Extension Education in Cameron County

Making a Difference

2010

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating
The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to serving Texans 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.

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 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 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 on this county and its people:

2010 Cameron County – Summary of Educational Programs

Table of Content

I. Agriculture and Natural Resources

II. Family and Consumer Sciences

III. 4-H and Youth Development

IV. Community Economic Development
Agriculture and Natural Resource

This past year the Agricultural and Natural Resource Extension Program Area Committees collaborated with other entities and individuals, and implemented a diverse educational program. Educational programs addressed local agricultural concerns and critical issues. This past year's total agriculture total cash receipts were more than $228,000,000 in the county. In 2009 the annual cash receipts for the top agriculture commodities were as follows: Cotton $16 million, Grain Sorghum $19 million, Corn $6 million, Vegetables $1.1 million, Livestock $4 million, Commercial Aquaculture $1.5 million and Nurseries $70 million.

Cameron County agriculture result demonstrations were established this past spring 2010. All Agriculture Result Demonstrations were harvested and evaluated; cotton, grain sorghum and soybean varieties. Agriculture producers had the opportunity to visit and visually evaluate all field Agriculture Result Demonstrations as to their performance.

International growers (Tamaulipas Mex.) visit Cameron County Agriculture Result Demonstrations. Cameron County Agriculture Producers participate in a Cotton and Grain Field Day.
Agricultural Production Program Committee meets to plan, evaluate and implement all agricultural county and multi-county programs. This year, the committee hosted a variety of educational programs to address water, nutrient management, and agronomic issues.

County Extension Agent Perez (center) meets with Ag. Production Committee

**Rio Grande Beef and Heifer Development Program**

This year more than 150 cattle (Bulls and Heifer) were entered in the RGV Beef and Heifer Development Program. The program provides ranchers to increase the value of bulls by collecting feedlot performance data, carcass characteristics and increasing the value of heifers through the development program. Feedlot data on each animal performance is compiled and made available to all ranchers.
Sustainable Agriculture Program

Cameron county small scale acreage agriculture producers hosted a Chef Produce Tour targeting local restaurant Chefs. The TIP of Texas Agriculture Producers Association meets every month at the San Benito Annex Building. There focus is to produce agriculture commodities and serve local restaurants and participate at local Farmers Market. The Texas AgriLIFE Extension provides leadership to the group with subject matter expertise and Extension Specialist. Other partners include Texas Mexico Boarder Coalition, University of Texas-Pan Am, USDA, Natural Resource Conservation and Cameron County.

Small Acreage Production

Free Range Hens-Organic Egg Production Tour

Organic Vegetable Produce Tour

SAFE Program: Sport Athletic Field Education

The SAFE(Sports Athletic Field Education)program, developed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, offers turf management assistance for coaches, athletic directors, sports field managers and maintenance personnel. Primary program goals include educating sports field managers to maintain the highest quality field possible, conserve resources (water, fertilizer, etc.) through proper application principles and provide for a safer playing condition for users. The SAFE maintenance approach involves the following activities: Develop the most effective and economical fertilizer program based on soil test results, turf grass species, environmental conditions and field use. Determine the best mowing height and frequency for each field based on type of sports field, turf grass species and available mowing equipment. Develop a customized irrigation program tailored to your particular field based on water needs and irrigation system performance. Develop aerification program for the field to promote proper turf grass growth and development, using equipment that measures hardness of soil. Encourage proper water use to assure continued high quality water and availability. Water management practices for sports fields.
The SAFE Program was implemented in four school district Spring 2010. School districts that participated in the SAFE Program were; La Feria ISD, Santa Maria ISD, Santa Rosa ISD, and Rio Hondo ISD. Each school districts athletic sport field had an irrigation audit based on the SAFE Program guidelines. School administrators, athletic sport field managers and other maintenance field personnel participated in the SAFE Program, evaluating sites and participating in educational workshops.

