



**Extension Education in Brooks County**  
*Making a Difference*

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development.

## EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

Among those served are hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts on this county and its people.

### **Brooks – Summary of 2013 Educational Contacts**

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Total Educational Contacts	241
Total participants	19,564
Contact Hours	5361
4H Members	67
4H Leaders	7
Special Interest	707
Westside Extension Educators	22
Office Contacts	2161
Site Visits	577
Phone calls	2428
Newsletters	2996
<b><i>Cash and in kind donations by AgriLife Supporters and collaborators</i></b>	
BLT	\$25379
4H Fundraising	\$ 6680.00
BCFA	\$ 6377.08
Shooting Sports (NRA)(ED Rachal)	\$ 10,000
Cost Recovery FPM	\$ 90.00
Fiesta Del Pan De Campo –Fundraiser	\$ 21,816
Do Well Be Well	\$ 50

***Better Living for Texans Brooks County 2013– Back to Basics***  
***Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS***

**Relevance**

In Brooks County, an estimated 2,326 individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically known as food stamps. Studies have shown individuals who live in poverty (including SNAP recipients) have dietary intakes that are not in agreement with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPlate). This audience, like many, may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Having enough food to eat is also a challenge; an estimated 1 in 6 households in Texas experience food insecurity.

**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 the *Walk Across Texas* program to promote physical activity.

During 2013, 23 Brooks County adults completed the BLT *Back to Basics* series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This report reflects results of the pre, post, and 30-day follow-up surveys completed by the 23 participants.

**Results**

Participants were mostly female (78%) and Hispanic (96%). Participants had a mean age of 42 with an average household size of 4.7. More than 90% (n=21) had a high school education or less. More than half of the participants received SNAP and/or WIC benefits; 48% (n=11) had children who received free or reduced-price meals.

*Meal Planning and Food Resource Management – adoption of behaviors*

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Current behavior (pre) Number (%*)</b>	<b>Intent to change Number (%*)</b>	<b>Behavior 30 days later Number (%*)</b>
<b>Plan meals in advance</b>			
Always	2 (9)	12 (52)	19 (83)
Sometimes	5 (22)	11 (48)	4 (17)
Never	14 (61)	0	0
Not Sure	2 (9)	0	0
No response	0	0	0
<b>Shop for food with a list</b>			
Always	1 (4)	11 (48)	21 (91)
Sometimes	5 (22)	12 (52)	2 (9)
Never	15 (65)	0	0
Not Sure	2 (9)	0	0
No response	0	0	0
<b>Compare prices when shopping</b>			
Always	7 (30)	8 (35)	16 (70)
Sometimes	14 (61)	14 (61)	7 (30)
Never	2 (9)	1 (4)	0
Not Sure	0	0	0
No response	0	0	0
<b>Use unit pricing when shopping</b>			
Always	1 (4)	10 (44)	14 (61)
Sometimes	3 (13)	11 (48)	8 (35)
Never	15 (65)	1 (4)	0
Not sure	3 (13)	1 (4)	0
No response	1 (4)	0	1 (4)
<b>Run out of food before the end of the month?</b>			
Always	1 (4)		17 (74)
Sometimes	7 (30)		6 (26)
Never	13 (57)		0
Not Sure	2 (9)		0
No response	0		0

\*percentage is rounded up to the nearest whole number

At the beginning of the BLT program, more than 60% of participants were “never” planning meals in advance, shopping with a list, or using unit pricing to identify economical food buys. Immediately after the program ended there was a noted increase in the percentage of participants who intended to practice the behaviors “always”. Thirty days later, more participants reported that they were practicing these behaviors “always” or “sometimes” compared to when the program began.

Immediately after the program ended, all 23 participants reported that they felt they could use what they had learned to spend less money at the grocery store. In addition, 9 of the 23 of participants felt that they would be able to stretch their food resources to last the entire month “always” immediately after the program. Out-of-pocket food expenses dropped 30 days after the program ended, but the percentage of participants who ran out of food before the end of the month “always” or “sometimes” had increased from 34% pre to 100% at follow-up.

