



Extension Education in Duval County
Making a Difference
2010

*Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.*

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:

Duval County – Summary of Educational Contact

- Total Contacts – 15,258
- Contact Hours via Educational Programs – 25,269
- Contacts by Volunteers – 2,406
- Total Youth Contacts – 2,307
- 4-H Members - 159
- 4-H Leaders - 17
- 4-H Clubs - 5
- Curriculum Enrichment Participants – 654
- Office Contacts – 237
- Site Visits – 2,828
- Phone Calls – 252
- Newsletter/Mail/E-Mail Contacts – 2,250
- Web Contacts – 835
- Radio Programs – 0
- News Releases - 9

2010 Duval County Agriculture and Natural Resources Programs Developed By: Samuel D. Gavito, Duval County Extension Agent

The Duval County Agriculture and Natural Resources Educational Programs for land owners were implemented by the Duval County Extension Office. These programs were in partnership with Jim Hogg, Brooks, and Jim Wells counties. The committees involved with these programs include the Duval Leadership Advisory Board and the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. The programs for 2010 which include the following were found to be relevant to our local land owners due to the extensive amount of ranching and wildlife ranch operations in Duval County and in the immediate surrounding counties.

■ **Brush Country Hay Show** – Samples of hay are submitted by individual land owners to be tested for protein and fiber content. Samples are submitted to the soil testing laboratory in College Station by the Duval Extension Office and results are reviewed at our annual hay show program. Fifty hay samples were submitted this year by land owners from the four-county area. This year the topics included army worm control, weed control through herbicides and farm income. Guest speakers included Dr. Roy Parker, Mac Young, Benny Martinez, and Samuel Gavito.

■ **Africanized Bee and Fire Ant Program** – Dr. Raul Villanueva (Texas AgriLife Extension Service Entomology Specialist) was the guest speaker on topics which included the fire ant, carpenter ant, and the Africanized bee. Adults interested in this program included local homeowners and pesticide company employees from San Diego, Alice and Kingsville. This program was initiated due to the request from local homeowners and the NRCS office in Benavides.

■ **Brush Country Ranch and Range Seminar** – A ranch/wildlife seminar was presented by the Duval/Jim Wells Extension Office at the Agua Poquita West Ranch located six miles south of Benavides on Highway 339 South. Guest speakers included Joe Pascal on beef, Benny Martinez on weed control, and Sam Gavito on wildlife food plots. Eighty-two landowners were present from the four-county area interested in managing their ranch for livestock and wildlife.

2010 Brush Country Water Well Screening

Relevance:

Landowners in Duval, Jim Wells, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Live Oak Counties use water wells for their livestock and homeowner use. It is up to the landowner to screen his respective water well for impurities. The water well program allows landowners to screen their individual water wells for contaminants which include arsenic, fecal bacteria, nitrates and salinity. Extension Agents in the four-county area teamed up to coordinate a Multi-County Water Screening Workshop and Water Quality Awareness Program for well owners in their respective counties. In April, agents developed a news release and distributed to clientele and local media to inform well owners on the importance of screening water samples and testing wells for contaminants. Clientele were also informed of the upcoming water screening workshop and instructed on how to collect and submit water samples. Each agent targeted approximately 50 individual well owners to promote this program.

Screening Workshop: On April 28, 2010, 78 water samples were collected from 57 cooperators and screened for the presence of fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, arsenic and salinity. Mr. John Smith, Extension Program Specialist with the Texas A&M University Soil and Crop Sciences Department provided supplies and technical assistance in screening the water samples.

Result Demonstration Report and Educational Materials: In September, a result demonstration report was developed discussing the results of the water screening workshop and the procedures used to test for contaminants. Each cooperator received a copy of the report along with their individual results. Cooperators also received printed information on how to shock chlorinate wells in order to reduce and prevent bacterial contamination, and materials on eliminating arsenic, nitrates and salinity through reverse osmosis equipment.

