



## 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 County – Summary of 2014 Educational Contacts

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Total Educational Programs Conducted	233
Total Participants	37,937
Contact Hours	5,529
4H Members	95
4H Leaders	11
4H Clubs	4
Westside Extension Education Club members	13
Office Contacts	2,631
Site Visits	954
Phone Calls	2,064
Newsletters	3
<b>Cash and In Kind Donations by AgriLife Supporters And Collaborators</b>	<b>\$70,364.70</b>
➤ BLT	\$34,875.00
➤ 4H Fundraising	\$9,714.70
➤ City of Falfurrias	\$20,000.00
➤ Cost Recovery	\$50.00
➤ Food Handlers	\$540.00
➤ Shooting Sports	\$4,145.00
➤ Roping	\$1,040.00

**2014 South Region Rangeland Management Plan**

**Relevance:**

Native range and pasture serves as a critical resource for livestock producers and wildlife enterprises in South Texas. Drought conditions continue to significantly impact range health in Brooks County and across the South Region. Stocking rates or carrying capacity must be evaluated and adjusted to allow recovery of forages and forbes. Control of noxious weeds and invasive brush species on native range continues to be a challenge for landowners. Brush sculpting is a practice wildlife managers are using to maintain or improve wildlife habitat. An increasing number of landowners have adopted prescribed fire as a management tool to improve rangeland health. Healthy rangeland is very important to the local ecosystems and to agriculture in the South Region. Brooks County is big in prescribed burning and rangeland management due to the abundance of wildlife.

**Response:**

The response to the issues listed above varied at times and covered a variety of topics. The response to this issue is as follow.

Mass Media: Utilized local newspaper and email list to inform/educate residents on issues they were facing through the drought.

Water Well Testing: Agent tested water wells to make sure water was suitable for livestock and wildlife consumption.

Equine Piroplasmosis Awareness meeting: Discussed the effects of Piroplasmosis on equine animals, testing procedures as well as management of pastures with infected animals in them.

Site Visits: Individual meetings with landowners to consult them on brush and rangeland management to control invasive species and discuss disease issues with native trees.

**Audience:**

The audience for this plan is a mixture of both farmers, ranchers, producers and members of the South Texas Prescribed Burn Association.

**Results:**

<u>Activity</u>	<u># of participants</u>
Water Well Testing	17
Equine Piroplasmosis Awareness meeting	40
Site Visits	15

**Future Plans:**

Agent will continue to assist landowners with issues as they arise. He will continue to meet with committee members to help identify issues and concerns that are affecting Brooks County Rangeland. A series of educational programs will be conducted in response to the committee's recommendations.

### **Brooks County Do Well Be Well**

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County

#### **Relevance:**

In Texas, The incidence of Type 2 diabetes is particularly high within high-risk populations--some racial and ethnic groups—African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians). In Texas, 2.2 M Texans with 1.8 M (10.3%) have been diagnosed and 460,040 undiagnosed. With 23.2% of adults 65 to 74 years of age, Texas has the 2nd highest prevalence in US. 14.5% of adults 45 to 64 years of age have diabetes. In Brooks county Diabetes short term complications have been 5 and holding for the past 6 years according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Diabetes Long term complications is at 17 in 2012 costing an average hospital charge \$37,010. In response to this the family and consumer science committee feel that it's important to work with families with diabetes and their care givers and that's where this program of DWBW comes in.

#### **Response:**

People with type 2 diabetes will manage their disease, to reduce their risks for complications and to attain their highest possible level of wellness. In Brooks County a one-to-one contact was made with a few individuals. Market and promote the DWBW with Dr's Lozano, Dr. Saucedo, and Dr. Levine in Falfurrias. Also, agent met with PA with Valley Clinic in Falfurrias.

#### **Results:**

In Brooks County unfortunately not enough data to signify behavior change, and/or Knowledge

### **Brooks County Better Living for Texans Program**

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County

#### **Relevance:**

In Brooks County, an estimated 2,289 individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically known as food stamps. The Family and Consumer Science committee main focus is to work with limited resource families. So with that in mind, 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. Also, Health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. These health conditions can be improved thru consumption of a healthy eating plan as affirmed in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. However, dietary behavior change can be difficult and requires knowledge, skills, motivation and an environment conducive to change. Moreover, Two-thirds of the adult population is either overweight or obese. Certain breakfast, snacking and dinner behaviors are associated with achieving and maintaining a healthier 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:

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. During 2014, 21 Brooks County adults completed the BLT Back to Basics series and completed the pre and post surveys. This program series focuses on food safety, stretching food resources, and meal planning. This report reflects the analysis of the pre and post surveys for those 21 participants. With "Get the Facts" Basic food buying skills enable clients to consider more healthful food choices when shopping. Get the Facts, a three-lesson series on the Nutrition Facts food label, was developed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists to enhance participant skills necessary for positive dietary behavior change. The skills-building series focused on comparing serving size, fat and sodium information when selecting food choices.

