



## Extension Education in Atascosa County

# Making a Difference

*Improving Lives.  
Improving Texas.*

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to educating Texans

for nearly a century. In 1915, the agency was established under the federal Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, AgriLife Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse populations across the state.

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

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.

Texans turn to Extension for solutions. Its agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns 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 on this county and its people:

## **Atascosa County – Summary of 2012 Educational Contacts**

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- **Total Educational Programs Conducted – 50**
- **Total Participants – 1189**
- **4H Members – 256**
- **4H Leaders – 15**
- **4H Clubs – 11**
- **Office Contacts – 263**
- **Site Visits – 257**
- **Newsletter/Mail/E-Mail Contacts - 476 Agriculture, 2580 4H News**
- **News Releases – 52**
- **Ag Fair - 496 Youth**
- **CEUs – 21 Hours**
- **Private Applicator Trainings – 2**
  
- **Agriculture & Natural Resources**
  - **Natural Resource Plan**
- **Family & Consumer Sciences**
  - **Friend to Friend**
  - **Walk Across Texas**
- **4-H & Youth Development**
  - **One Day 4-H**

## **Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan**

### **Response**

The Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan provides guidance for the deployment of emergency resources under a local incident command. Our local emergency management plan includes specific provisions for requesting and deploying state resources to aid in managing and resolving situations for which local resources are inadequate. Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan provided outreach education to clientele that helped them reduce their risk during a disaster. The following programs and activities were conducted this year.

- \*Reviewed and updated the Animal Issues Committee Plan
- \*Staff disaster Preparedness Training
- \*Office Disaster Preparedness Plan Review
- \*Patriotism thru Preparedness Program for 4-H families
- \*District 12 Emergency Management Strike Team

### **Result**

The agent updated the County Emergency Management Coordinator on the Animal Issues Committee Plan, Office Emergency Management Preparedness Plan and the Emergency Management Training the agent has attended. Over 85 families received Disaster Preparedness information through the 4-H monthly newsletters.

## **Atascosa County General Family and Consumer Science**

Family Consumer Science Committee meets twice a year to assist the County Agent in which program areas need to be addressed each year. Programs with different topics were offered in 2012 that could not be captured under specific program plans. Agent sent out Dinner Tonight electronic announcement each Monday this year.

## **Atascosa County Texas Extension Education Association**

The Texas Extension Education Association was organized in 1926 as a way to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development and community service. This association has as its objectives: to strengthen, develop, coordinate, extend adult research-based education to improve the quality of life for families and communities in cooperation with Texas A&M University System; promote family strengths and leadership development, serve as a medium for the expression of charitable and educational interests, and award 4-H and TEEA adult scholarships on a nondiscriminatory basis to worthy applicants; offer a means by which members in cooperation with Texas AgriLife Extension may interpret and provide programs of state, national and international importance in the preservation of the American home and the promotion of better international understanding; and to function exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes as a 501c3 organization.

The District meeting was held in Atascosa County with a great turnout of 36 district members and a hand full of guest. The Agent and 3 club members attended the State meeting in Beaumont. We now have a county member on the State board.

## **2012 Friend to Friend - Outcome Summary**

### **Relevance**

Regular screening significantly increases the likelihood of finding cancer early, when treatment is more often successful. Within the last two years, women living in rural areas of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Pap test. Mortality is higher for rural women because of later diagnosis. Access to accredited screening is difficult since more than half of Texas counties are areas with a shortage of primary care health professional. One-half of Texas counties do not have accredited, permanent mammography facilities. Distances to screening facilities are often significant, and operating hours are 8-5 on weekdays.

### **Response**

The project goal is to decrease breast and cervical cancer morbidity and mortality for women living in rural Texas counties by improving screening rates and early detection of cancer. Mammography and Pap test providers are invited to come to the event to acquaint women with their facilities. Women will be given lists of places where they can obtain mammograms and Pap tests, along with the facilities' contact information and hours of operation. A local health professional will speak and give a strong message to have a mammogram and/or Pap test. The health professional will inform women about current screening guidelines.

### **Results**

- Friend to Friend was pilot tested in 43 Texas counties including Atascosa County.
- We will be holding this event in February
- Average age of women who attended the event:
- Ethnic Breakdown:

### **Future Plans**

For 2012, Atascosa County FCS agent plans to:

- develop stronger programs
- expand programs and increase participation
- continue with current collaborations as well as develop new collaborations

## **Better Living for Texans Program – Atascosa County**

### **Relevance**

The Dietary Guidelines, MyPlate and the Nutrition Facts label form the basic nutrition education constructs for the American population. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-ED) recipients need sound nutrition education so that they can make healthful food choices. Basic food buying skills enable clients to consider more healthful food choices when shopping. This skill is important because health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease, diabetes and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. More than 60% of adults are overweight or obese and heart disease is the leading cause of death. Hypertension affects approximately 1 in 3 adults in the United States.