2010 Cameron County Sport Athletic Field Education

Relevance/Issue Description

Water Quality and conservation were identified as a TCFF issue in Cameron County. Water management is one of the critical components of the best management practices of sports fields. The Sport Athletic Field Education (SAFE) program, developed by Texas AgriLIFE Extension, of the Texas A&M University System, offers turfgrass management assistance for athletic directors, coaches, sport field managers and fields personnel. Primary goals of this program include educating managers to maintain the highest quality field possible, conserve resources (water, fertilizer, pesticide, etc.) through proper application principles and provide for a safer playing condition for users. The SAFE maintenance approach involves the following activities: Develop the most effective and economical fertilizer program based on soil test results, turfgrass species, environmental conditions and field use. Determine the best mowing height and frequency for each field based on type of sport field, turfgrass species and available mowing equipment. Develop a customized irrigation program tailored to particular field based on water needs and irrigation system performance. Develop an aerification program for the field to promote proper turfgrass growth and development, using equipment that measures hardness of soil. Encourage proper water usage/conservation measures to assure continued high quality water and availability. Program emphasis improve turfgrass quality enhances player safety and aesthetic of sport fields.
Target Audience:
The 2010 target audience included local and area athletic directors, coaches, sport field managers and field personnel in Cameron County. The target audience also includes local school ISD administration personnel and other interested turf managers. In Cameron County all school districts with sport fields under natural turf were the target population. In Cameron County, only seven of the nine sports athletic fields managed by the school district were of natural turf. Two sport athletic fields were of artificial turf. Of the seven natural turf sport athletic fields four participated (La Feria ISD, Rio Hondo ISD, Santa Maria ISD, Santa Rosa ISD in 2010 educational programs in Cameron County.

Educational Response:
In Cameron County, a series of educational events were planned and delivered during 2010 by Texas AgriLIFE Extension.

- Sport Athletic Field Education- 4 School District Site Visits
- Sports Athletic Field Education Meeting-Introduction
- Sports Athletic Field Education Conferences-5 School Districts
- Sports Athletic Field Education Soil Testing Program
- Sports Athletic Field Education Water Testing Program
- Sports Athletic Field Education Irrigation Auditing-5 School Districts
- Sports Athletic Field Education Conferences-4 School Districts
- Sports Athletic Field Education Workshop and Tour
- Sports Athletic Field Education Site Evaluations/Conferences- Four School Districts Partnerships and Collaborators: In Cameron County, all school districts that participated in the program were sponsors and contributors to the Sport Athletic Field Education program by donating labor, equipment, and resources.

Evaluation Strategy:
A retrospective post survey was administered to all program participants after the end of the Sports Athletic Field Education program and secured from participants at the SAFE Workshop/Tour.

Results: All participants (school ISD administration, athletic field managers, athletic directors) that participated in the workshop/tour and educational activities agreed 100% that information provided was very informative and would adopt practices introduced to conserve water, improve turf conditions and reduce cost of operation of athletic field.

Future Plans: 2011 will bring another page of educational programs and evaluated adopted practices in four athletic field in target school districts.
Cameron County Master Gardener Program

The Cameron County Master Gardener Program and Cameron County Master Gardener Association was established in 1999. Master Gardener Classes are held annually starting in January and ending in July. Master Gardener Classes are held only once per year in the spring. Master Gardener projects are implemented throughout the communities in the county. This past year the Cameron County Master Gardener Volunteer program reached approximately 1000 youth and adults and volunteer more than 1800 hour through their educational efforts in teaching horticulture education.
Texas Master Gardener Class Graduation Ceremony

This past year the Cameron County Master Gardener Class graduated in August 26, 2010. The Master Gardener Class participated in a variety of educational activities and received 75 hours of horticulture instruction in the following area; Plant pathology disease, insect identification, soil science, landscape management, herb, ornamental, and native care and identification, tree management, and water conservation.

The graduating Master Gardener Class initiated horticulture education community projects and obtain approximately 821 volunteer service hours with a value of $17,129.00 contribution to our local community. As a result for their individual training, of the 12 graduates 7 responded to a post evaluation. The evaluation noted that they were 100 percent completely satisfied with the accuracy of information, and the information lead to a significant change in knowledge and behavior when applying horticulture subject matter for their own personal use and also educating the general public in the communities of Cameron County.

Cameron County Master Gardener Volunteers participated in all Extension education horticulture events throughout the county. This year (2010) the entire Master Gardener Association membership confirmed more than 2000 volunteer service hours, with a value of $41,700.00 dollars contribution to Cameron County communities.
Coastal and Marine Resources

Tony Reisinger, Coastal & Marine Resources Agent

• The marine extension program for 2010 focused on commercial fishing, aquaculture, recreational fishing, youth education, and the Bahia Grande and the master naturalist program.

