

We have recently partnered with the San Elizario Urban Agriculture Department to help address nutritional and food access concerns in the city of San Elizario, Texas. This quarter, we supported the Bee Real Festival at the local City Hall by hosting a nutrition educational booth. In addition, BLT agents participated at the San Eli ISD Public Health Fair. This provided additional opportunities to participate at local food action roundtables, establishing relationships with community members and business owners, as well as networking with school parent liaisons, this partnership aims to extend the outreach work of the BLT program and help further the ambitions of this vibrant border town.

In addition to building new partnerships, BLT is also continuing a partnership with the City of El Paso Parks and Recreation and Superior Health plan to support the Family Fit Program. The purpose is to transform the health of the community, one person at a time, and we are happy to continue that purpose through a health and wellness sponsorship. Family Fit Program is through The City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department, and it was launched in March 2022 and will run through December 2022. A total of 100 BLT educational incentives (pedometers, step tracking devices) were given to participants to promote physical activity. Part of the program is participation in step challenges, setting daily goals, virtual levels/badges, and monthly BLT nutrition classes to motivate participants and their families to continue staying active and eating healthy.



VEGETABLE SUBSCRIPTION BOXES WITH A PURPOSE

Eddie Rascon, El Paso County Extension Agent- Horticulture

Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, squash, okra, grapes, herbs, onions, garlic, and many other vegetables were grown this season at the El Paso Master Gardener teaching and demonstration gardens and provided to the community.

-But, how? - You may ask.

This was all possible through a subscriber business model adopted for the second year by the El Paso Master Gardener Association. This model is based on the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model to connect producers to consumers with locally grown produce. Each prepaid subscriber received a box of freshly grown and picked vegetables throughout the eight-week summer growing season. In addition to the produce, subscribers received News from the Garden a weekly newsletter that offered recipes on select vegetables, food safety guidelines and general gardening tidbits.

Proceeds from this program help to support our local Master Gardener educational activities and events throughout the year. Through the generous support of the subscribers, the Master Gardeners were also able to donate a portion of the proceeds to the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank. The end of the season celebration and check presentation were made at the garden and the foodbank announced the donation would allow them to secure 7,000 meals to regional residents in need.



SUMMERTIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

In conjunction with Long Acres Ranch, 26 participants in the “Girls Exploring the Outdoors” learned from the “Leave No Trace” presentation.

The annual Fort Bend 4-H Day Camp gave 27 young people a chance to explore more about 4-H project opportunities in a one day action-packed event.

Older 4-H members participated in Youth Leadership training. Twelve youth participated in lessons to develop leadership skills and utilize parliamentary procedure properly.

A two-day youth Fashion Camp taught 20 students about fashion design and careers in the fashion industry.

Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension, along with help of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension partners, hosted the Expanded Food and Nutrition education Program (EFNEP) Nutrition Block party in June featuring 3 days of food and nutrition learning fun. About 35 youth participated over the three days.



MORE SUMMER FUN IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The "You Can Academy" hosted a summer program in cooperation with the Extension office over several weeks throughout the summer. About 19 youth learned about Engineering, Civil Design, and "Ecobots" through several hands-on building activities. The series ended with a closing ceremony including a guest speaker and goody bags for the campers.



The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners hosted their annual Earth Kind Kids Camp with the help of 62 volunteers, providing a full week of experiences for 25 youth. The schedule included Entomology Day with stations that included honey tasting, eating bugs, making native pollinator houses, creating Butterfly cards, learning the Bee Dance, and making Lady Beetle magnets; Bird Day that included garden tours of a butterfly garden and a veggie garden, learning about quail, reading "She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head", making a bird feeder, and playing Bird Bingo; Cowboy Day included learning about 3 Sisters, making Paper Pots and Parts of the Plant, reading the book "Tops and Bottoms", hearing from Cowboy Larry who runs the Black Cowboy Museum, and branding on white bandanas; and the Water/Fish Day with a backyard bass fishing activity, learning about Danger Box and decomposing, making a rain gauge, and creating a Zen garden. On the last day, parents were invited to a closing ceremony where the campers presented what they learned and served treats.



2022 SE TEXAS URBAN AG AND FARM SAFETY SUMMIT

On September 22 and 23, 2022, the Harris County AgriLife Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee hosted the 3rd annual "SE Texas Urban Ag and Farm Safety Summit". This multi-county educational event was held at the Gerald D Young Agriculture Education Center in Katy and attracted attendees from the surrounding nine counties of SE Texas specifically from Fort Bend, Waller, Montgomery, Madison, Brazos, Jefferson, Washington, and Austin counties.

