



Extension Education in Atascosa County

Making a difference
2009



Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.

the day, serving diverse rural and urban populations across the state.

AgriLife Extension 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. AgriLife Extension programs have continued ever since to address the emerging issues of

Through a well-organized network of program specialists, professional educators, and some 98,000 trained volunteers, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service 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 AgriLife Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to AgriLife 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.

These are just a few highlights of AgriLife Extension's impacts on Atascosa County and its people:

Atascosa County – Summary of Educational Contacts

- Total Educational Programs Conducted – 103
- Total Participants – 5978
- Contact Hours via Educational Programs – 20,757
- 4-H Members – 292
- 4-H Leaders – 62
- 4-H Clubs – 10
- Curriculum Enrichment Participants – 1211
- Office Contacts – 878
- Site Visits – 700
- Newsletter/Mail/E-Mail Contacts – 894 Agriculture, 3600 4H Newsletter contacts
- Web Contacts – 605
- Radio Programs – 14
- News Releases – 54
- Ag Fair – 568 Youth



2009 District 12 Food Safety GAPs Initiative Outcome Summary South Region Food Safety Team Report

Impact Statement

With the California spinach outbreak in September of 2006, the California leafy greens industry has initiated a Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) requirement for the industry to regain consumer confidence in leafy greens. This document has been used by the retail industry such as HEB to be a standard for all growers in the United States growing fresh produce crops. While GAPs practices have existed for years, this document has added documentation and thresholds (metrics) for water quality, documentation/land metrics for animal encroachment (cattle, hogs, goats, sheep, and deer) and manure based amendments and sprays. The outbreak of *Salmonella* sp. on peppers/tomatoes in 2008 continued to keep food safety concerns on the forefront of Texas production and Texas retail vegetable industry throughout the 2009 year since the source of the outbreak originated in Mexico but the products were distributed by a produce company in South Texas. Several factors may contribute to microbial contamination of produce but water quality of irrigation water is often blamed for these outbreaks as it was in the pepper/tomato outbreak in 2008. Producers practicing Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) address these concerns at the farm level thereby decreasing these risks. Currently, there are very few producers that are GAPs certified in Texas. Part of being certified is that the water quality of the irrigation water is acceptable and documented. Irrigation water quality has been something very few producers have documented on their farms in Texas. The water testing results in a private lab is quite costly (\$30 per sample) and collection of the water samples is largely time consuming in terms of coordination of when the produce crops were being irrigated. This water quality test is also different from what producers and county extension agents are accustomed when it comes to the procedure for collecting samples and sending promptly for the 24 hour testing requirements. Many factors can contribute to microbial contamination throughout the fresh produce process but water quality has been identified as an important step where implementation of educational practices and knowledge would impact or decrease the risk of contamination of produce. In 2009, the irrigation water quality study that was conducted in District 12 by eight county extension agents including vegetable specialist Juan Anciso in eight counties came to a completion. Irrigation water quality data was collected from 90 sites using various water sources to include surface and well water. The agents that participated included Barbara Storz, Omar Montemayor, Rolando Zamora, Marcel Valdez, Jaime Lopez, Richard Griffin, Joe Taylor, and Omar Gonzales. Most (85 out of 90 or 94.4%) of the irrigation water samples from sources in District 12 are adequate for furrow or sprinkler irrigation in vegetable crops under the guidelines for generic *E. coli* of the California Leafy Greens GAPs Agreement (see graphs below). Of the 5 water samples that could not be used under furrow or sprinkler irrigation, 3 samples or fields could be used for irrigating crops if drip irrigation were used. Therefore, 88 out of the 90 samples or 97.8% could meet the California GAPs Agreement. With this better understanding of the microbial levels in the irrigation water sources in District 12, this information should help curtail speculation from the media and consumers that irrigation water quality in South Texas may not be adequate for vegetable production. This database which will be located in the National GAPs Program website (www.gaps.cornell.edu/) will encourage more vegetable producers in South Texas to become GAPs certified since the results show no problem with the water quality whether surface or well. These irrigation water collection demonstrations have increased the knowledge of producers and county extension agents in irrigation water quality testing and collection. Food safety trainings for producers,



