



Extension Education in Zavala County
Making a Difference
2011

*Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.*

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to serving Texans

outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development. Among those served are the hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

for nearly a century. The agency was established in 1915 under the Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Extension programs have continued ever since to address the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse rural and urban populations across the state.

Texans turn to Extension for solutions. Its agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in a significant return on investment to boost the Texas economy. The agency custom-designs its programs to each region of the state, relying on residents for input and for help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension's impacts in Zavala County and its people:

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and more than 100,000 trained volunteers, Extension delivers practical research-based knowledge to Texans in all 254 counties. Our expertise and educational

Zavala County – Summary of 2011 Educational Contacts

√ Office Contact From Office visits-----	712
√ Radio Programs -----	20
√ Printed News Media Releases-----	140
√ Special News Series Releases(Drought)-----	12
√ Printed News Media Outlets-----	4
√ Adjunct Faculty Agreements(School Districts)-----	3
√ 4-H and Youth Development-----	1,640
√ Telephone Calls Office and Cellular Communication-----	1,245
√ Agriculture and Natural Resources Related Contacts -----	991
√ Newsletters/mail/e-mail and cellular text-----	570
√ Site Visits in county-----	460
√ Site Visits out of county regional educational efforts-----	530
√ Contacts with other agencies and collaborators-----	265
√ Volunteers-----	240
√ Contacts made by trained volunteers-----	920
√ International Contacts Agriculture/Natural Resources-----	20
√ School District teachers and other school district educators-----	95
√ Elected officials and other stakeholders in the county-----	96
√ Food Safety Training Educational Contacts-----	138

The Zavala County Extension agent provided relevant educational programs; research based data and introduced new and innovative practices and technologies to insure production of agricultural commodities now and in the future to meet the needs of consumers and agricultural producers alike. The rich history of spinach production in the area drove programming efforts during 2011 which is vital to producers if they are to continue using research based data and information on new spinach disease controlling products, new and improved production and management practices and enhanced spinach variety development areas. While many other events, activities and educational programs were conducted during the program year the following or highlighted efforts that included:

- *January-Planning meeting for the 2011 spinach and vegetable crops improvement programs.
- *February-Gather research data from current results demonstrations
- *March-Publish data from 2010-11 evaluation efforts.
- *April-Establish watermelon variety trials
- *May-Submit Proposal to Texas Department of Agriculture for feasibility study on the potential of a fresh spinach/vegetable packing facility in Zavala County.
- *June-Submit Food Safety Program Proposal to the Winter Garden Spinach Producers Board. The agent received funding for these efforts.
- *July- Workshop on Partial Cost Recovery efforts by Texas AgriLIFE Extension regarding educational programs.
- *August-Planning Food Safety Educations Programs for field workers, packing shed workers and producers.
- *September-Meeting to establish research demonstrations and programs for winter crops.
Presentation by Extension Crops Committee members on 2010 research results at the International Spinach Conference in The Netherlands.
- *October-Establish results demonstrations on spinach fields to evaluate listeria, e-coli-, and salmonella risk in field soils.
- *November-Established fungicide trials to evaluate the efficacy of various fungicides on spinach diseases.

December 7, 2011 Food Safety Training for Packing Shed Workers at Pentagon Produce facilities.

December 28, 2011 Vegetable Crop pesticide updates and CEU training event for private pesticide applicators training

As a result of these efforts consumer demands for abundant, fresh, wholesome, high quality, affordable and safe vegetables were produced in Zavala County. Without up-to-date, relevant and research based information many producers have a risk of ceasing to exist and if enough raw product cannot be produced in the county vegetable processing and packing facilities along with hundreds of jobs would be lost in the county would cause a severe economic setback for agricultural producers, field workers and plant employees. Many of these efforts will be continued in 2012.

Zavala County Office of the Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service wished to acknowledge the Zavala County Crops Committee members, The Winter Garden Spinach Producers Board, Del Monte Corporation, Tiro Tres Farms, Crawford Farms and Espinica Texas for working collaboratively and jointly with spinach producers and other vegetable producers in the county in addressing difficult production issues facing vegetable crops producers in the County.



Fresh market spinach seen here used to be harvested by hand. Now mechanical harvest of fresh market spinach is common in Zavala County. Plant population density studies were conducted in Zavala County in 2011 to address mechanical harvest issues of fresh market spinach.

Emerging issues in the county related to agriculture and natural resources motivated the Zavala County crops and the Animal and Wildlife Industries program area committees to evaluate educational needs for Zavala County to address these issued identified. The committees prioritized educational program needs in the area of continuing education units(CEU's) for producers who currently hold private applicator pesticide licenses, private applicator license training and testing, results demonstrations on fenceline/brush management, crop variety trials, field days, publications on native range and pasture management and related issues. The county committees requested Extension specialist to collaborate with agricultural industry representatives, Texas Department of Agriculture and U.S.D.A. with these efforts to address these needs of the agricultural and natural resources community of Zavala County. From time to time specific emerging issues will prompt the Extension Program Council or Leadership Advisory Board in Zavala County to request short term educational events to address those needs in Zavala County. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County developed the following activities to address these relevant General Agriculture and Natural Resources Issues in the County.