Results

A total of 78 water samples were submitted by 57 cooperators from the five county area and screened for bacteria, nitrates, arsenic and salinity during this program. All of the water samples were screened for bacteria, nitrates and salinity. Only 36 samples were screened for arsenic. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria was found in 16 (20.5%) of these samples. The average nitrate concentration for all samples screened was 3.73 ppm with only four samples testing 10 ppm or more (10–50 ppm). Six samples tested positive for arsenic but only one indicated a high level at 30 ppb. The average salinity of all the samples was 811 ppm with a range of 395-2095 ppm. Individual well owners with high level of contaminants were alerted to those problems and provided with information on how to correct them or to simply avoid use of that water.

The 2011 Water Screening Workshop is scheduled for May 3-5, 2011.

Brush Country White-Tailed Deer Management Program

Relevance:

White-Tailed deer operations continue to expand in Duval, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Jim Wells Counties and have significantly increased agriculture income for the four county areas. White-Tailed deer have also significantly impacted land values in Duval County due to the demand for deer leases and recreational use. White-Tailed deer are a natural resource that contributes to wildlife enterprises and must be well managed to maintain populations, recreational opportunities and continue to have a positive economic impact for respective landowners. It is important that the local Extension offices continue to educate our wildlife producers about current practices and technologies associated with these topics. The Duval County Ag. and Natural Resources Committee continues to suggest that educating landowners in Duval and surrounding counties would help increase profitability in wildlife production.

This program was targeted towards landowners interested in White-Tailed Deer Management in Duval, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Jim Wells Counties. This is the ninth annual program which attracts forty to seventy-five landowners each year.

Response:

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service hosts an educational White-Tailed deer clinic/seminar annually in Duval County the day before the White-Tailed deer rifle season opens to address this relevant issue. The clinic consisted of a tour of the Garza Ranch in Benavides, Tx. with topics being discussed at designated stops. The topics included food plots, deer densities, buck/doe ratios, the value of deer cameras, and aging deer on the hoof, plant i.d, wild hog management and laws and regulations from the Duval County Game Warden.

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service County Agents and Specialists would like to recognize the partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologists and Game Wardens, and the Wildlife Services Duval County Trapper for their support and assistance with this program.

Results:

A retrospective post evaluation instrument was utilized to measure knowledge gained and overall satisfaction with the program. Twenty four of the forty participants returned the evaluation instrument which consisted of eleven questions based on the information presented at the event. The statements were as follows:

your understanding of....

- 1) the resource needs of livestock, exotics, and wildlife – 16 of the 24 increased knowledge by 40%
- 2) the role of livestock, exotics, and wildlife in fever tick control – 9 of the 24 increased by 35%
- 3) the role of control techniques feral hog damage abatement – 14 of the 24 increased by 28%
- 4) the use of cameras in documenting and managing wildlife – 16 of the 24 increased by 35%
- 5) the role of annual census surveys for deer density estimations – 17 of the 24 increased by 30%
- 6) the duties and responsibilities of the Game Warden – 10 of the 24 increased by 27%
- 7) the importance of estimating buck/doe ratios – 16 of the 24 increased by 40%
- 8) the importance of knowing what to look for in aging buck on the hoof – 15 of the 24 increased by 32%
- 9) the importance of recognizing brush species and their role for white-tail deer – 14 of the 24 increased by 30%
- 10) the role of a Wildlife Management Plan – 17 of the 24 increased by 42%
- 11) the role of a wildlife food plot – 17 of the 24 increased by 45%

(34.9% overall knowledge gained)

Twenty three out of the twenty four (95.8%) were mostly to completely satisfied with the information being what was expected to receive, accuracy of the information, easy to understand, timeliness of information, helpfulness of the information, relevance of the examples used, instructors knowledge level of subject matter, and instructors response to questions.

Comments made on the evaluation instrument were based mainly on the tour of the ranch and the timely stops made where the topics were discussed.

The 2010 Duval County 4-H and Youth Development programs were implemented by the Duval County Extension Office, Duval Leadership Advisory Board, Adult Volunteers, and Project Leaders. The 2010 youth programs which include the following have been found to be relevant due to the demographics and rural area we reside in.