middle buyers and entry level workers continued to be another important area for GAPs certification in 2009 and the educational efforts in District 12. Entry level worker trainings in hand washing and hygiene were conducted in District 12 in Spanish by county agents. These county agents included Marcel Valdez, Jaime Lopez, Omar Gonzales and GAPs food safety program assistant Ashley Gregory and they helped coordinate these meetings and employ the training material. Over 120 individuals were trained in hand washing and hygiene through this effort in Spanish in 5 separate trainings. The HEB Produce Safety Training for producers and middle buyers continued in 2009 with 4 trainings in San Antonio. Over 70 individuals were trained in the new GAP metrics and 95.6% were mostly or completely satisfied with the course and training. These individuals represented over 105,000 acres of produce production in the United States and Mexico. Economic impacts based on one of the trainings indicated that median costs to implement GAPs practices on the farm to be \$239 per acre. Adopting GAPs practices on the farm could be very expensive on a per acre basis but if not implemented 65% of the median average of the total acres would be impacted either by reduction or elimination because GAPs was not implemented as a result of buyers making it mandatory. Other outcomes from the HEB food safety trainings included test averages of 82.6 and 78.9 in two of the four trainings with the first class having 50% believing that they had an above average understanding of GAPs before the training and then 77.3% having an above average understanding of GAPs after the training. The second class, respectively, had 36.8% believing that they had an above average understanding of GAPs before the training and then 93.8% having an above average understanding of GAPs after the training.

2009 Atascosa County Agriculture Plan

Developed By: Joe Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County Agriculture Plan provided a number of educational opportunities for clientele to participate in. The Atascosa Cattlemens Association, South Texas Peanut Producers Board, Atascosa Wildlife Coop, Atascosa Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, Atascosa Club Calf Producers Association, and the Atascosa County Leadership Advisory Board hosted a number of educational programs including the following:

- * Multi -County Irrigation Program
- * Private Applicator License Training
- * South Texas Peanut Growers Annual Tour
- *Brush Country Quarterly Newsletter
- * Peanut Breeding and Variety Demonstrations
- *Wildlife Field Day
- * Cattlemens Association Annual Meeting
- *Wildlife Coop Annual Meeting
- *Annual Ag Science Fair

Over 80 Atascosa County producers attended the numerous educational programs.



Result:

Atascosa County Agriculture producers received the latest educational information in Irrigation, Cotton, peanuts, Range Management, Pesticides, and Livestock production. All Atascosa County Pesticide Private Applicator License holders were reached with the Brush Country Newsletter and 29 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEU's) were offered this year. This agent also completed the Ag Increment Report for Atascosa County at the Farm and Ranch survey for the Texas Comptrollers office. Due to our efforts Atascosa County producers were able to get the latest information to help them succeed in their own operations.

2009 Landowners Educational Series Results

Summary developed by Joe G. Taylor, County Extension Agent - Natural Resources, 4-H and Youth, Atascosa County.

Relevance

The Landowners Educational Series is targeted toward new landowners in Atascosa County. The Census of Agriculture indicates that in 2002, Atascosa County had 1,539 farms and the average size was 435 acres. In 2007, Atascosa County has 1,810 farms and the average size was 356 acres. That is a 18% change increase in the number of farms and a significant reduction in the average size in acres of current farms.

Response

The Atascosa Wildlife and Fisheries Committee recognizes this trend and recommends that we need to educate our new landowners about Texas AgriLife Extension and programs offered each year. The Landowners Educational Series was advertized in the Brush Country Newsletter as well as in the local newspapers.

The programs promoted for 2009 include the following:

– Fruit and Nut Trees for Atascosa County, October 19, 2009

10 attending, 7 completed the evaluation

Dr. Larry Stein, Extension Horticulturist from Uvalde, presented a program on recommended fruit and nut tree varieties such as pecan, plum, pears, peaches, and blackberries. He also cautioned homeowners about apricots, almonds, blueberries, avocado, and other fruits needing very special care in order to survive in our alkaline soil and warm summer months.

– What's Bugging You?, October 26, 2009

12 attending, 11 completed the evaluation

Dr. Noel Troxclair, Extension Entomologist from Uvalde, addressed insects, problems, and control methods. The primary focus was armyworms, household and vegetable insects.

– Weed and Brush Management, November 2, 2009

20 attending, 16 completed the evaluation

Dr. Robert Lyons, Extension Range Specialist from Uvalde, presented the program on weed and brush management. He discussed chemical control, products, recipes, and timing of application, as well as application methods.

