



Extension Education in Dimmit County
Making a Difference

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

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.

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.

Dimmit County – Summary of 2014 Educational Contacts

2014 Outcome Summaries:

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Multi-County Water Quality Education (Related to Oil & Gas)

Family & Consumer Sciences

- Child Passenger Safety
- Food Protection Management
- Friend to Friend
- Step Up & Scale Down

4-H & Youth Development

- Take a Stand - *Against Bullying*
- One Day 4-H

2014 Output Summaries:

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Natural Resources
- Horticulture

Family & Consumer Sciences

- Better Living for Texans (BLT)
- General FCS Contacts

Community Economic Development

- Community & Economic Development

2014 Multi-County Water Quality Education Plan (Related to Oil & Gas) – Outcome Summary

Developed by Jaime Lopez, Frio County ANR Agent

Relevance:

Water quality and quantity have emerged as the preeminent issue across the state including the Eagle Ford Shale area in South Texas. Agriculture and Oil & Gas industries are the largest water uses in South Texas, and both are under close scrutiny because of the potential for negative environmental (water quality) impacts. The goal is for homeowners and landowners to adopt best management practices to protect water quality and enhance water conservation so water supplies will meet future water needs in the Eagle Ford Shale area.

Response:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Frio, Atascosa, Dimmit, Zavala, and LaSalle counties developed the following activities to address this relevant issue:

- “Update on the Carrizo/Wilcox Aquifer” – Matt Pope, Evergreen Underground Water District
- Nueces River Authority Community Meeting on the San Miguel Creek
- Frio, Atascosa, LaSalle, Dimmit, Zavala Water Screening Program
- Multi-County Agent training on Water Screening Kit
- “Public Briefing... Water Issues and Uses”
- Frio, Atascosa, LaSalle, Dimmit, Zavala Hydrocarbon Water Testing Program
- The Zavala County AgriLife Extension Agent presented a program to 5th and 6th graders at the Batesville Elementary school on the water cycle, home water conservation tips, what kids can do and be a part of water conservation and preventing water contamination and pollution. The students were given an opportunity to evaluate the program. Over 97 percent indicated that they learned at least 5 things regarding water conservation, the water cycle and what they can do as part of water conservation at home and at school.
- The Zavala County Extension Agent developed a series of 3 news media releases informing the public on ways to conserve water at home and in the landscape during the hot dry summer months in South Texas. The news media releases were submitted and printed in The Zavala County Sentinel, The Uvalde Leader News, The South Texas Star and The Eagle Pass Business Journal.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Frio, Atascosa, Dimmit, Zavala, and LaSalle, would like to recognize and thank the partnership and cooperation of the above mentioned individuals, company reps, association and governmental agencies.

Results:

Water screening results provide critical information on current status of water. Fecal Coliform is the most common problem private well owner’s experience. The presence of fecal coliform in water indicates that feces (bodily waste from humans or animals) may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with feces have microorganisms present that can cause a number of “waterborne” diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. Of the samples, 15 positive for fecal coliform (30.6%). Nitrate level was .7 average, with 20pm the high nitrate sample. Nitrate is converted to nitrite which combines with hemoglobin, the chemical that carries oxygen in the blood, to form methemoglobin. Oxygen cannot bind with methemoglobin, therefore, oxygen is not carried throughout the body. As a result, oxygen starvation occurs. This condition is called methemoglobinemia. If left untreated, death may result. Infants less than 6 months in age and young livestock are most susceptible. Salinity in the form of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) was also determined on each sample. 967.5 TDS have salinity with range from 29 to 5500 TDS salinity.

The estimated value for each participant in the multi-county water program is \$1, 895 mean x 49 samples = \$92, 855 value of program participants.

Results indicate that the Multi- County Water Plan met its objectives to increase knowledge and behavioral changes with the homeowners that participated. 92.3% of the participants indicated that they were completely satisfied with the entire program. The average estimate how valuable their participation in the Water Educational Program has been to them is, \$1, 895 per participant.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to Mr. Drew M. Gholson, John Smith, Diane Boellstroff, Ryan Gerlich and the Texas Water Well Owner Network Program for providing the expertise on screening the water samples and helping with the program. We would also like to thank the San Antonio River Authority and the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District for being part of the program. Additional thanks are also due to Dr. Monty Dozier and Mr. Todd Swift for their guidance with the Multi-County Water Plan and to the agents from Dimmit, La Salle, Frio, Atascosa, and Zavala Counties.