*January 22, 2011 Spinach Industry Field Day-Del Monte Research Farm-Crystal City-**35 in attendance**

*Weekly-The Agent utilized weekly and monthly publications provided by the Texas Beef Council, Extension Beef specialist and The Texas Animal Health Commission for inclusion in the agents weekly news and information column to area news media on subject matter as it related to beef and livestock producers in Zavala County. **44 articles/information columns published from 1-1-11-11-30-11**

*March 17, 2011 Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Testing for agricultural producers in Zavala and surrounding counties was held. **18 in attendance**

*April-November-The agent published a series of articles addressing the current drought conditions in Zavala County. These articles ranged from information on drought herd management practices, fire prevention and safety, sources of hay and supplemental feeding and managing water resources during droughts. **8 articles in 5 news media outlets.**

*July 11, 2011 watermelon variety field day. **17 in attendance**

*August 5, 2011-Publish initial data from Spike 80DF fenceline applications and its effects on multiple brush species(On going through 2012)

*September 4, 2011 Drought Insurance Workshop. **12 in attendance**

*October 15, 2011-Wildlife population status as a result of current drought. TP&WD presentation to committee members 21 in attendance.

*Monthly- The Zavala County Extension agent periodically met with the Farm Service Agency county committee to assess any possible crop or livestock losses due to disaster conditions in the county.

*December 11, 2011 Annual Crops, Livestock and Wildlife Industries Committees Annual Program evaluation and review.

*December 15 2011 Zavala County crops, livestock and wildlife industries committee members meet to review and complete annual crop increment report data and information for the past year and projections for the next production year.

*December 28, 2011- Last chance video series private pesticide applicator CEU training opportunity and License application training.

Feedback from producers indicated that they were very satisfied by the programming efforts in the areas of need as they related to the Agricultural and Natural Resources industries of Zavala County. 98 percent of producers randomly interviewed indicated timely drought information; private pesticide applicator continuing education unit opportunities and published results of demonstrations held in the county were most useful in their day to day management practices as well as long range planning in their operation. Many of these activities, programs and events will be duplicated during the 2012 program year.

Zavala county does not have a Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension Agent. Despite this lack of personnel the following activities were utilized in 2011 to promote and expand both adult and youth participation in Family and Consumer Science areas.

August 2011-The Zavala County Extension Agent utilized Walk Across Texas(WAT) marketing materials and provided them to schools in the county to promote this program in schools. As a result the La Pryor Independent school district utilized a modified version of this program during the spring of 2011. Participants in the Walk Across Texas Program indicated that 98 percent continued with exercise and walking activities. 64 of the 98 walk across Texas participants in the La Pryor Independent School District indicated that they had lost 8 or more pound from participating in the walk across Texas Program. The Zavala County AgriLife Extension Service would like to acknowledge all volunteers who provided assistance with these workshops. The La Pryor Independent School District Elementary Physical Education Department is acknowledged for implementing the Walk Across Texas(WAT) program on their campus.

The Extension agent met with 4-H club managers, project leaders to discuss family and consumer sciences related contest in 4-H such as food show, food challenge, consumer decision making, fashion show and textiles and clothing. As a result the agent had two 4-H volunteers who served as judges at the district 12 4-H food show in December of 2011. These efforts will continue in 2012 and increase the number of participants and programs in the family and consumer sciences areas in Zavala County.

The Zavala County Extension agent assisted county volunteers in the implementation of a cooking, clothing and food contest at the Zavala County Junior Fair in January 2011. There were 19 food and clothing entries at the 2011 Zavala County Junior Fair. The agent provided 4-H food and clothing information to the participants in an effort to encourage them to participate at the district level.

The Zavala County Extension agent utilized the neighboring FCS agent in Dimmit County to assist with parenting, nutrition and health programs as requested in Zavala County from schools and social service agencies. There were over 180 contacts made by the neighboring FCS agent in Zavala County.

The agent also provides a link to the FCS website on the Zavala County Extension Service Web page.

4-H and Youth Development



The Zavala County 4-H and Youth Development program area committee identified leadership development needs and suggested several leadership educational opportunities to address during the 2011 program year. A conclusion was made that development of leadership skills among youth and adults in Zavala County can only be addressed by providing leadership development opportunities and training for both adults and youth. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County developed the following activities to address these relevant adult and youth leadership issues.

