



Extension Education in Zapata County
Making a Difference
2010

Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to serving Texans

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.

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.

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:

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

Zapata County – Summary of Educational Contact

COUNTY STATS

Founded: 1858

County Seat: Zapata

Other Communities: San Ygnacio, Ramireno, Chihuahua, Lopeno, Falcon

Area: 999 Square Miles

Population: 14,200 (2008)

Agricultural Products: Beef Cattle, Hunting, Vegetables

4-H Clubs: 3

4-H Members: 233

CONTACTS SUMMARY

Phone.....	340
Office Visits.....	188
Site Visits.....	248
Email/Mail.....	563
Total Contacts.....	1399

Beef Improvement Program

Relevance

The beef industry is constantly undergoing change. High feed prices, disease & illness, genetic invariability, market trends, consumer demands and numerous environmental obstacles are just a few of the problems facing today's beef producer. USDA Statistics show that Texas beef receipts were \$6.9 Billion (36% of the state's ag income) in 2008, making Texas the #1 beef producing state in the nation. Not only do these beef producers have a colossal impact on the local, state and national economy, they are also responsible for feeding an ever increasing world population.

Response

In Zapata County, there are three major program efforts implemented to impact local beef producers:

- **Beef Herd Health Clinic** provided local beef producers with the knowledge and tools to properly manage their cow herd's health, providing an increase in profits for them and a safe, wholesome food product for the consumer.
- **Bull Selection Workshop** educated producers on how to improve the genetics of their herds through proper sire selection and the tools available when selecting breeding bulls for their cow/calf operations.
- **"Pasture to Plate" Beef Marketing Seminar** gave local beef producers a step by step view of each sector of the beef industry. Presenters representing cow/calf producers, sale barns, order buyers, feed yards, meat packers, and the consumer spoke on their sector's trends and preferences.

Results

Beef Herd Health Clinic participants completed a retrospective evaluation that measured both knowledge gained and intentions to adopt or behavior changed. 9 evaluations were secured from participants of the clinic.

- 81% of clinic participants learned new information
- 89% said they planned to vaccinate their calves prior to weaning
- 89% said they planned to vaccinate cows 1-3 months prior to calving

Bull Selection Workshop participants completed a retrospective evaluation that measured both knowledge gained and intentions to adopt or behavior changed. 3 evaluations were secured from participants of the workshop.

- 89% of workshop participants learned new information
- 100% said they planned to use the tools presented in the workshop when purchasing bulls
- 100% said they planned to conduct or ask for a breeding soundness exam when purchasing bulls

"Pasture to Plate" Beef Marketing Seminar participants completed a retrospective evaluation that measured both knowledge gained and intentions to adopt or behavior changed. 11 evaluations were secured from participants of the seminar.

- 96% of seminar participants learned new information
- 82% said they planned to change the method, time, or type of cattle they marketed

Other Agriculture/Natural Resources Programs

Monthly Newsletter

The *Zapata Brush Country Ag Update* newsletter was released every month to its subscribers.

Pesticide Education

One Private Applicator Training was held in Zapata County. TDA administered tests immediately following the training and 100% of all tested received their licenses.

Horticulture

Several horticultural calls and site visits were administered throughout the year. Most common issues include Citrus Tree Care, Turf Management, and undesirable plant control.

Looking Ahead...

2011's programs will focus on Range & Wildlife Management. Programming will include a Range Nutrition Clinic, Prescribed Burn Workshop and Seminar for producers who manage their properties for both beef cattle and wildlife.

Ag Literacy Program

Relevance

Statistics show that only 2% of the U.S. population is involved in production agriculture. As today's youth are further removed from farming, their understanding of agriculture and how it impacts their daily lives is rapidly deteriorating. Because these youth will one day mature into the leaders and voters of tomorrow, it is crucial that we educate them on the integral role agriculture has on their individual lives and society at large.