• Emphasis on bycatch reduction for sea turtles and red snapper was taught through a series of port visits to Brownsville and Port Isabel. Eighty-one bycatch reduction devices, BRDs, were distributed to our one hundred and thirty two vessel fleet this year.

Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) aboard a Brownsville Shrimp Vessel

• Demonstrations with cambered doors, devices used to spread a shrimp net open as it is towed along the bottom, reaped huge savings for our shrimp fleet in 2010. The introduction of super fibers for net construction, first funded by Cameron County in 2008, showed the potential for increased efficiency by the fleet by using a new type of polyethylene netting for shrimp trawls. A 5% savings in fuel consumption has been demonstrated using this new net material and another 25% savings can be attributed to the new door design we have introduced to the fleet. It is conservatively estimated that our Cameron County fleet saved 2.4 million gallons of diesel fuel at a value of $5.7 million in 2010 by adopting this new fishing gear. In the three years this project has been implemented, we have helped save the Cameron County fleet 7.3 million gallons of diesel fuel valued at $17.8 million!
Cambered Shrimp Trawl Doors

Our Cameron County shrimp fleet has received attention from national environmental groups due to efforts in reducing bycatch and becoming energy efficient with minimal environmental impact. The reduced carbon footprint has contributed to our fleet becoming a model for other fisheries worldwide.

• Aquaculture efforts were focused on shrimp hatchery monitoring for disease and virus. **Farm raised shrimp and fish production for 2010 was 0.5 million pounds valued at $1.1 million. Economic impact of aquaculture on Cameron County is estimated at $ 3.3 million.**

• **The value of our commercial fisheries in Cameron County for 2009 was $41.0 million for 27.0 million pounds with an economic impact of $123.0 million. Shrimp dominated the catch.**

• Recreational fishing activities consisted of tournament support through weight, length and species determinations.

• Over 300 youth were educated on marine ecology though marine field days, slide shows, talks and demonstrations. Our Junior Master Naturalist Program in Cameron Park continued with about twenty one youth between six and fourteen years of age. The program is being duplicated in the Los Fresnos school system with the same number of youth.
Junior Master Naturalists

Our Rio Grande Valley Texas Master Naturalist Program has 125 members this year and each member must complete 40 hours of volunteer work annually. **This year to date our Master Naturalists have completed 11,320 volunteer service hours in the Rio Grande Valley at a value $236,022.00.**

Bahia Grande salinities remain close to oceanic making it an extremely productive estuarine environment for redfish, trout, shrimp, blue crabs, and numerous other species. At present we are concerned that a return to drought conditions due to La Nina could again result in higher salinities detrimental to sea life. The planned widening in 2011 of the main channel will eliminate these concerns.

**Our Coastal and Marine Resources Committee identified beach trash as a major issue on county beaches.** They suggested the county parks system provided trash bags and charge a substantial fee to be refunded to beach-goers upon leaving the beaches, when they return the trash filled bags. **A pilot study implemented this summer by the parks department netted 41 tons of trash and $15,000 in revenue which paid for the project.** This fee and trash bag system is planned to be adopted this summer. Due to the leadership of the Coastal Issues Committee, this pilot study proved to be a successful project that the Cameron County Commissioners Court adopted the program to continue on county beaches.
Family Resource Programs Cameron County 2010

Income Generation Projects

The County Extension Agent conducted multiple educational programs in Cameron County Total Contacts 558. Participants found the projects practical and very beneficial. They said that making their own crafts or decorations will help them to save money.

Promoting Physical Activity

Participants were satisfied with this program. They said that all the nutritional information was very helpful. Then through the Salsa Dancing they were able to exercise in a different way. Participant’s comment: I’m diabetic and for many years I have refused any medical treatment, but now after this program and the information I got I did realize that I need to make changes and control my diabetes. Total Contacts 147
Energy Conservation and Budgeting

County Extension Agent conducted the Energy Conservation and Budgeting Programs. Participants learned tips in how to save energy and set up their Family Budget. Total Contacts 155

Because I’m a Woman

Provided Different information and services such as: Women’s Health, Nutrition and Recipes, Free Facials, Dress for Success, Workforce Solutions, Seniro Companionship, Craft’s Ideas, Small Business Adminitration and Physical Activity. Total Contacts 95
Cancer Awareness