Future Program Actions:

Working with agents from Dimmit, La Salle, Frio, Atascosa, and Zavala counties we will continue to offer water educational programs targeting homeowners and landowners so they can continue to monitor their water resources. AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu

2014 – Dimmit County Natural Resources Plan – Output Summary

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

Relevance:

Over 700,000 acres of rangeland are managed in Dimmit County for wildlife and livestock. Of these acreages, over 600,000 are used for recreational and commercial hunting. The need to assist landowners with questions on brush management, and other wildlife questions is needed.

Results

As a result of this plan, this agent assisted landowners by answering questions via telephone, in the office, and made numerous site visits whereas this agent assisted landowners by assessing parcels of land and giving input on to what changes needed to be made. Landowners had the opportunity to inquire about brush control methods, plant identification, and general questions about food plots and wildlife. Agent meet with Dimmit County Range and Wildlife committee in order to gain input on what type of programming efforts needed to be conducted in the county. As a result, Dimmit County offered programs in water quality and quantity. Agent also gained professional development by attending South Texas Buckskin Brigade and was able to learn more about population dynamics, plant ID, and a wealth of information from professionals from across the state.

Future Plans

Agent will continue to meet with Range and Wildlife Committee to gain input on future programming efforts. Programs will be conducted in order to assist landowners with the ever changing challenges that they face in their operations.

2014 – Dimmit County Horticulture Plan – Output Summary

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

Relevance

Due to our geographical location, and distance from nurseries and landscaping maintenance companies, numerous questions are fielded by the County Extension Agent for the clientele of Dimmit County.

Response

This agent assisted landowners and home owners by answering questions via telephone, office visits, and making numerous site visits in order to assist clientele with questions on trees, shrubs, lawns, and insects. Agent was able to assist individuals with numerous problems, many of which were caused by drought. Agent will be conducted Private Applicator training in order to assist both homeowners and producers with the need for gaining a private applicator license to assist them in purchasing the needed herbicides needed to maintain their desired botanicals. Agent will be conducting Last Chance CEU training on December 22 and 23 in order to assist licensed individuals with their credits needed.

Future Plans

Agent will continue to offer private applicator trainings, along with CEU opportunities in the county. Site visits and phone calls will be answered in order to assist clientele with problems as they arise.

2014 – Child Passenger Safety Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 3 and up. For children ages 14 and under, the annual cost of motor vehicle occupant-related death and injury exceeds \$17.8 billion. Although safety belts and child restraints are the single-most effective tool in reducing these deaths and injuries, nationally more than half of children killed in vehicle crashes are unrestrained. Misuse and non-use of child restraints remains high. When the oilfield boom hit the rural area of Dimmit County, an increase in traffic crashes increased. In 2013, Dimmit County had 301 total crashes. Eight of those crashes were fatal which resulted in 10 fatalities and 38 serious injuries.

Response

The purpose of the *Child Passenger Safety (CPS)* program is focused on reducing motor vehicle fatalities and injuries and their associated costs through education to increase child restraint and seat belt usage. The CPS program offers free child safety seat and booster seat inspections. Individuals who go through an inspection receive education on how to correctly use seat belts, child safety seats, booster seats and also learn of the dangers air bags pose to children. Based on inventory, car seats and booster seats are issued to those who are in need. The CPS program ensures that all children who receive an inspection leave safely restrained.