Special Guests in attendance included Dr. Dan Hale, Associate Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Mr. Kelly Adkins, State Executive Director, USDA, Farm Service Agency, Mr. Allen Kaminski, District 11 State Director, Texas Farm Bureau and Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner, R. Jack Cagle. All provided a welcome on behalf of their respective agencies. Keynote speakers for the two-day event included Dr. Larry Boleman, retired associate vice chancellor for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, providing an update on the current beef cattle industry and trends that we are facing from a producer standpoint. Mrs. Audra Smith, Private Attorney, spoke to the crowd on Friday, where she provided valuable information on agricultural issues and the laws that affect landowners and producers daily.

2022 SE TEXAS URBAN AG AND FARM SAFETY SUMMIT, cont.

Educational tracks focused on hay and pasture management, equine and beef cattle nutrition and management, farm loans and business opportunities, and vegetable and row crops. All combined, these topics provided attendees with a wide variety of classes to choose from.

Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicators were provided the opportunity to receive up to five CEU credits in the subject matter of Drift, Integrated Pest Management, and Laws and Regulations, along with two additional general courses.

In addition to the classwork, attendees also had the opportunity to tour the Coastal Prairie Conservancy where they learned about native and invasive grass species and control methods as well as on site beef cattle management. Prairie View A&M University Farm served as an additional tour option where participants visited and experienced first-hand the International Goat Research Center, the horticulture greenhouses, and Prairie View A&M Extension Service farm and facilities.

A tradeshow attended by over 50 agriculture businesses, organizations, and partners were on site to speak with attendees and provide information on services, programs, and resources as well as answer questions from the participants.

Harris County ANR was proud to partner with Urban Harvest as the premier sponsor for this year's event. Other significant donors included Texas Department of Agriculture, NASDA, Primeway Credit Union, Harris County Farm Bureau, Corteva Agri Science, Purina Feeds, Capital Farm Credit and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.



GROWING FUTURE DIETITIANS IN AGRILIFE

Every year Tarrant County AgriLife Extension is fortunate to host students enrolled in the Dietetics Programs at Texas Christian University (TCU) and Tarrant County College (TCC). These student interns are future registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN) and nutrition dietetic technicians, registered (DTR), and must complete a specific number of supervised practice hours in a community nutrition setting before they are eligible to sit for their exams. With the plethora of nutrition education offered by Tarrant County AgriLife Extension through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Tarrant County Extension's Family and Community Health (FCH) department, our county Extension office is the best place for these students to fulfill this requirement.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) is the accrediting agency for education programs preparing students for careers in the dietetics profession. This agency sets standards, competencies, and skills upon which the dietetic internship programs at TCC, and TCU must base their curriculum, to prepare students for their future in dietetics. For the community nutrition rotation, these competencies and skills include everything from assisting in the preparation of and implementing nutrition education programs, to assessing program quality indicators, to demonstrating leadership skills and cultural competence in interactions with clients and staff.



"By filming 30-second videos and the cooking demo, this experience encouraged us as nutrition students to be able to explain concepts to someone who may not have the same level of knowledge we do. This skill is transferable to our future practice as we will be working with many different clients and need to explain all types of concepts"

Tarrant County EFNEP and FCH are excited for the opportunity to work with these student interns for their community nutrition rotation; they are eager to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to something they could potentially see themselves doing as a career. During their time with us, they have been able to explore and participate in a variety of projects and activities including recording quick videos with nutrition messages, as well as recipe demonstration videos showcasing healthy tailgating recipes. Students have also had the opportunity to assist with the preparation for EFNEP youth classes by helping to gather recipe ingredients and preparing them for youth participants to taste. Some of the students have even gotten to teach part of an EFNEP youth lesson during the PE class period at a local school.

We spend time with the interns discussing details related to the behind-the-scenes planning and preparation that goes into our nutrition classes and other program details related to things like budget, program recruitment, and the importance of program evaluation. We also discuss with students what they have observed or experienced while actively participating in some of their community nutrition internship projects and activities.

We strive to give our student dietetic interns a quality experience here at the Tarrant County AgriLife Extension office, and we are confident that the activities in which they participate not only fulfill the necessary learning competencies set forth by ACEND, but they also make an impact on the students that will stick with them through the remainder of their internship experience, even at other supervised practice sites. Here's to the future of dietetics!