Agent used the “Hats Off to Breast Health” This program (skit) discusses how some “hats” women wear (in other words, myths the believe) could affect their chances of surviving breast cancer. The participants enjoyed the presentation because they were able to participate. Total Contacts 100

Better Living for Texans

BLT Assistants conducted Get The Facts Lessons and 188 participants completed the pre and post surveys.
INTRODUCTION

The Dietary Guidelines, MyPyramid and the Nutrition Facts label form the basic nutrition education constructs for the American population. SNAP-ED recipients need sound nutrition education so that they can make healthful food choices. Get the Facts, a three-lesson series on the Nutrition Facts label, was developed to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The series focused on label reading, serving size, sodium and fat. Serving size and fat were selected as key topic areas because over 60% of adults are overweight or obese and heart disease is the leading cause of death. Sodium was selected because hypertension affects approximately 50 million people in the United States.

METHODS

The lessons and surveys were translated into Spanish. A survey instrument was developed to assess self reported behavior and knowledge. The survey contained three behavior questions, five knowledge questions and ten demographic questions. Evaluation protocol included presurvey and post-survey administration before and after the Get the Facts series was taught. A telephone interview was also conducted as a follow-up. As of October 1, 2010, 131 pre/post and 123 follow-up surveys were returned to Texas A&M University at College Station, Texas from Cameron County.

- The typical client attending Get the Facts, was Hispanic (98%), female (93%) and had a less than a high school education (45%).
- SNAP (37%), free/reduced school meals (54%) and WIC (36%) were programs most utilized by these participants.
- Many clients (52%) indicated that this was the first Extension program that they had attended. Clients were more likely to indicate that they always or almost always check food labels for serving size, sodium and fat after completing the Get the Facts lesson series than before the lesson series.
- The percentage of participants who stated that they never check food labels decreased dramatically during the time this lesson series was taught.
- Self-reported behavior regarding all three concepts: serving size, sodium and fat improved during this lesson series.
• Behavior improvements were statistically significant (p<.001)

• Behavior improvements were sustained during follow-up by those clients who responded to the follow up telephone interview.
• Of all five knowledge questions asked, the hypertension prevalence had the lowest 5 pre-survey value.

• These data suggest that knowledge regarding all five educational constructs improved during the time that the lesson series was taught.
• Mean knowledge score (out of 5) increased from 2.02 to 3.88 during this lesson series.
• Knowledge improvements during the teaching of the Get the Facts series were statistically significant (p<.001).
• Knowledge gain was sustained during the follow up period by those clients who responded to the telephone interview.

Client comments from Cameron County.

“What I have learned here is that we should always check the labels on the foods we eat to know what we are putting into our bodies.”
“Learned that I need to watch what my family eats and make certain changes in our way of eating.”
“Eating healthy is very important.”
Parenting Connections Outcome Summary – Cameron County, 2010

Relevance

Although children are influenced by many different elements in their environment, parents are the primary influence in the lives of their children. Parents’ contributions to their children’s development are unparalleled, especially during their early childhood years. Research indicates that children who grow up with actively involved and nurturing parents (as opposed to uninvolved parents) reap numerous benefits, including better school performance, increased self-esteem, healthier relationships with peers, healthier sex-role development, and greater access to financial resources. In addition, children who are raised in environments in which parents are fully involved are less likely to engage in behaviors that put them at risk for a variety of physical and mental health problems.

Research suggests that quality educational programs can assist parents in developing the skills they need to effectively raise their children. The qualities/skills that are common to effective parents (e.g., unwavering love, sensitivity to a child’s needs and feelings, clear and consistent limits geared toward a child’s stage of development, firm but not harsh discipline, encouragement of child’s emerging independence, parental involvement in child’s education, being a positive role model) can be taught through a series of parenting education classes that allow parents the opportunity to discuss and practice the desired skills.

Response

In 2010, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service conducted multiple parent education workshop series’ in Cameron County utilizing the Parenting Connections curriculum. Topics covered included guidance/discipline, parent-child communication, promoting a healthy self-esteem in children, and child development. Approximately 700 single session parenting classes were attended by participants (see Table 1 for single session parent evaluations). One-hundred and seventy-nine parents and/or other relatives completed the 4-week program (see Table 2 for outcomes).