Results

January through November 2014:

- 10 child safety seat inspections conducted
- 0 children arrived correctly restrained
- 9 new seats were issued
- 7 old/unsafe seats were collected
- 6 children arrived totally unrestrained or incorrectly in a seat belt

Economic Impact Statement

The proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, leading to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings, and improved quality of life. These economic benefits are an estimated \$1,988 per child age 0 to 4 and \$2,347 per child age 4 to 7 for new seats distributed, and \$558 per child for seat misuse corrected with an assumed 75% continued use. Based on this formula, the total economic impact for the 10 inspections conducted during calendar year 2014 is \$15,291.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Develop a stronger program
- Increase the number of child safety seat inspections
- Increase collaboration

2014 –Food Protection Management Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

Each year, an estimated 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Common symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. While some people may view this as a mere case of “food poisoning” foodborne illness has serious health and economic consequences. In fact, foodborne illnesses from five pathogens alone (Campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli O157:H7, and E. coli non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$6.9 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. All of us are at risk for foodborne illness, but older adults, pregnant women, young children, individuals with chronic disease, and those with a compromised immune system are at an increased risk. Because nearly half of our food dollars are spent on foods eaten away from home, it is imperative that employees who work in retail food service handle food safely.

Response

To meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments, the Food Protection Management (FPM) program was developed. Our two-day certified food manager program prepares food service workers to sit for the state Certified Food Manager exam. Our 2-hour food handler program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services, trains front-line food service workers on the basic principles of food safety. Both programs are conducted at the county level by Extension agents.

Results

During 2014, 27 people in Dimmit County participated in the FPM program and completed the food handler program. Change in knowledge (pre vs post) was used to evaluate the food handler program. In addition, client (customer) satisfaction surveys were collected from participants.

Food Handler Course – participant characteristics

More than 59% (n=16) of the participants were female and more than half (56%; n=15) were Hispanic. All age groups were represented and more than 85% (n=23) identified Spanish as their preferred language. Although 22% had completed some college or a college degree, 41% (n=11) had not finished high school. More than 40% (n=11) of the participants had food service experience and almost 60% (n=16) acknowledged they had received training over food safety in the past.

Mean score and % score were both rounded to the nearest whole number.

There **was a** statistically significant increase in test scores (comparing pre vs post) suggesting an increase in food safety knowledge.

Mean score pre: 62 Mean score post: 86

Summary: The food handlers program was successful in helping participants (foodservice employees) increase their knowledge about food safety as it pertains to the retail setting.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Develop a stronger program
- Expand the program and increase participation
- Continue with current collaborations

2014 – Friend to Friend Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

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.

- 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.

Results

- 15 women attended the *Friend to Friend* event on April 23, 2014 at the Public Library in the city of Carrizo Springs.
- Demographics for women who attended the event:
 - Hispanic = 100%
 - Female = 100%
- A Wesley Nurse-RN presented on Breast Cancer screening tools and urged women to obtain a mammogram.
- An OB/GYN presented on Pap screening, HPV and Cervical Cancer. He encouraged women to have regular Pap screenings and for those of age to receive the HPV Vaccine.
- An educational bingo was created for the event. The bingo was based on terms or phrases association with breast or cervical cancer. As each item was called, a fact, definition or symptom was read. Prizes were donated by community businesses and volunteers. The prizes were awarded to the bingo winners and every woman left with an item. The women seemed to enjoy the method of delivery.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Develop a stronger program
- Expand program and increase participation
- Continue with current collaborations

2014 – Step Up & Scale Down Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

Nearly two out of three (64.5%) U.S. adults are overweight or obese. The percentage of U.S. adults classified as obese doubled between 1980 and 2000 from 15% to 30%. Overweight adults and obese individuals are at increased risk for a variety of healthcare issues. In 2013, Texas was among 18 states that had a prevalence of obesity between 30% and <35%.

Response

Step Up & Scale Down is a 12 week program designed to support people who want to live healthier lifestyles. The program uses weekly motivation, support, and accountability to assist people in meeting their goals. Counties who implement the program have a goal of 25 participants who will move toward a healthier weight to minimize their risks for chronic diseases. The program focuses on weight loss, increase in physical activity, increase in fruit and vegetable consumption, increase in water intake and perceived improvement in health.

Results

Beginning in April 2014, Step Up & Scale Down was implemented with Dimmit County Employees once a week, for 12 weeks during the lunch hour. Seven employees participated in the program, 5 completed both pre and post tests.