*Food Safety- adoption of behaviors*

Behavior	Frequency (pre) Number (%*)	Frequency (post) Number (%*) (intent to change)	Adoption of Behavior (30-days later) Number (%*)
<b>How often do you sanitize cutting boards after cutting up raw meat or poultry?</b>			
Always	4 (17)	13 (57)	22 (96)
Sometimes	5 (22)	10 (44)	1 (4)
Never	11 (48)	0	0
Not sure	3 (13)	0	0
No response	0	0	0
<b>How often do you thaw frozen food at room temperature?</b>			
Always	3 (13)	11 (48)	17 (74)
Sometimes	3 (13)	10 (44)	1 (4)
Never	15 (65)	2 (9)	5 (22)
Not sure	2 (9)	0	0
No response	0	0	0
<b>How long did you leave your last meal out after it was prepared?</b>			
Eaten/stored immediately	7 (30)	4 (17)	3 (13)
< 1 hour	1 (4)	8 (35)	10 (44)
1 – 2 hours	1 (4)	11 (48)	10 (44)
> 2 hours	0	0	0
Not Sure	13 (57)	0	0
No response	1 (4)	0	0

\*percentage is rounded up to the nearest whole number

Less than 20% of participants reported sanitizing cutting boards after cutting up raw meat or poultry when the program first began. That percentage rose to 57% immediately after the program ended with 96% reporting doing so 30-days later. Interestingly, at the 30-day follow-up survey we found that the percentage of clients who “never” let food thaw at room temperature was lower (22%) compared to when the program began (65%).

**Other findings:**

**Average monthly out-of-pocket food expenses reported by participants\*\*:**

Before BLT: \$ 239.60

After BLT: \$ 192.50

\*\* Based on 20 participants who reported monthly out-of-pocket food expenses at the beginning of BLT and 30-days after the program ended. Changes in out-of-pocket food expenses **were** significantly different.

Assuming that the reduction in out-of-pocket food expenses was not due to an unforeseen economic hardship and if they could be sustained for 12 months, these 20 individuals would save an estimated \$11,376 over the course of a year. However, it should be noted that for these 20 individuals, the number receiving food from a food bank/pantry rose from 2 (pre-BLT) to 7 (30-days after), and the number of participants with children who received free/reduced price meals at school also rose from 9 to 17. Participation in WIC dropped from 12 to 5. Because more individuals reporting running

## Family and Consumer Sciences

out of food before the end of the month, it is very possible that the reduction in out-of-pocket food expenses were due to an economic hardship. All 23 participants rated the BLT program as “excellent”.

### Client Success Stories”

**Clientele will use a list prior to leaving to the grocery stores... “they feel as if this is some self-control for them to follow.”**

**Will have their children help with the groceries so they will have some ownership of the outing.**

**Agent and PA will encourage several apps they can use to have an ongoing grocery list and many have stated that it’s a great tool to have because the majority of the time they will forget the list at home.**

### *Three Easy Bites Brooks County 2013*

**Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS**

### Relevance

Two-thirds of the adult population is either overweight or obese. Certain breakfast, snacking and dinner behaviors are associated with achieving and maintaining a healthful weight. Research supports eating breakfast, planning snacks and dinner, as well as having enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of a dinner plate are associated with healthy weight.

### Response

A three lesson series, *Three Easy Bites*, was developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists. The curriculum promoted positive lifestyle behaviors related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. *Three Easy Bites* session goals were -- families would:

- Plan to eat breakfast, include foods from at least two MyPlate food groups, and include breakfast items on their weekly grocery list;
- Plan which snack foods they will eat, eat their snacks away from the television, and compare their snack portion relative to the Nutrition Facts serving size; and
- Plan their dinner meal, include fruits and/or vegetables with every dinner, and include fruit and/or vegetables on their weekly grocery list.

Participants could opt out of the survey evaluation process if desired. Nonetheless, 28 pre/post/follow-up survey sets were received from Brooks County, Texas. Only pre/post/follow-up data sets were analyzed.

Most participants (82%) reported that Better Living for Texans (BLT) was not the first AgriLife program they had attended. The typical *Three Easy Bites* participant was female (92%), described herself as Hispanic or Latino (100%) and was 35 years of age. Participants identified themselves as white (100%). The highest level of educational attainment for participants (100%) was 12 years or less. No participants had been advised by a health professional they weigh too much.