### **Response – Better Living for Texans (BLT)**

The BLT Program is a cooperative endeavor among Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. A component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), BLT offers food and nutrition education to SNAP recipients, applicants, and other low-income audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely. BLT also incorporates in its program physical activity. 23.16% of Atascosa County population is food stamp recipients and county residents are potentially eligible. Research suggests that limited resource individuals consume diets that are not in agreement with current dietary recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines and Food Guide), potentially increasing their risk for developing chronic disease. Additionally, limited resource audiences are at a higher risk for food insecurity and hunger, which also impacts health.

### **Results**

- Recipes and money saving tips handed out at the annual Thanksgiving Dinner
- Recipes provided at food bank locations
- Money saving food buying tips

### **Behavior**

Data suggest self-reported behavior regarding serving size, fat and sodium improved during the time this lesson series was taught. The percentage of participants who indicated that they always or almost always check food labels increased (serving size from 32% to 67%; fat from 52% to 75% and sodium from 28% to 65%). The percentage of participants who indicated that they never check food labels decreased (serving size 4% to 1%; fat 6% to 1% and sodium 15% to 1%).

## **Atascosa County Walk Across Texas Summary**

### **Relevance**

Physical activity was recently named as one of the 10 leading health indicators. Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression, and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. 26 % of Texas adults are obese & 19 % of Texas children are obese. Only 25 % of adults and 27 % of high school students get regular, moderate exercise & 29 % of American adults are not physically active at all. Texas ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation as the most inactive state, 12<sup>th</sup> with the highest adult obesity rates, as well as, 6<sup>th</sup> with the highest childhood overweight rates. Sixty-one and a half percent of children aged 9-13 years do not participate in any organized physical activity during their non-school hours and that 22.6% do not engage in any free-time physical activity.

### **Response**

Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity. Walk Across Texas is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression and is associated with a longer healthier life.

### **Results**

Evaluation of the Atascosa County WAT program was conducted via the use of a pre, and post survey. This allowed for the collection of data that reflected current behaviors, and the extent to which behaviors were actually adopted.

Success Stories: Most participants reported having more energy and enjoying spending time with their families. One participant has added biking and swimming as additional activities to enjoy.

### Atascosa County One-Day 4-H

#### **Relevance**

One day 4-H is a grass roots community service effort for 4-H youth to identify, plan, and implement a community service project that serves the needs of their particular community and/or county. One day 4-H teaches 4-H members the importance of giving back to their communities based on issues they see are affecting the lifestyles of the citizens. One Day 4-H was selected by the 4-H members of the Atascosa County 4-H Club.

#### **Response**

One day 4-H helps develop the core life skills of communication, responsible citizenship, contribution to group effort, teamwork, self-motivation, problem solving, service learning, planning/organizing, and social skills.

The specific objectives of one day 4-H are:

- Provide opportunities for youth to perform community service projects in their individual communities and counties based on their identified needs.
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn about social and community issues and develop ways of resolving those issues.
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members.
- Promote teamwork.
- Give participants opportunities to work in a strong youth-adult partnership.
- Provide leadership opportunities.
- Give 4-H members the opportunity to participate in a new, exciting event that promotes 4-H

#### **Results**

There were a total of 20 participants in the One Day 4-H event of ages ranged from 5-40.

#### **Future Plans**

This Outcome plan will continue to be conducted in Atascosa County, it offers youth the opportunity to work as a team on a community service project that helps people in our community.

Currently we have eleven 4-H Clubs. An annual budget to operate 4-H in Atascosa County is \$11,400. Our Annual 4-H Awards Banquet had 180 4-Hers, family members and guest this year. Atascosa County also has a very active 4-H Ambassadors Club which provides leadership to the Quality Counts 4-H Program. The group also raised over \$394 for Relay for Life, through the proceeds of a salad supper held in conjunction with our County 4-H Round Up. Each July we hold a county wide 4-H Adult Leader, Officer training and calendar planning meeting.



**ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS**

Sr. Livestock Judging Team-  
1st & 3rd Place District  
5th Place State

Scholarships -

Paige Smith - Texas 4-H Opportunity & Atascosa County 4-H Merit Scholarship

Murray Grimshaw - Atascosa County 4-H Merit Scholarship



**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Main Street Outreach—Thanksgiving Dinner  
Relay for Life - Salad Supper  
Freedom Quilts  
Fabric Drive - Lytle Stitchers  
Blankets for Babies  
Food Drive - CAMM  
Spread the Biscuits - animal toy collection  
Special Olympics Track Meet  
Jourdanton Fire Department Santa's Helpers

# **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Atascosa County**

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