"Working with the students at Morningside Elementary really broadened our visions of what community nutrition actually is. It was eye-opening that the education we were providing in P.E. might be the only formal nutrition education they ever received, making it critical to have our activities engaging."

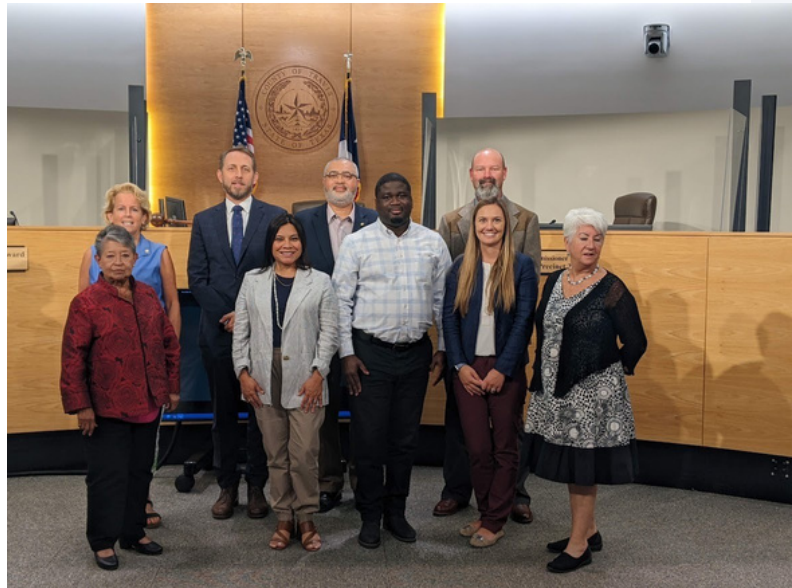
TRAVIS COUNTY 4-H AWARDS BANQUET

Travis County wrapped up the 2021-2022 4-H year with an end of the year banquet on August 9th, 2022. This year's banquet was at the Creedmoor Community Center and a delicious meal was catered by Wilhite Barbecue. Members and volunteers of the 4-H program were recognized for their accomplishments throughout the year and we are looking forward to a fantastic 2022-2023 4-H year.



TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

New Agents Beau Whisenant, County Extension Agent for Agricultural and Natural Resources, Morgan Newton, County Extension Agent for 4-H and Youth Development, and Peter Agboola, CEP Agent for Agricultural and Natural Resources were introduced to the County Commissioners Court on September 2nd, 2022, by County Extension Director Maggie Johnson.



HOME SCHOOL DAY AT THE AUSTIN ZOO

The 4-H program set up a booth at the Austin Zoo's Homeschool Day to promote 4-H opportunities to new families. They were able to reach around 400 attendees. Homeschoolers were able to make a garden in a glove to take home, participate in a fishing activity or go on a photography tour around the zoo with the 4-H booth.



4-H FOOD CHALLENGE TRAINING

On September 29th, Agents Sonia Coyle and Morgan Newton hosted a training for the Food Show and Food Challenge contests. 4-H members were able to come out to learn about the contests as well as practice for both contests. Members had a blast learning new skills and meeting other members from across the county.



BEXAR COUNTY

County Judge Nelson W. Wolff
Commissioner Rebeca Clay-Flores
Commissioner Justin Rodriguez
Commissioner Marialyn Barnard
Commissioner Tommy Calvert



DALLAS COUNTY

County Judge Clay Jenkins
Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia
Commissioner John Wiley Price
Commissioner J.J. Koch
Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel



EL PASO COUNTY

County Judge
Ricardo A. Samaniego
Commissioner Carlos Leon
Commissioner David Stout
Commissioner Iliana Holguin
Commissioner Carl L. Robinson



FORT BEND COUNTY

County Judge KP George
Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr.
Commissioner Grady Prestage
Commissioner Andy Meyers
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HARRIS COUNTY

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Commissioner Adrian Garcia
Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey
Commissioner R. Jack Cagle



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County Judge B. Glen Whitley
Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks
Commissioner Devan Allen
Commissioner Gary Fickes
Commissioner J.D. Johnson



TRAVIS COUNTY

County Judge Andy Brown
Commissioner Jeff Travillion
Commissioner Brigid Shea
Commissioner Ann Howard
Commissioner Margaret Gómez



**With the support of the County Judge
and County Commissioners, each Texas
A&M AgriLife Extension County Office
offers the knowledge resources of the
Texas A&M University System to local
citizens for self-improvement, individual
action, and community problem-solving.**

Thank You.