- **2010 Horsemanship Clinic** – Thirteen kids from Duval and Brooks counties participated in a 2-day Horsemanship Clinic provided by the Animal Science Department in College Station. This event occurred at the Saenz Ranch located south of San Diego. The kids learn from professional equine instructors proper riding techniques. This program is designed to help local 4-H youth to compete at equine events.
- **2010 Duval Classic Prospect Show** - In November a 2-day prospect show in Benavides is held for 4-H and FFA members to exhibit their market animals. This year 180 kids from the south Texas area participated. The exhibitors use these prospect shows to prepare themselves for county and major shows in the future. Prizes included buckles, garment bags, duffle bags and coffee mugs.
- **2010 District 12 Rifle Competition** – Duval County hosted the District 12 Rifle Match at the Duval Shooting Complex, 6 miles west of Benavides. There were 120 4-Her's from District 12 who participated in the event. Three senior teams qualify for the state match in Rosenberg from each district in Texas.
- **2010 Brush Country 50 Meter Rifle Match** – Duval 4-H Shooting Club hosted the 1st Annual 50 Meter Invitational .22 Rifle Match at the Duval Shooting Complex in July. This was in preparation of the State Games in San Antonio. Forty-five 4-Her's participated from District 12. This program was implemented due to the request of adults in District 12 who wanted their kids to prepare for the State Games in San Antonio.
- **2010 "Friends of NRA" Dinner** – The Duval 4-H Shooting Club Adult Volunteers hosted the 2nd Annual Friends of NRA Dinner in October. The dinner raised \$29,000 for the Friends of NRA. The Duval Extension Office subsequently submitted a grant for \$6,000 for the Duval 4-H Shooting Club benefit. This year we are requesting equipment to assist our shotgun program.
- **Ag Fair** – 4th grade elementary students from San Diego and Freer attended the Ag Fair at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds. Duval sent 152 kids to the event. The Ag Fair included topics of interest for the kids in agriculture awareness such as milking of a dairy cow, beef bi-products, cotton, wildlife, and wool.
- **Operation Detour** – In May, the Duval Extension Office collaborated with the U.S. Border Patrol stationed in Laredo to present the Operation Detour Program to the San Diego High School students and the Benavides Jr. High and High School students. There were 250 students who attended the program which focused on drug prevention and the drug cartel operations in Mexico which are also involved in America.

- Sheep and Goat Clinic
- Duval County Fair in San Diego, Tx
- Freer County Fair in Freer, Tx
- San Antonio Livestock Show
- Houston Livestock Show
- 4-H District Events
- Texas 4-H State Shooting Games

Duval County Youth Wildlife Program 2010

Relevance:

As today's youth are further removed from agriculture and natural resources, they do not understand the importance of agriculture and how it impacts their daily lives. With limited resources of a small community/town, it is important that Extension offers support and enrichment to students. This program targets 7th grade students attending the Benavides Junior High in Duval County and provides the following educational components: educational support materials on wildlife, wildlife field trips, pre and post tests, instructor evaluation, and information on wildlife opportunities for the future. This program was identified as an issue for the Duval County Extension office to address by the Leadership Advisory Board two years ago. This is the 2nd annual wildlife youth program in Duval County.

Response:

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service hosted an educational youth field day on October 26, 2010, three miles east of Benavides at the residence of Luis Beto Garza. The field day consisted of 7th grade students arriving at 9:00am on the school bus and gathering in the back patio of the residence. The 1st presentation was given by Dr. Megan Dominguez (Extension Range Specialist), on turkeys which included a power point with visual aids. The 2nd presentation was given by Dr. Scott Henke (Wildlife Science Professor at Texas A&M Kingsville), on coyotes, which included a power presentation with visual aids. The students then walked to the pond located on the property and were given a talk on laws and regulations by the Duval County Game Warden. The Parks and Wildlife Biologist then talked to the students on types of rods and reels, artificial lures, dead baits, tying knots, setting the drag on the reel and the basic food chain of the large mouth bass.

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service County Agents and Specialists would like to recognize the partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologists and Game Warden, the Professors from Texas A&M Kingsville, and the Benavides High School Principal and staff for their support and assistance with this program.