Results

Participant Characteristics

The average age of participants was 27.5 years. Parents who attended the classes had an average of 3.0 children. Sixty-one percent of attendees were female and 29% were male. Approximately 50% possessed a high school diploma, 8% some college, and 3% a college degree. Nearly 35% did not possess a high school diploma. Eighty-eight percent of the participants identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, 6% Caucasian, and 3% “Other.” Seventy-seven percent reported household incomes under $20K, 8% between $20-29K, and 7% over $30K. Thirty-seven percent of participants were married (1st time), 17% divorced/separated, 2% remarried, and 39% single. Seventy-seven percent identified themselves as the child’s custodial parent, 11% as the non-custodial parent, 1% a grandparent, and 7% as a relative or “other” caregiver.
Single Session Parent Evaluations

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of items related to the parent education classes. Six-hundred and ninety-nine (699) written evaluations were completed.

Table 1. Parent Evaluations - Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percent in Agreement</th>
<th>Percent NOT in Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned new information from today’s class.</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will use this information now.</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will use this information in the future.</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information presented today will help me become a better parent.</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of attending this class, I feel more confident as a parent.</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.*
Cameron County Money Smart

Relevance

35 participants completed the pre-workshop survey. The mean age of the group was 44 years (24 provided their age). 15 participants indicated they had at least completed high school or the equivalent. 7 of 26 participants providing income information indicated their monthly household income was less than $1000; 15 indicated monthly household income of $1000 - $1499; and 3 indicated monthly household income of $1500-$1999.

Response

Participants were asked a series of questions to assess their current financial management behaviors. 79% (24 of 33) of participants indicated they currently used a budget; 22 of 34 participants indicated they save as often as they can. Only 2 participants indicated saving regularly and 9 never save. All but four participants reported Always or Usually paying bills on time. 83% had not reviewed a copy of their credit report in the last year. While 21 participants indicated they had a checking account, only 9 reported using checks, debit card or electronic payments as a method they use to pay their bills. The most common method used to pay bills was cash. This suggests that educational programs on the use of checking accounts could be a need of this audience.

Results

Evaluations completed following the Money Matters class were used to assess what the participants knew about the class concepts before the class and after the class. Results indicated that participants felt they knew more about the class concepts after the class than before the class. The average score before the class was 9.3 and the average score after the class was 11.8. The maximum score was 12.
EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Poor health disproportionately affects low-income and minority populations. Recent research documented that people who are most food insecure are at a greater risk for poor health and obesity than those who are food secure. In fact, research indicates that people who run out of food or miss meals because they cannot afford them are the most obese. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 16% of Texans live in poverty, a figure above the national average of 12%. Census statistics for Cameron County suggest that in 2006, 36% of people were in poverty. 48% of related children under 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 24% of people 65 years old and over. 32% of all families and 53% of families with a female householder and no husband present had incomes below the poverty level. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program of Cameron County provides education to limited resource adults with children on topics related to dietary quality, food resource management, food safety, and physical activity through a series of at least seven nutrition education lessons.

The purpose and mission of the EFNEP-Adult program is to reach out to limited-resource families with young children and provide food and nutrition education. Using "hands-on" experiences, clients participate in a seven-lesson series on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles.

- 1,198 families with 2,806 children enrolled in EFNEP.
- 107 EFNEP participants were pregnant and/or nursing.
- 95% of families at or below 185% of federal poverty level.
- 90 of families enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.
- 97% of EFNEP adult participants were Hispanic/Latino.
- 1% of EFNEP adult participants were White, Non-Hispanic/Latino.

The following results show how adult clients' food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes:

- 98% of participants with a positive change in any food group at exit. Specifically, EFNEP participants consumed 1.4 more cups of fruits and vegetables and 1.4 additional cups milk at completion, compared to entry.
- 83% improved in one or more food resource management practices such planning meals in advance.
- 92% improved in one or more nutrition practices such as using the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices.
- 62% improved in one or more food safety practices such as thawing foods safely.
- 26% of program participants with positive change in physical activity. In fact, participants reported walking 10,247 miles during the 2009-10 reporting year. As a result of this physical activity, an estimated 22% of program participants could prevent the onset of diabetes over their lifetime through increased physical activity. Including the cost of lost wages and annual health care costs, the total potential economic impact for these participants is approximately $2.5 million.
The following results show how youth clients' food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes:

- **89%** now eat a variety of foods.
- **98%** increased knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.
- **91%** increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods.
- **99%** improved practices in food preparation and safety.
- **97%** improved physical activity behavior or attitude.

**Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** will continue to look into new areas and assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed-behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being. Studies have shown that for every $1 spent on EFNEP, $10 were estimated to be saved in health care costs and $2 saved in food costs by participants. For Cameron County, this equals $4.3 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost $858,336 in food costs. During the 2009 – 2010 year, a total of 191 volunteers from both EFNEP Adult and Youth combined a total donation of 2,288 hours that equals a cost savings of **$47,705.00** for EFNEP.
4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- 4-H CYFAR Program reached 1,228 youth through various programs in higher education and science based educational programs at the Rio Hondo Alternative Education Center and at Rio Hondo Middle School. The majority of students were Hispanic, at-risk, and in a high poverty area of the county. These students were taught the importance of obtaining a higher education degree, plant science, chemistry, physics, and engineering.

- 4-H Fund raiser profits $7,000. 50 4-H members and leaders planned and implemented the Cameron County 4-H Council Bay Fishing Tournament. Proceeds from this event went to 4-H programs, activities, leadership camps, and a newly formed scholarship fund.

- 57 local businesses and individuals sponsored $5,000 towards the Cameron County 4-H Bay Fishing Tournament. Local T.V., radio, and newspaper media outlets also donated thousands of dollars worth of advertisement towards the Fishing Tournament and to promote 4-H.

- We currently have 80 registered 4-H volunteer leaders that contribute an average of 150 hours a year valued at over $250,000 dollars to the county. We also have 46 registered youth volunteers who also serve as officers and many event planning committees.

- A total of 18 organized clubs currently exist within Cameron County. Our on-going goal is to continue to expand with new 4-H clubs throughout the county. We currently have 403 youth who are members of traditional 4-H clubs within the county. We are currently in the process of starting an after school 4-H Club at Berta Cabaza Middle School where students will learn about landscaping and will take part in the actual landscaping of their school.

- In 2010, 4,288 youth participated in 4-H through special interest/short term day camps such as Junior Master Gardener programs and the Master Naturalist program. An additional 4,027 youth were reached by 4-H school curriculum enrichment programs and other environmental stewardship activities. Overall, a total of 8,727 youth have been reached in the county by various 4-H programs and activities.

- Cameron County 4-H Council partnered with the Cameron County Farm Bureau donated 10 turkeys and 10 full boxes of canned food items to ten needy families from the Harlingen Parental Center. 4-H Council conducted the canned food drive, while the Farm Bureau donated $200.00 for the purchase of the turkeys.

- 55 4-H members and leaders participated in Christmas Holiday Help in which 4-H members cooked Christmas dinner, wrapped donated toys and clothes, and they constructed ornaments for 4 needy families. 4-H members and parents then personally delivered the food and items to the various families.

- Cameron County 4-H had two of its members receive scholarships from the Texas 4-H Foundation. Kaysey Aguilar received a $10,000.00 scholarship and Amanda Salinas received a $1,500.00 scholarship.

- Cameron County 4-H members submitted 41 record books this year of which 24 of them advanced to the District Record Book competition. Four of our senior age record books advanced to the State Record Book Contest.

- Cameron County 4-H had 735 total entries at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show, 21 of our members made the Sale of Champions.
4-H member’s county-wide host Annual 4-H Holiday Help for needy families-donated toys.

4-H Council Officers participate at a 4-H Marine Camp during their Annual 4-H Leadership Officers Retreat.

4-H members host Annual 4-H Bay Fishing Tournament. This 4-H County Council annual fund raiser supports all 4-H county events.

County Commissioner David A. Garza addresses 4-H members during a 4-H Leader Conference.
Junior Master Gardeners Outcome Summary - Cameron County, 2010

Relevance

Youths who are elementary school age are increasingly unaware of how fruits, vegetables, and ornamentals are produced. They are also unaware of the processes involved in producing fruits, vegetables, and other horticultural related products. It is important that youth be aware of how important the preservation of the environment is in relation to producing these products. Youth must also be made aware that fruits and vegetables grown at home are tastier and healthier as they are free of chemicals and preservatives that can be harmful to one’s health.