**Results**

A trend toward self-reported behavior improvement was noted during the time *Three Easy Bites* was taught (Table 1). Due to limited sample size, statistical significance could not be determined (Table 2).

Table 1. Percentage of *Three Easy Bites* participants who answered always or almost always: pre/post/follow-up data sets (n=28).

Behavior Questions	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Follow-up survey
	%	%	%
<b>How often do you plan breakfast ahead of time?</b>	0	75	100
<b>How often do you include at least two breakfast items from different food groups?</b>	0	71	100
<b>How often do you use a shopping list which includes breakfast items when you go to the grocery store?</b>	0	53	100
<b>How often do you plan snacks ahead of time?</b>	14	73	96
<b>How often do you snack in front of the television?</b>	82	0	7
<b>How often do you use the Nutrition Facts serving size information to determine how much of your snack to eat?</b>	0	57	100
<b>How often do you plan dinner ahead of time?</b>	0	75	100
<b>How often do you have enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of your dinner plate?</b>	0	75	100
<b>How often do you use a shopping list with fruits and vegetables when you go to the grocery store?</b>	3	75	100

Table 2. Mean behavior response (5=never thru 1=always): pre/post/follow-up data sets (n=28).

Behavior Questions	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Follow-up survey
<b>How often do you plan breakfast ahead of time?</b>	4.7 <sup>a</sup>	2.2	1.0
<b>How often do you include at least two breakfast items from different food groups?</b>	4.6	2.2	1.1
<b>How often do you use a shopping list which includes breakfast items when you go to the grocery store?</b>	4.7	2.4	1.3
<b>How often do you plan snacks ahead of time?</b>	4.2	2.2	1.1
<b>How often do you snack in front of the television?</b>	1.6	3.0	3.4
<b>How often do you use the Nutrition Facts serving size information to determine how much of your snack to eat?</b>	4.8	2.5	1.3
<b>How often do you plan dinner ahead of time?</b>	4.7	2.1	1.0
<b>How often do you have enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of your dinner plate?</b>	4.6	2.1	1.0
<b>How often do you use a shopping list with fruits and vegetables when you go to the grocery store?</b>	4.5	2.1	1.0



## Family and Consumer Sciences

Answers coded: never=5; almost never=4; sometimes=3; almost always=2; always=1

Statewide results (n=797) indicate the *Three Easy Bites* curriculum was effective (p>.001) at improving participant behavior related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. All curriculum goals were met by participants. Interestingly, self-reported behavior improvement extended thru the follow-up period suggesting participants continued to adopt best practice behaviors. Best practice behaviors with the greatest participant improvement were:

1. Shopping with a list which includes breakfast items
2. Using the Nutrition Facts label to determine portion size of snacks
3. Planning breakfast ahead of time
4. Including enough fruits and vegetables to cover half of the dinner plate

The leader-facilitated learner-centered *Three Easy Bites* lesson approach may have helped clients internalize information and enhanced skills necessary to improve best practice behaviors associated with healthier weight. This curriculum was especially relevant given 30 percent of these participants had been told by a health professional they weigh too much. Research confirms consistent improvements in eating patterns can help clients achieve and maintain healthier weight.

### Friend to Friend in Brooks County, 2013

The *Friend to Friend* program's purpose is to encourage women to get regular mammograms and Pap tests for the early detection of breast and cervical cancer, when the disease is most curable.

#### Relevance

- Regular screening significantly increases the likelihood of finding cancer early, when treatment is more often successful.
- Women living in rural areas of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Pap test within the past two years.
- Mortality is higher for rural women because of later diagnosis.

#### Response

- This project's 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.
- Funding was applied for and awarded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to fund screenings and transportation to uninsured and underserved women in need of screening services.
- The county Extension agent, regional cancer prevention specialist, and patient navigators plan and implement a *Friend to Friend* event. Women attending are given the opportunity to sign a commitment card to obtain a mammogram and/or Pap test within the next year and the option to complete a help request form for assistance in obtaining screening services.