Results from Pre to Post Test

- 40% increase in participants rating their health from “fair” to “good”
- 20% increase in participants planning their meals and snacks in advance.
- 100% increase in the daily intake of water.
- 80% decrease in the daily intake of sweetened beverages.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Develop a stronger program
- Increase participation/graduation rate
- Increase collaboration.

2014 – BLT Bronze Level Plan - Output Summary
Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts

In 2014, Dimmit County FCS agent collaborated with the County of Dimmit to provide education and fitness classes for the county's employee wellness program. Education was implemented using the Step Up Scale Down program and consisted of basic food and nutrition, preparing healthy meals, tips for eating out, cardio for beginners, muscle endurance and aerobics. The Dimmit County 4-H food and nutrition project successfully held 5 workshops where youth learned about nutrition, food safety and preparing recipes. The workshops taught youth great life skills but also prepared them for county and district 4-H Food and Nutrition contests. Food Protection Management was implemented for the second time. This program focuses on food safety and upon completion participants receive their food handler's license and their certified food manager's certificate if they pass the written exam. Agent also conducted program on preparing healthy foods which were specifically requested by adult groups. Ag in The Classroom was conducted with all 4th and 5th grade youth who attend Carrizo Springs Intermediate School.

Results of Efforts

- 10 adults were reached through the Fitness and Step Up Scale Down program.
- 22 youth were reached through the 4-H Food and Nutrition Project
- 374 youth were reached through the Ag in The Classroom program.
- 27 adults were reached through the Food Protection Management Program (Food Handlers Course)
- 5 adults were reached through the Food Protection Management program (2 Day Managers Course)

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Continue with current collaborations
- Add new programs
- Increase participation
- Strengthen programming

2014 – General FCS Contacts Plan - Output Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts

In 2014, general FCS contacts were made with the following agencies & organizations:

- BLT Programming
 - Dimmit County 4-H Food & Nutrition Program
 - Carrizo Springs ISD
 - Dimmit County Employees

- Emergency Preparedness
 - Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Dimmit County Commissioners' Court, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and Red Cross

- Friend to Friend - Breast & Cervical Cancer Awareness
 - 15 total contacts
 - Collaborators: Methodist Healthcare Ministries, Women's Clinic Dimmit County Commissioners' Court

- Child Care Provider Training
 - 7 total contacts (100% female, 100% Hispanic)
 - 93% were *completely satisfied* with the helpfulness of the information in decisions about their own situation
 - 100% would recommend this activity to others.

- Food Protection Management
 - 27 adults participated in the 2 hour, Food Handlers Course
 - 5 adults participated in the 2 day, Managers Course
 - The 2 day course was implemented in collaboration with Maverick County Extension office. Both FCS agents team taught 2 courses, one in each county.

- Step Up Scale Down
 - Implemented with Dimmit County Employees as part of the County Wellness Program.
 - 10 adults were reached through the program

- Child Passenger Safety
 - 10 child safety seat inspections were conducted (9 new seats were issued)
 - Total economic impact for the 10 child safety seat inspecting conducted = \$15,291.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County FCS agent plans to:

- Continue with current collaborations
- Strengthen programs and increase participation
- Implement 1 new program: Welcome to The Real World

2014 – Dimmit County Take a Stand, *Against Bullying* Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

Conflicts among youth and bullying have been increasing. School districts have been mandated by the Texas Legislature through two bills (House Bill 212 and 283) to adopt and implement a dating violence policy and a discipline management policy. Both bills require training for teachers/staff as well as training/curriculum for youth to address these issues. Currently, there is no standard curriculum being utilized by school districts.

Response

Texas 4-H has developed, in partnership with the Texas Rural Mediation Services, a curriculum called Take A Stand! The curriculum is available for elementary, junior high and high school grade levels. The curriculum objectives are for students to increase knowledge and skills necessary to solve conflict peacefully, for teachers to observe students using skills to work out conflict, for schools to experience a decline in discipline referrals and an overall decline in bullying. During the 2014 Fall semester, the Take A Stand curriculum was implemented with all 4th graders at Carrizo Springs ISD Intermediate School. The curriculum content consists of 5 lessons addressing the following topics: conflict management/bullying, communication, etiquette, teamwork & cultural awareness.

