



Extension Education in McMullen 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:

## **McMullen County – Summary of Educational Contact**

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- **Total Educational Programs Conducted – 195**
- **Total Participants – 11, 189**
- **Contact Hours – 16, 539**
- **4-H Members – 74**
- **4-H Leaders – 15**
- **Curriculum Enrichment Participants – 50**
- **Office Contacts – 197**
- **Site Visits - 248**

## Range Management in McMullen County

### Relevance

There are over 83 million acres of pastureland in Texas. Native rangelands serve as a vital resource in livestock production and for wildlife habitat. Control of noxious weeds and invasive brush species on native rangelands continues to be a challenge for landowners. Brush sculpting allows landowners and wildlife managers to maintain or improve wildlife habitat. Livestock producers should utilize range monitoring and proper stocking rates to improve sustainability and rangeland health. McMullen County has minimal row crop production with over 730,000 acres in rangeland in which beef cattle production and wildlife resources are vital to the area economy. Members of the Agricultural and Natural Resource Committee, Soil and Water Conservation District Directors, and the EQUIP Working Group have identified invasive species such as mesquite, prickly pear, acacia species, and noxious weeds affecting the health of rangeland in the area.

### Response

Prescribe Burn Planning Consultations

Result Demonstration Applied Research in Range Management

Result Demonstrations – Aerial Foliar Treatments of Mesquite Evaluation (San Miguel)

Result Demonstration – Mesquite Control Trail Evaluation (Tilden Ranch)

Result Demonstration – Mesquite Control Trail Evaluation (Dull Ranch)

CEU Recertification Program

### Results

Evaluations questionnaire indicated a 55% gain in knowledge to control noxious weed *Isocoma drummondi*, common goldenweed. 100 % of the participants are able to identify common goldenweed compared to 10% previously. A 65% increase in knowledge was reflected in the timing of herbicide of herbicide treatments to control annual weeds versus perennials. A 40% increase in knowledge gained was reflected on the questionnaire in the importance of using recommended application rates.



## Character Education in McMullen County

### Relevance

Historically, character education and ethics were taught in the home environment, but this has changed as demographics have changed. Our agency is poised to reach youth and has the opportunity to shape ethical young people who will have values as contributing adults. The shift in society's expectation of young people has changed and youth are more disrespectful as a result and lack manners. This problem is widespread among all youth in Texas. The issue of a lack of discipline and respect was identified during the 2004 Texas Community Futures Forum process.

### Response

In McMullen County, the Texas Building Character curriculum adopted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is utilized to target 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students of McMullen County ISD. A weekly lecture series conducted from September through December addresses one of the six virtues of good moral character which includes respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring and citizenship. A pre-test and post-test questionnaire was utilized to measure knowledge gained by students. Statements from the teachers evaluation questionnaire were utilized to document any behavior changes.

### Results

Pre-test and post-test scores reflected a 31% and 28% increase in knowledge for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students respectfully.

A 90% increase was reflected in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students being able to define the “Golden Rule” as it relates to respect.

70% increase of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students indentifying the six pillars of character correctly.

70% and 64% increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students being able to list traits of a trustworthy person correctly.

80% percent of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students could identify could list 3 traits describing a respectful person compared to 27% on the pre-test.

The following are statements taken from the teachers evaluation reflecting any changes in attitude and behavior:

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

My students recall many of the lessons, stories, games and examples which were taught in character education. They remind each other of the lessons when someone is going against one the pillars (virtues) taught.

Attitude becomes a major focus of our classroom after it is taught. I see many neat changes, some subtle changes other more dramatic.

The children glean a lot of knowledge out respecting their peers. The play they do about name calling really stick in their heads.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students don't have to be reminded of being of good character so much. They are able to identify the character pillars more easily in stories and different situations. They look forward to weekly sessions.

Every morning, my students have announcements. They are usually ready to go up on stage without being prompted. They have class jobs each week and most often I don't have to tell them to do their jobs. They take their jobs very seriously.

Future program efforts include to expand the curriculum throughout the rest of the school year which may also include "Taking a Stand" curriculum to address bullying issues affecting the youth in our county and nation.

## Jr. Master Gardner Program in McMullen County

### Relevance

The JMG program is currently used through community clubs, after school and school based programs. The JMG program has had documented success in schools validated by research studies indicating an increase in science achievement scores, increased parental involvement, improved leadership/community service, and increase knowledge and consumption of fruits and vegetables for children participating in the Junior Master Gardener Program. The purpose of the Junior Master Gardener program is to grow good kids through igniting a passion for learning, success, and service through a unique gardening education.

### Response

A spring garden was established at McMullen County ISD targeting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Garden serves as an outdoor classroom to teach students about soils, seeds, plant classification, plant identification, weeds, insect identification, plant diseases, nutrition, soil fertility and water conservation. Teaching activities are conducted twice per month from March through May.



### Results

A retrospective post evaluation was utilized to measure knowledge gained by participants.

- A 50% increase in the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students that could identify parts of a plant.
- An 80% increase in the number of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that learned to identify a monocot plant related to plant classification.
- 100% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students learned to identify dicot plants
- 90% increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students being able to recognize the different types of root systems.
- 70% percent increase in 5<sup>th</sup> grade students being able to identify a stolon and rhizome root systems.
- 90 % of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students learned the value of mulch in conserving water.

Teacher testimonial stated that the kids enjoyed setting up and working in the garden. I think that the project will really help them in science, math, and social studies too.

Future plans based on feedback include expanding the program by having a fall and spring garden.

## Science Engineering & Technology Project – Welding Project

In 2009, the McMullen 4-H Club was awarded a grant for the use of a wire feed welding machine. One of the requirements of the grant was for participants to complete a project and have project exhibited. 6 youth eager to learn welding skills participated in project workshops to develop skills utilizing wire feed welder and eventually advancing to DC stick welding machine. An agricultural mechanics project was planned and constructed during the month December 2009 thru February 2011. A shop table was constructed as an entry for the Ag. Mechanics Contest at the San Antonio Livestock Show. Participants learned about planning, designing and constructing the project. Valuable experience was gained in constructing the project in which participants learned the importance of good math skills, teamwork, communication skills, and leadership. The Welding Project as it is referred to by participants is excellent example of 4-H members learning by doing.



## One Day 4-H

On October 9, 2010, *one day 4-H* proved that one day can make a major difference in the life of an individual, a community, and a state.

*One Day 4-H*, a new community service project allows Texas 4-Her's to thank their communities, counties, and state for more than 100 years of support for 4-H and its members. Conducted by Texas 4-H for the first time in 2009, it also was the first time this type of program was presented anywhere in the United States by 4-H. In 2009, *one day 4-H* partnered with 378 other organizations, introduced 484,153 people to 4-H, raised \$120,361 for other organizations, and received \$68,458 in-kind donations.

Each participating 4-H club selected a project based on local community needs. These projects varied from community to community and included working with Meals On Wheels, Master Gardeners, the Lions Club, and UNICEF. Other clubs planted gardens and helped clean historic sites.

In 2010, McMullen 4-H Club *one day 4-H* efforts included Hilltop Cemetery Cleanup, Canned Food Drive, and Trash Pick-Up.

45 Participants assisted with mowing, weed trimmer and trash pick-up at Hilltop Cemetery. 80 pounds of canned goods collected for local food bank (Tilden Baptist Church). Trash pick-up conducted from school track to trash trailer collection site, roadside collection.





# Texas AgriLife Extension Service McMullen County

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