#### Impact of the Program

- *Friend to Friend* was implemented in 42 Texas counties in 2013.
- 34 women attended the *Friend to Friend* events on October 9, 2013 at the Brooks County Extension Office in the city of Falfurrias, Texas.



Demographics of women who attended the events:

- Median age was: 55.
  - Ethnic breakdown:
    - African American: 0%
    - American Indian/Native American: 0%
    - Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%
    - Latina/Hispanic: 90.3%
    - White: 3.2%
    - Multiple race/ethnicity: 1.6%
    - Other/missing: 4.8%
  - 6 total volunteers assisted at party/events.
  - Other Health Professional and Nurse Practitioner urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the events.
  - At the end of the event, 74.4% of women, aged 40 or over, correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year.
  - 15 Women requested help to navigate screening and diagnostic services.
  - 0 Clinical sites for screenings, diagnostics, radiologists and lab services were contracted including the following:
    - South Texas Rural Health
    - Dr. Jose Lozano, MD
    - Dr. Francisco Saucedo, MD
  - None: Mammogram screenings and diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
  - None: Pap screenings and diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
  - 99% Women were referred to other available sources for Breast and Cervical screenings and diagnostics.
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## Do Well Be Well Brooks County 2013

Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS

### Response:

The importance of the program was brought in when meeting with my Family and Consumer Sciences committee. They are the People with the pulse on the community. They assisted the agent with planning and implementing the program within the community. As our goal with DWBW clients with type 2 diabetes will manage their disease, to reduce their risks for complications and to attain their highest possible level of wellness. The CWWD program provides the practical application of the knowledge and skills gained in DWBW with ultimate goal of blood glucose control.

The sessions consisted of

Class 1 What is Diabetes? And Nutrition: First Step to Diabetes Management.

Class 2 One Diabetes Diet No longer the sole option and managing blood glucose.

Class 3 Nutritional labels and Diabetes and Exercise.

Class 4 For Good measure at Home and Eating Out and Diabetes Medicines.

Class 5 Preventing and Managing Complications.

### Results:

Questions:	Pre/Post	% 's
Average mean for class participants was	57	
Female Participants	13 of 13	100%
Ethnicity of Class Participants were Hispanic	11 of 13	85%
DWBW participants completion	13 of 13	100%
Diabetes between 4 or 5 years	2 of 13	15%
Diabetes 5 or more years	3 of 13	23%
When asked how they heard of the class majority were via (Friend)	6 of 13	46%
Highest level of Education		
High School	6 of 13	46%
The average income		
Under \$20,000	6 of 13	43%
Medicaid Coverage	9 of 13	69%
Private Insurance	1 of 13	8%
No insurance	4 of 13	31%
Medications		
Administered diabetes medications	10 of 10	77%
Administered Cholesterol medications	7 of 13	54%
Administered Blood Pressure Pills	10 of 13	86%
Administered Insulin	2 of 13	15%
Workforce: did not work for pay in the last 12 months	6 of 13	46%
Meal plans		
Not given a meal plan	4 of 13	31%
County Carbohydrates	1 of 13	8 %
Plate Method	1 of 13	8 %
How many managed their blood glucose	4 of 13	31%

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How many added physical activity to their day (walk, garden, mechanic)	10 of 13	77%
Blood Glucose Management before breakfast (average of 127)	11 of 13	85%
Checking Glucose levels 2 hours after a meal (average of 170 pre and 143 post)	9 of 13	69%
Patients who checked their Hemoglobin A1c in the past 12 months (average of 6.5)	2 of 13	15%

When asked how would you rate your ability to control your diabetes the %'s were across the board, This would worry me that even with the resources provide them they still will not follow a healthy habit

## Westside EEA Brooks County 2013

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Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS

### Response:

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. In Brooks County this organization has been in existence since 1960. 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 scholarships on a nondiscriminatory basis to worthy applicants; offer a means by which members in cooperation with Texas A&M 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.