Results

- One hundred and fifty seven (157), 4th grade youth completed both the pre and post test.

Ethnic Breakdown	
Hispanic	142
Black	2
White	12
Asian	1

Gender	
Males	82
Females	75

- The pre/post test measured knowledge. Questions focused on identifying the signs of anger, actions used to show respect, methods of working as a team, understanding other perspectives and cultural awareness.
- The pre/post test data showed:
 - 15% increase in youth identifying actions people use to show anger.
 - 16% increase in youth understanding the importance of seeing things from other people’s point of view.
 - 26% increase in youth understanding manners are actions used to show respect.
 - 12% increase in youth understanding when on a team, all team members should be involved in making decisions.
 - 29% increase in youth being able to identify a tradition as a way families celebrate a holiday or custom.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County agents plan to:

- develop a stronger program
- increase enrollment and results of pre/post tests
- continue with current collaborations
- increase enrollment and results of pre/post tests

2014 – Dimmit County One Day 4-H Plan - Outcome Summary

Developed by Josephine A. Farias, Dimmit County FCS Agent

Relevance

The One Day 4-H Community service project is a means of utilizing all 4-H’ers across the State of Texas to conduct a community service project on the same day throughout the State. This is a way of saying “Thank you” to Texas for supporting the program for over 100 years. Members of Dimmit County 4-H decided to give back to the first responders of Dimmit County, by providing them gift baskets to show appreciation for the services that they provide to our community.

Response

The youth of Dimmit County 4-H are focused on the gift baskets for first responders in Dimmit County. The youth secured six 70 quart buckets, and brought nonperishable snacks to the AgriLife Extension Office in order to make goodie baskets for the individuals. Youth then delivered the gift baskets to the following agencies: Dimmit County Border Patrol, Dimmit County Volunteer Firefighters, Carrizo Springs Firefighters, Camion Real EMS, Dimmit County Sheriff’s Department, and Gene Fernandez, Dimmit County Game Warden.

Results

- 39 youth and 5 adults participated in the One Day 4-H community service project.
- Thirteen youth completed the customer satisfaction survey.

Ethnic Breakdown	
Hispanic	19
White	17
Asian American	3
Other	1

Gender	
Males	25
Females	1

- 95% of youth found the event was positive for the community
- 99% of youth found the a better appreciation for community service
- 80% of youth found that this project had an influence on the community
- 82% of youth said they *would recommend* this activity to others.

Future Plans

For 2015, Dimmit County agent plans to:

- Identify emerging community service projects.
- Increase participation in community service projects.

2014 - Dimmit County Economic Development Plan - Output Summary

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts

In 2014, Dimmit County worked with the Chamber of Commerce in providing venues for yearly festivals that were held at the Dimmit County Fair Grounds. Agents also provided information to Chamber about educational opportunities that AgriLIFE Extension could provide. The County has continued to work on building the new Show Barn and Multi-Purpose Center. Dimmit County Classic continues to be a success, 2013 Dimmit County Classic generated over Four Thousand Dollars to the Parent leaders association, and brought individuals from numerous counties to participate.

Results of Efforts

- Dimmit County Commission's Court allocated \$11.5 Million for a new Multi-Purpose Center and Show Barn
- Dimmit County Classic generated over \$4000 to the Dimmit County 4-H project, and 2013 looks to be just as eventful.

Future Plans

- Continue collaborations with Chamber and County to secure new multi-purpose facility for the community.
- Continue to work with parent leaders in order to provide Prospect Shows.
- Strengthen ties between City and County to work together in Community Projects

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Dimmit County

Personnel

Richard Griffin

County Extension Agent - Ag/NR

r-griffin@ag.tamu.edu

Josephine A. Farias

County Extension Agent - FCS

jafarias@ag.tamu.edu

Anais De Luna

Administrative Assistant

adeluna@ag.tamu.edu

Contact Us:

Address:

303 South 5th St.

Carrizo Springs, TX 78834

Phone:

830-876-4216

830-876-4228

Fax:

830-876-4233