Response

Educational lessons were conducted at Castaneda Elementary School in Brownsville where administrators, teachers, and students were able to attend and learn. Lessons were conducted in a variety of horticultural related areas. These lessons included lectures and hands on activities in which students were able to plant flowers, vegetables, and even trees during an Arbor Day celebration. Close to 300 students attended the arbor day celebration in which students were able to assist in the actual planting of a tree. Other educational lessons included soils and site selection, planting and maintaining your garden, and harvesting.

Results

Students learned about the importance being good stewards of the land while also learning about establishing a vegetable garden. They learned about the importance of organic vegetables and the use of an integrated pest management approach to reduce pesticide usage.

Students were administered a pre-program questionnaire in which they had an average of -6.8 or 68% of the questions wrong. Students were then given an identical post program questionnaire at the conclusion of programming. In the post-program questionnaire, students averaged -2.9 or 29% of the questions wrong. In addition, in the pre-program questionnaire, no one answered all the questions correctly and three students got all the questions wrong. In the post-program questionnaire, nine students answered all the questions correctly and 100% of the students answered at least some of the questions correctly.
Youth Higher Education Awareness Outcome Summary - Cameron County, 2010

Relevance

There are many at risk under-privileged youth who are unaware of the many higher education opportunities available to them here in South Texas. They are also unaware of the finances needed and the funding that is available to them in order to acquire a higher education degree. These groups of students are often overlooked by school counselors and thus fail to graduate high school and in most cases fail to attend an institution of higher education. They are then often relegated to mostly low paying jobs that have little or no opportunity for career advancement.

Response

Educational lessons were conducted at the Rio Hondo Alternative Education Center utilizing the College for Texans curriculum. Lessons were delivered using power point technology as well as handouts that were given to participants. Educational lessons included local higher education institutions, financial aid 101, financial impact of college degrees, and possible degree programs and related careers. Students were informed about the expected salaries that they should expect to earn related to their level of education obtained. They were also informed about the many expenses that one will incur once they are living on their own and having to pay for all of their own expenses. This made them realize that trying to live comfortably on the salary of a high school drop-out would be extremely challenging if not impossible.

Results

Students gained a greater knowledge in the areas of higher education, financial aid, and careers as witnessed by the results of their pre and post program questionnaire. Students missed an average of -5.1 or 41.6% of the questions on the pre program questionnaire. Every student scored a 100 on the post program questionnaire. There was no change in the number of students who said they planned on going to college after graduation. One student commented on how he was now planning on graduating high school early and going to college, whereas before programming, he had no plans on even graduating high school in the immediate future.
Cameron County Leadership Advisory Board


Leadership Advisory Board Members 2010

State Representative Eddie Lucio III and County Commissioner David A. Garza

Extension Volunteer Recognition Event held December 1, 2010

State Representative Eddie Lucio III addresses Extension volunteers “Importance to Volunteer in the Community”.

Cameron County Commissioner David A. Garza received an award at Extension Volunteer Recognition.
Emergency Management

The purpose of the Cameron County Emergency Management Plan is to provide an opportunity for individuals, families, businesses, and communities learn how to better prepare for unexpected events, mitigate to reduce risk, and how to recover from whatever event they may have experienced. Goals: Inform Citizens, Increase Awareness, Citizen Preparedness steps to prepare for a Hurricane and Create A Volunteer Base within their family unit.

This year Extension agent initiated county-wide workshops/educational exhibits on Emergency Management to provide residents information on a wide array of topics; Preparing for the Unexpected, Emergency Food and Water Supplies, Protecting your Home from Hurricane Wind Damage: Boarding Windows, Evacuation Guidelines for People with Special Needs, Power Outage Checklist, Mosquito Control, and Sea Grant publication-The Eye of the Storm in English and Spanish.

The Cameron County Extension staff and Expanded Food and Nutrition staff delivered Extension Eden publications were distributed throughout the year at educational programs and Extension educational exhibits.

Extension agents Jennifer Herrera and Tony Reisinger provide information to county residents, “Preparing for the Unexpected”.

Extension agents Beatriz R. Loya and Lilian Mezquida at County Judicial System Bldg. Emergency Management Extension publication were made available to local residents.
Texas AgriLife Extension Service Cameron County

Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service Staff

Dr. Enrique Perez
County Extension Agent-Agriculture

Lilian Mesquida
County Extension Agent-Family Resource

Marco Ponce
County Extension Agent- 4-H Youth & Development

Tony Reisinger
County Extension Agent- Coastal & Marine Resources

Jennifer Herrera
County Extension Educator- Horticulture

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