### Results:

Provide guidance and leadership to Westside Extension Education Association in Brooks County. County Extension agent provided best management practices to all club members during the club meeting. Assisted with 4-H scholarship drive as well as provided programming throughout the year as needed. Programs for the 2013 year included: Supporting CASA, Spring Conference, Preparing for the Unexpected, and Friend to Friend. Westside EEA groups also assisted with the local County fair as well as volunteer during the Jim Wells County fair. Agent worked with District 12 Director to plan and implement the spring conference. Agent provided seven sessions for the Westside EEA Club. A total of 647 contacts were made with the Westside EEA club.

## 4H FCS Brooks County 2013

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Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS

**Response:**

Youth need a variety of projects and activities to help them develop into contributing members of society. 4-H volunteers provide leadership for projects and activities. Youth and adults are provided with many Family and Consumer Sciences opportunities for growth. In 4-H, we pride ourselves as we demonstrate life skills to all our youth in all 4H events and activities. This year Agent Salinas reached a total to date of 828 with 13 educational programs. Youth and adults are provided with many opportunities for growth and leadership. In 4H we pride ourselves in allowing the child to discover him or herself by participating in what they enjoy and rather than seeing the event from the sidelines.

**Results:**

- ✓ Clothing and textiles leader trainings for both youth and adult leaders.
- ✓ Food and Nutrition/ Food Challenge leader trainings for both youth and adults.
- ✓ Photography workshops for youth
- ✓ Met with local schools to provide and discuss the curriculum enrichment programming.
- ✓ planning with SHAC committee healthy lifestyles, Health Fair
- ✓ BCFA Home Economics board to review and approve Home Economic rules

## 4H Management Brooks County 2013

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Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS

**Response:**

Brooks County is a rural community that has little to no extracurricular activities other than the ones provided in the school district with communities in schools. Our youth continue to ask for additional youth activities to keep them busy as well as off the streets. Our youth board made up of club managers, youth and local business stake holders continues to assist agents in programming as well as implementing a variety of events. Agents oversee 4-H and youth development program including management of 4-H club managers, volunteer leaders, clubs/groups, coordination of Youth Advisory Board and work with partners to ensure effective functioning of the 4-H and Youth development program. During the 2013 4H Year Agents reached 3,996 4H youth, families, volunteers, and leaders. A total of 26 Educational programs were conducted as well.

**Results:**

In 2013 the Brooks county 4-H program reached a total of 3,996 participants through efforts of educational programs, site visits, volunteers and or the local media. Below you will find the activities and or programs conducted with our youth in Brooks County.

- ✓ Working with the Youth Advisory Board with all 4-H Projects and events
- ✓ Iron Horse Rally
- ✓ Attending BCFA Board Meetings
- ✓ Brooks County Fair/Home Economics/Royalty Court
- ✓ Ag Day

## 4-H and Youth Development

- ✓ Club Manager Meetings and Trainings
- ✓ Keeping up with all 4-H enrollments plus and 4H Open House
- ✓ Achievement events
- ✓ One day 4H
- ✓ Thanksgiving Community Dinner
- ✓ Club Meetings, District 4H meetings and events
- ✓ Fund-raising
- ✓ 4-H Monthly Newsletter
- ✓ 4-H Marketing and Promotion
- ✓ AG day
- ✓ Fiesta Del Pan De Campo
- ✓ Programming with Leadership Lab/ Program and speakers
- ✓ Cluster Meetings
- ✓ Incentive Points
- ✓ Friend of NRA Banquet

## Emergency Management Brooks County 2013

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Developed by Celia G. Salinas, Brooks County CEA-FCS

### Response:

The purpose of the Brooks County Emergency Management Plan is to provide an opportunity for individuals, families, businesses, and communities across Texas to learn how to better prepare for unexpected events, mitigate to reduce risk, and how to recover from whatever event they may have experienced. Texas is subject to numerous disasters, whether they are natural, accidental or intentional. These hazards are somewhat unpredictable. Texas experiences the effects of hurricanes, drought, wildfires and other incidents.

### Results:

For the 2013 year Agent didn't have much to report to this plan. Emergency management meetings were met as well as distributing preparing for the unexpected reaching 486 clients. Agent had a total of 4 educational programs as she met with the following agencies:

- ✓ Brooks County Independent School Districts
- ✓ CACOST/Head Start
- ✓ Carousel Adult Center
- ✓ American Red Cross
- ✓ Health Care Unlimited

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

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