Results:

A pre-post test evaluation instrument was utilized to measure knowledge gained and overall satisfaction with the program. Twenty eight students returned the evaluation instruments which consisted of questions based on the information presented at the event. The questions were as follows:

- 1) Wild Turkeys usually nest _____ -14 of 28 increased knowledge- 50%
- 2) The subspecies of wild turkey we have in south Texas _____ - 18 of 28 increased knowledge-64%
- 3) Which characteristics are found only on male gobblers _____ - 4 of 28 increased knowledge- 14%
- 4) Young turkeys are called _____ -17 Of 28 increased knowledge- 61%
- 5) Young turkeys can fly around _____ -25 Of 28 increased knowledge-89%
- 6) How many eggs does a hen lay in her nest _____ -16 of 28 increased knowledge- 57%

- 1) Coyotes are found _____ - 13 of 28 increased knowledge-46%
 - 2) Average weight of a coyote in Texas is _____ - 25 of 28 increased knowledge-89%
 - 3) Typical Coyote density is _____ -10 of 28 increased knowledge-36%
 - 4) Coyotes disperse from their parents territory at _____ - 18 of 28 increased knowledge-64%
 - 5) Coyotes occur _____ -26 of 28 increased knowledge-93%
 - 6) Coyotes are _____ -20 of 28 increased knowledge-71%
 - 7) Do coyotes regularly eat livestock _____ - 17 of 28 increased knowledge-61%
 - 8) Problems associated with coyote control include _____ - 5 of 28 increased knowledge-18%
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- 1) Under 17 rears of age, you _____ required to have a fishing license.– 1 of 28 increased knowledge-3%
 - 2) A large mouth bass is a _____ - 1 of 28 increased knowledge-3%
 - 3) Number in your possession is _____ - 12 of 28 increased knowledge-43%
 - 4) Bass has to measure at least _____ inches to be kept – 19 of 28 increased knowledge-68%
 - 5) The _____ is the preferred food of the large mouth bass. – 4 of 28 increased knowledge-14%
 - 6) An _____ is used to imitate a live bait fish. – 10 of 28 increased knowledge-36%
 - 7) A _____ is where we put all of our tackle. – 2 of 28 increased knowledge-7%
 - 8) How satisfied are you with the program? – 24 of 28 completely satisfied-85%
 - 9) Would you recommend this program to others? – 25 of 28 would recommend-89%

(53.1% overall knowledge gained)

The Benavides High School Principal and staff liked the program so much they have asked if we could host an event every six weeks. The students were very enthusiastic. The presenters stayed all day. It was very enjoyable.

NEFE High School Youth Program 2010

Relevance:

When it comes to learning about how to handle and manage money, any knowledge a student gains from a course on the subject isn't worth much if there isn't a way to turn what they learn into real actions that result in positive habits. That is what the NEFE High School Financial Planning Program® does for students. Students create their own financial plan, create their own budget, propose a personal saving and investing plan and select strategies to use in handling credit and managing their debt. They also demonstrate how to use various financial services, create a personal insurance plan and examine how their choice of career and lifestyle will affect their financial plan.

It is important that the Duval Extension Office offer support and curriculum enrichment to students due to the limited resources of a small community/town. The issue was addressed to the Duval Extension agent by the Benavides High School Principal, last year when this program began, and was highly supported by the Leadership Advisory Board.

This program is targeting the Benavides High School twelfth grade students. There are twenty one students in the class. The instructor is Mrs. Lillian Gonzalez.

Response:

The Benavides High School teacher reviewed the NEFE curriculum with the Duval Extension Agent and the Curriculum Director in August, 2010, and began to teach Unit One in September. This started with a hands on computer program called "Reality Check" where the students input real life situations to figure how much they will need to live on after High School. Then the program was taught two to three times a week using the NEFE teacher manual and student guide. The students covered topics such as, smart goals, financial plans, budgeting, keeping track of expenses, making money work for them, compound and fixed interest rates, late fees on credit cards, and buying a house or vehicle.

The Duval Extension Office would like to recognize the partnership with the Benavides Independent School District for their support and assistance with this program.

Results:

This program has not been officially evaluated thru any evaluation instrument, although, the instructor will do a retrospective test in the near future, The comments made by the instructor have been very positive, as she wants to continue the course in the new year. The High School Principal and Curriculum Director have both echoed these comments. This program is still in the "new" stage for the school, but we do know that the curriculum will continue to get better in this school district.

The teacher has asked for assistance from the Duval Extension agent to look for additional visual aids and power points to use with the teacher guide and assistance with the evaluation instrument for the future. The instructor also said that twelve of the twenty one students are really enjoying the class.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Duval County

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