- *January 15, 2011-Attend 4-H Volunteer training event in Freer with 4-H volunteers.
- *January 23, 2011. Zavala County Youth Board Event Planning and Development Workshop
- *February 4, 2011 a workshop to identify 4-H volunteer needs for Spring contest, review scholarships and conduct a stock show review and evaluation. Leadership roles for volunteers were defined and volunteer leadership training needs were addressed at this meeting.
- *February 10, 2011 Distribution of flier announcing 4-H Leadership Lab, District Election Convention and Texas 4-H Congress Opportunities. Provide updated YTube video clips list for 4-H volunteers who will potentially serve as judges and assistants at various 4-H events.
- *March 3, 2011 4-H Adult Volunteer Training on methods demonstrations, judging contest and share the fun were provided to adult leaders for spring events.
- *April 14-4-H members attend District Round-up and district council meeting.
- *May-Promote 4-H Leadership Lab via newsletters, radio, printed media and website.
- *August Newsletter announcing 4-H leadership opportunities for youth through participation in the election process to elect officers who will serve as leaders for each individual 4-H Club in Zavala County.
- *October 30, 2011 4-H Club officer leadership training was held for all 4-H officers elected in all the 4-H clubs in Zavala County.
- *November 1, 2011 Zavala County 4-H County Council Training

As a result of these educational and training events 4-H meetings in all the 4-H clubs in Zavala County demonstrated their effectiveness as a result of properly trained 4-H officers. This training consisted of planning and conducting effective 4-H meetings, proper use of the 4-H gavel and proper use of parliamentary procedure. Adult leadership training resulted in more volunteers being recruited to serve as judges and helpers for county and district roundup events. Leadership training events for both youth and adults were evaluated using a pre and post test format of data gathering. Results indicated that the adults indicated an overall 95 percent increase of knowledge gained in the areas of adult leadership responsibilities, confidence in serving as judges and assistants in various county and district events. Youth leadership evaluations indicated a 95 percent gain in knowledge about basic parliamentary procedure. 100 percent of 4-H officer leadership training participants indicated adapting parliamentary procedure practices at 4-H meetings as a result of these leadership training opportunities.

Besides leadership training and development Zavala County Youth need a variety of projects and activities to help them develop into contributing members of society. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County and the Zavala County 4-H Leaders Association and Youth Development committee developed the following activities to address these relevant 4-H Youth Projects and curriculum implementation.

- *January 6,7,and 8th 2011 4-H Animal Project Exhibition at the Zavala County livestock show
- *February 10-16, 2011 Zavala County Youth Participated in San Antonio Livestock Show
- *March 2- April 15 Walk Across Texas Program-La Pryor Elementary School
- *April-Horse Show Validation was completed for a La Pryor 4-H Member

4-H and Youth Development

- *June 23, 2011 Steer Validation and Steer project feeding and management workshop
- *September 23, 2011 Swine project selection and feeding clinic
- *August 9, 2011 County Newsletter announcing 4-H Project Opportunities to youth in Zavala County (Animal, shooting sports, photography, foods and nutrition and fashion show projects)
- *October 23, 2011 Zavala County lamb and goat validation and 4-H lamb and goat project management clinic
- *October 29, 2011 Zavala County swine validation and 4-H swine project management clinic
- *November 22, 2011 4-H Animal Projects Enrollment Night for Major Shows In Texas
- *December 10, 2011-4-H Clover Kids Rabbit Distribution and Workshop
- *December 17, 2011 Countywide 4-H Swine, Steer, Goat and Lamb Weigh Day and Showmanship Clinic

As a result of these educational and training events 4-H members were able to have an opportunity to experience a wide range of 4-H project opportunities and life skill development. Post project completion interview results indicated that 95 percent of 4-H youth participating in one or more 4-H project event gained knowledge in the areas of responsibility, animal nutrition, health and management as well as record keeping skills and financial management skills.

Community Economic Development

Each year Zavala County 4-H youth involved with animal projects gain financial resources from the participation and sale of animal projects in the annual Zavala County Junior Livestock Show in January. In January 2011 this event generated \$100, 890.00 from the sale of animal projects. Now in its 6th year the Zavala County education fund account establishment continues to flourish despite economic uncertainty. On average each 4-H member receives \$1,860.00 for animals sold. If an exhibitor participates with animal projects for the entire 4-H career this total could potentially generate on average over \$21,000.00 per 4-H youth. This is a substantial amount that could be managed by the 4-H youngster, learn financial responsibility and invest for future educational needs.

Dr. Ruben Saldana, District Extension Director-District 12, Marcel Valdez, CEA,-Zavala County, Mr. Jimmy Henry, Coordinator-Community and Economic Development-Prairie View A&M University met with Zavala County Judge Joe Luna and members of the Zavala County Commissioners Court to discuss the possibility of opening a County Extension Agent position for community and economic development through the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. As a result the position was advertised and a person was selected to serve in this capacity in Zavala County. It is expected that this person will assume this position by January 2012.



Pictured above following the presentation on the County Extension Agent for Community and Economic development position in Zavala County are Oscar Galindo, CEA-ANR-Maverick County, Marcel Valdez, CEA-ANR Zavala County, Dr. Ruben Saldana, District Extension Administrator-District 12, County Judge Joe Luna, Jimmy Henry, Coordinator-Community and Economic Development Program-Prairie View A&M University-Cooperative Extension Program, Zavala County Commissioner Isidro Cantu-Precinct 1, and Commissioner Don Lindenborn-Precinct 4.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Zavala County

Staff



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