Response

In Zapata County the Ag Literacy Program was developed to provide agricultural education to 4th grade students in Zapata County. Programming efforts included:

- The **“Agriculture: In Touch With You Daily”** Lesson was given to students in a classroom setting. This lesson included instruction and hands on demonstrations that utilized everyday grocery and consumer items to instill the relevance of agriculture on a personal level.
- The **Zapata County Ag Day** Event was held to give 4th grade students an up close and personal view of production agriculture and its products. 240 4th grade students along with ZCISD faculty and staff were bused to the event, where they gained hands on knowledge in beef cattle, sheep & goat, and small grain crop production.

Results

The **“Agriculture: In Touch With You Daily”** Lesson's impact was determined from pre & post evaluations given to 4th grade participants and were administered by class teachers. 166 pre tests and 170 post tests were returned for compilation.

- A **10.2%** overall increase of knowledge was measured
- Student knowledge of basic agriculture increased **16.8%**
- Student knowledge of agricultural by products increased **7.2%**

The **Zapata County Ag Day** Event's impact was determined from pre & post evaluations given to 4th grade participants and were administered by class teachers. 65 pre tests and 106 post tests were returned for compilation.

- A **9.2%** overall increase of knowledge was measured
- Student knowledge of small grain production increased **4.9%**
- Student knowledge of beef & dairy cattle production increased **9.5%**
- Student knowledge of sheep & goat production increased **15.9%**
- Student knowledge of swine production increased **6.4%**

“Quality Counts” Youth Livestock Program

Relevance

Texas has the largest number of 4-H and FFA livestock projects in the nation. In Zapata County, 201 4-H members participated in market livestock projects during the 2009-2010 year. With this opportunity comes a responsibility for each exhibitor to learn and demonstrate the highest standards, both in personal character and in the feeding and care of their animals. “Quality Counts” is designed to teach young people the importance of displaying good character in carrying out livestock projects, and in every aspect of their lives.

Response

In Zapata County, three non-species specific livestock clinics were implemented using the “Quality Counts” curriculum:

- **Project Selection Clinic** taught youth livestock exhibitors about how to properly select their livestock projects. Chapter 1 of the “Quality Counts” Curriculum, which covered the purpose of 4-H/FFA and livestock projects, was included in the clinic.
- **Project Management & Nutrition Clinic** taught youth livestock exhibitors about how important proper nutrition is not only to the success of their project in the ring, but also to the quality and safety of the animal product consumed. Chapter 2 of the “Quality Counts” Curriculum, which covered the impact of youth livestock projects on the meat industry and producing a safe product, was included in the clinic.
- **Project Health Management & Showmanship Clinic** taught youth livestock exhibitors about the proper procedures and practices needed when managing animal health and also the importance of sportsmanship in the ring. Chapter 3, which covered proper medication and feed label use and Chapter 4, which covered Sportsmanship vs. Gamesmanship, were included in the clinic.

Results

3 “Quality Counts” Youth Livestock Clinics had a combined attendance of 5 participants. Pre & Post Evaluations were administered before and after the clinic series to measure knowledge gained. 2 pre-tests and 2 post-tests were completed. Participants showed an increase in knowledge of **2.5%** in the Sportsmanship vs. Gamesmanship content from Chapter 4 of the curriculum.

4-H Livestock Projects

Zapata County 4-H members exhibited their livestock projects at the Zapata County Fair, San Antonio Livestock Exposition, and various prospect shows. A Sheep & Goat Showmanship clinic was held in January to give newer exhibitors hands-on experience in the show ring before the county fair. Livestock Projects in Zapata County included Beef, Meat Goats, Poultry, Rabbits, Sheep and Swine.

Looking Ahead...

Texas AgriLife Extension Service will continue to promote ag literacy to the youth of Zapata County. A Community Service oriented program will show 4-H members the importance of citizenship and giving back to the community. Livestock projects will continue to be pursued and many have shown interest in starting a 4-H Shooting Sports Program in Zapata County.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Zapata County

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