These three items were specifically selected as they relate to obesity, heart disease and hypertension. Session goals were:

- Serving size: Understand the difference between a serving and a portion; estimate common serving sizes; use serving sizes to create healthy, balanced meals using the plate method.
- Fat: Gain knowledge of the basic components of the Nutrition Facts label; understand the health consequences of consuming saturated and trans fat; compare food labels to select products lower in saturated fat and trans fat.
- Sodium: Explain that most (more than 70%) of the sodium in the American eating plan comes from processed foods; understand the effects of sodium on blood pressure; compare food labels to consistently select products with less sodium. With "Three Easy Bites" A three lesson series, Three Easy Bites, was developed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists. The curriculum promoted diet related best practice behaviors related to breakfast, snacking and dinner.

Three Easy Bites session goals were as follows. 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, 20 pre/post survey sets were received from Brooks County.

### Response:

Back to the Basics: 6 of the 21 participants (29%) reported that BLT was their first exposure to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. This suggests that the program is reaching new audiences who otherwise might not have the opportunity to benefit from Extension programs. Get the facts: Always reading nutrition labels and we're including our children in the process. I now check the amounts of salt in food that I buy. "I Shop for healthier foods". I prepare menus and a shopping list that include more produce. I read all nutrition labels of food. I check the nutrition label for calories and don't eat as much as I did.

### **Brooks County 4-H Food Challenge**

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County

#### **Relevance:**

The specific objectives of the 4-H Food Challenge are:

- Provide opportunities for participants to exhibit their knowledge and skills when preparing and presenting a dish
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members
- Promote teamwork.
- Give participants opportunities for public speaking.
- Provide leadership opportunities.
- Give 4-H members the opportunity to participate in a new, exciting competitive event.

#### **Response:**

A county-wide 4-H Food & Nutrition Workshop was offered to youth interested in the food challenge project.

Topics and activities may include:

- Workshop Topics: Overview and implementation of the 4-H Food Challenge
- Nutrients and their functions
- Measuring liquid and dry ingredients
- Cooking Methods Reading labels
- Calculating Cost Per Serving
- Developing a recipe o Functions of ingredients
- Presentation of a dish/Garnishing
- Public Speaking

#### **Results:**

A total of 22 youth participated in the Food challenge contest in which 17 were eligible to attend district contest. Two senior teams as well as one junior/intermediate team participated at the district level. All youth participated in the county wide workshops as well as watched the YouTube food challenge videos.

### **Brooks County One Day 4H Program**

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County, Arnoldo Ochoa, County Extension Agent—Agricultural & Natural Resources—Brooks County

#### **Relevance:**

In the state of Texas 4-H has a project called One Day 4H and in Brooks County we chose to collect food for the food pantry in Falfurrias Texas. The event was considered as the event for “One Day 4-H” by the club managers of Brooks County. The project was taken into action by our three active 4-H clubs. This event was brought to light with the city’s annual Fiesta Del Pan De Campo hosted in Falfurrias. Knowing we have almost 2,300 people who live below the poverty level in Brooks County our youth made a decision to help with the food pantry. Also knowing that for every \$1 we could receive 17 pounds of food from the food bank of Corpus Christi.

#### **Response:**

Planning phase was part of the community clubs and each manager selected youth to assist with the event. The specific objectives of one day 4-H is as follow:

## 4-H and Youth Development

- Provide opportunities for youth to perform community service projects in their individual communities and counties based on their identified needs. In Brooks County it was the food bank as there first priority
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn about social and community issues and develop ways of resolving those issues. In this case our youth learned to utilize the upcoming Fiesta to generate funds and foods for the local pantry.
- Give participants opportunities to work in a strong youth-adult partnership. Both parents and youth worked together in planning, coordinating and implementing the event.

