



## Extension Education in JIM HOGG 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:

## **Jim Hogg County – Summary of Educational Contact**

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- 94 4H members. 55% increase from 2009.
- 6 Screened Adult Volunteers
- 7588 Total Educational Contacts
- 121 Office Visits from Clientele
- 327 Site Visits by Agent to Clientele
- 444 Telephone Calls
- 24 News Articles

## **Jim Hogg County Rangeland Management Plan 2010.**

Developed by Lawrence Perez, Jim Hogg County Extension Agent - ANR

**Relevance:** Jim Hogg County is one of the few in Texas that have high arsenic levels indigenous to its water supply. This rural county depends on underground aquifers for private well water to serve individual homeowners and the water supply corporation for the town of Hebbronville. It is the main source of safe drinking water for a large percentage of residents. Other contaminants are also found in well water in these counties, and few residents are knowledgeable about what constitutes a “safe level” of these particular agents.

**Response:** A program was developed by extension agent Larry Perez in cooperation with the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University to test for unsafe compounds in local wells that are sources for household drinking water, agricultural uses such as livestock or horticulture, and use these tests to educate local high school students. A high school environmental science class at Hebbronville High School was invited to participate to gain first hand knowledge of scientific processes and protocols. It is hoped that by teaching the young men and women of Jim Hogg County, they will be able to help teach others and alleviate any misinformation.

**Results:** This program took place over a 2 day period with a “Pre-Test” being given to students on day 1. The pre test was administered, then an educational program explaining all aspects of the sampling process was given such as what they were going to sample for, how to take a sterile sample, and quantities allowed. The students were then instructed to bring in a sterile water sample from a water well. Most of these samples were to be from ranches in Jim Hogg county.

The following day, after transport, the samples were logged in, and assigned a sample number. A total of 35 samples were submitted. The students began testing for 4 items: 1) nitrates, 2) fecal coliform, 3) arsenic, and 4) measureable salinity. Of the samples turned in from Jim Hogg County, none were positive for fecal coliform. Only 2 returned positive for arsenic and of those positive samples, all were within the acceptable limits. The average salinity was 811 ppm(parts per million), and the average nitrates was 3.73 ppm.

After the sampling was done, a post test was administered. The same questions were asked on the post test as were asked on the pretest.

A total of 20 students participated in both the pretest and post test. Both tests had 6 questions. Of the 120 questions answered on the pre test, students missed a total of 58 questions for an average score of 51.

After the program, the post test was administered and of the 120 questions asked, students only missed 7 questions for an average score of 94.

**Future Plans:** Future plans are to expand this program in the Jim Hogg County ISD.

## Jim Hogg County Game Management Plan 2010.

Developed by Lawrence Perez, Jim Hogg County Extension Agent - ANR

**Relevance:** Jim Hogg County is an extremely rural county that depends on hunting for a large percentage of the landowner income. The need to continue to develop this income generator is great. Because of the economic importance of the species that are hunted in the area, predator control and feral hog control is a topic that is of utmost importance.

**Response:** A program was developed by extension agents Samuel Gavito (Duval County) and Larry Perez (Jim Hogg County) for landowners to increase their knowledge of the management of white-tailed deer, therefore increasing the value of deer for a more economically valuable deer lease. Topics of the program this year were: Food plots; Deer densities; Buck/doe ratios; The value of deer cameras; Aging deer on the hoof; Plant ID; and Wild hog management. This program was expanded this year to include Jim Wells county and Brooks county. The target audience for this program were landowners interested in white-tailed deer management. Participants were from Jim Wells county, Jim Hogg county, Duval county, and Brooks county. County Extension agents, USDA employees, NRCS employees, as well as Texas Parks and Wildlife personnel also attended for professional development representing counties in the south Texas brush country area. Collaborators included the local game wardens, the Duval County Parks and Wildlife biologist and the Wildlife biologist with the National Resource Conservation Service.

**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 while aging a 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.

When going over the evaluations of this program, it was considered by attendees as the “best one you’ve had” according to one of the comments. Acknowledgements go to Mr. Sam Gavito, County Extension Agent in Duval County, Rogelio Mercado, County Extension Agent in Jim Wells County, and Nikolo Guerra County Extension Agent in Brooks County for their cooperation in this multi-county event.

**Future Plans:** This program will be moved from Duval county to Brooks county next year.

## **Jim Hogg County 4H Shooting Sports Outcome Plan 2010.**

Developed by Lawrence Perez, Jim Hogg County Extension Agent - ANR

**Relevance:** In a county with only one town, Jim Hogg County is an extremely rural county with a youth population that enjoys the outdoors. Most outdoor activity centers around the “ranchito”, hunting lease or friends and relatives ranches. With this background, kids are around firearms most of the time with little to no formal training in the safety and use of firearms.

**Response:** The 4H shooting sports program was introduced in Jim Hogg county by county agent Larry Perez for youth members of Jim Hogg and surrounding counties. The aim of the program (no pun intended), was to have a safe and educational environment so that students could learn how to use a bow or firearms from someone specifically trained on how to do so. Another objective of this program is to use the shooting sports project to foster life skills through participation. This past year (2010), enrollment in this program doubled from the previous year.

**Results:** To determine whether or not our program was meeting its objectives, an evaluation instrument was prepared and distributed to participants. We looked at three areas and asked questions pertinent to these 3 areas: 1) Personal Development, 2) Knowledge, and 3) Skills, and asked each member: “How have you changed as a result of your involvement in this project?” Using the columns “not at all”, “very little”, “somewhat”, and “greatly”, participants completed the survey. After tabulating the results, one thing was immediately noted...100 % of all participants increased positive behavior in all aspects. Results of questions in the personal development section revealed that 83% of participants indicated that they have changed greatly because of shooting sports when it comes to “showing respect for others” and “cooperating with others”. In section 2, we evaluated knowledge. **The only question to get a “changed greatly” 100% in any category was the statement: “My knowledge of shooting safety has increased”.** Only one participant stated that their knowledge of sportsmanship only increased “somewhat”, where all other participants knowledge of sportsmanship increased greatly. In the last section, skills were evaluated. The statements with the highest degree of change were: 1) “my ability to draw the bow has increased”, 2) “my ability to use correct form has increased” and 3) “my ability to improve my score has increased”. The survey allowed for comments and the one that sums up the entire section was: “I learned to have fun and try to do your best”.

**Future Plans:** This project will continue and grow to include shotgun and light rifle events.

# Texas AgriLife Extension Service

## JIM HOGG County

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