### **Results:**

In Brooks County with our “One Day 4H” project our 4H youth and parent volunteers raised \$400 and over 100 pounds of nonperishable foods that did go the food pantry located at the First Baptist Church in Falfurrias. In turn with these funds the church was able to feed 250-300 families with the funds raised. Along with stocking with the pantry with the 100 pounds collected.

The youth comments were: they felt good to give back to the community we are being raised in. Population during the Fiesta event felt it was a worthy cause to collect a food item for the entry to a big event and knowing it was going to a worthy cause.



## **Brooks County Youth ANR & Livestock Plan**

### **Relevance:**

4-H ANR Projects are critically important to the youth of Texas. Livestock projects, soil, grass, and livestock judging are all important programs. Moreover, Shooting Sports is one of the top 10 4-H Projects offered in the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program which has seen a dramatic increase in Brooks County.

In 2000 there were over 75,000 county livestock show entries for cattle, swine, meat goats and sheep (Coufal, 2006) One half of those entries were 4-H. There have been six major benefits identified as a result of exhibiting livestock: 1. social relations; 2)character; 3) family; 4)competition; 5)learning new cultures and environments; and 6)helping finance the youth's higher education. Parents of youth suggest that life skills are enhanced by raising a 4-H livestock project. The longer youth are engaged in the project they are more likely to develop life skills (Boleman, 2003).

### **Response:**

In order to address the aforementioned issues, the following actions were put into play.

Project visits: All of the 4-H livestock show exhibitors were visited along with their project animal to help with showmanship, feeding, working animals, and doctoring of projects.

Validation: Held validation for all project animals including major show and county show validation.

Shooting Sports: Created videos in support of the shooting sports program and made them available to the youth and parents of the Brooks County 4-H.

### **Audience:**

The target audience of this plan included a mixture of Brooks County Youth, 4-H members, and parent leaders.

### **Future Plans:**

In the future, the county extension agent will meet with the youth advisory board and county council to receive recommendations on what educational programs will support this plan. These programs will then be conducted.

## Community Economic Development

### Brooks County Community Resource and Economic Development

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County

#### Relevance:

Provide leadership to local planning groups to help facilitate educational programs and secure resources to address community and economic development needs. Teach individuals and businesses the knowledge and skills needed for building sustainable communities. Develop new community leaders that can effectively lead organizations and communities.

#### Response:

In Brooks county several events have been planned, coordinated and implemented through the Brooks county Extension Office. Such events are as follow:

- Brooks County Fair Association
- July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration (Cook off/vendors) in conjunction with the city of Falfurrias
- Falfurrias Lions Club Vice President as well as community Service projects with South Texas Literacy Coalition
- 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Fiesta Del Pan De Campo
- Christmas for Foster Kids

#### Results:

In Brooks County the Lions Club Project accepted a \$500 donation for the club as well as providing leadership towards the literacy projects at the local library. Also, a \$20,000 match was provided to the Extension office to offset the cost of the Fiesta Del Pan De camp where the committee booked and provided music for the event headlining was Jimmy Gonzalez and Mazz, Whiskey D, and several conjuntos from within South Texas. A carnival, Rodeo, Community Health 5K Walk/Run, Trail ride, and Vendors. A total of \$8,900 profit was made for the Brooks County 4-H program.

### Brooks County Emergency Management

Developed by Celia Salinas, County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences—Brooks County  
Local Emergency Management team—Brooks County

#### Relevance:

The Brooks County management plans provide guidance for the employment of emergency resources under a local incident commander. Local emergency management plans include specific provisions for requesting and employing state resources to aid in managing and resolving situations for which local resources are inadequate. Although, Brooks County Emergency Management Plan addresses all four stages of Emergency Management, the most significant contributions our agency will make are in preparedness and recovery, followed by mitigation. Brooks County Emergency Management Plan will provide outreach education to families, communities, businesses, and producers that will help them reduce their risk as they prepare for, mitigate for, and recover from disasters.

#### 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. In Brooks County the following was implemented during the 2014 year.

## Community Economic Development

- Staff training on emergency management
- Hurricane Conference 2014 –Hidalgo County
- Emergency Management team meetings
- Westside EEA training on preparing for the unexpected
- Health Care Unlimited clientele and providers Preparing for the unexpected
- Met with Court and EOC coordinator to plan CPR class

### **Results:**

In Brooks County the agent as well as the emergency management team reached approximately 295 Brooks County residents in the area of preparing for the unexpected. Agent continues to support the emergency management team as we move forward to be better at what we do for the people of Brooks County.

# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Brooks County

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## Personnel

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