Results

An evaluation instrument was utilized to measure pre and post understanding at each of the three educational series meetings. A total of thirty-four participants completed the Customer Satisfaction instruments.



The results were as follow:

Customer Satisfaction

97% were mostly/completely satisfied with the overall program.

100% were satisfied with the information being accurate.

100% were satisfied with the information being easy to understand.

100% were satisfied with the completeness of information on each topic.

100% were satisfied with the timeliness of information.

91% were satisfied with the helpfulness of the information.

100% were satisfied with the quality of course material.

100% were satisfied with the relevance of examples used.

Understanding

(% of respondents who increased their understanding of the subject matter presented)

75% - Knowledge of Brush Species

81% - Knowledge of Weed Species

94% - Knowledge of Brush and Weed Chemicals for Control

100% - Knowledge of Timing of Chemical Application

100% - Moisture Conditions for Weed and Brush Control

100% - Knowledge of Forage Insects such as the Armyworm

100% - Knowledge of Household Insects

82% - Knowledge of Insecticides for Insects

100% - Knowledge of Vegetable Insects and their Control

100% - Knowledge of Recommended Fruit and Nut Tree Varieties

86% - Knowledge of Chilling Hour Requirements

86% - Knowledge of Rootstocks

86% - Knowledge of Fruit Tree Insects

100% - Knowledge of Pecan Tree Insects

71% - Knowledge of Fungal Diseases of Pecans

100% - Knowledge of a Fruit and Nut Tree Spray Schedule

Facilities

%100 were completely satisfied with the physical setting contribution to ease of listening and participation.

Anticipated Changes and Economic Impact

71% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from this activity.

51% of respondents anticipate benefitting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this extension activity.

Value of Activity

100% of respondents said implementation and programs provided by Extension were quite or extremely valuable to them.

100% of respondents would recommend this activity to others.

100% of respondents would attend another subject offered by Extension if it addressed a specific need or interest of theirs.

Summary:



Feedback from participants attending the Landowners Education Series indicates a weed and brush field day would be positive for new landowners in Atascosa County. The Atascosa Cattlemans Association has recommended this for a spring field day in Atascosa County.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to the following specialists Dr. Larry Stein, Dr. Noel Troxclair, and Dr. Bob Lyons.

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**2009 Atascosa County Youth Education Plan
Plan Summary Report**

Date of Summary: December 1, 2009

Relevance:

Youth Education is one of the top Priorities in Atascosa County. Club Manager Training is necessary to Keep Club Managers up to date .

2009

4-H Club Manager Training

Ongoing Education for 4-H Club Managers in Atascosa County

Relevance

Atascosa 4-H has ten clubs that reach 300+ countywide youth annually. Keeping club managers up to date on county, district, and state events is very relevant. It is also important that club managers understand the many facets of youth development and protection.

Response

The Atascosa County 4-H Coordinator and county staff developed a questionnaire in the fall of 2007 to find out what club managers need in the order of training to make their 4-H clubs more efficient for members. This is the second year of club manager training held in conjunction with our 4-H Council meetings.

Results

An evaluation instrument was prepared utilizing the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Participant Survey. A retrospective post survey was utilized to collect information regarding knowledge gained and utilized to improve 4-H club meetings and correspondence with the Atascosa County Extension Office.

Data

8 of 21 club managers completed the survey in November of 2009.

Before Program After Program

Satisfaction Not at All Slightly Somewhat Mostly Completely

Information is What You Expected 1 7

Accuracy of Information 8

Completeness of Information 8

Quality of Course Material 8

Instructors Knowledge 8

Instructors Speaking/Presentation 8

Instructors Organization 8

Instructors Response to Questions 8



4-H and Youth Development

Before Program

After Program

Subject	Before Program					After Program				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Club Chartering & Club Financial Management	1 12.5	0 25	3 37.5	3 37.5	1 12.5	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 25%	6 75%
Adapt Recreation in Club Meeting	1 12.5	0 0	5 62.5	1 12.5	1 12.5	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 37.5	5 62.5
Officer Training	1 12.5	0 0	3 37.5	2 25	2 25	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 25	6 75
Annual Prospect Show Fund-raiser	2 25%	0	0	0	6 75%	0	0	0	0	8 100%
Awards Banquet	2 25	0	0	0	6 75%					8 100%
Club Ed Website	7 87.5			1 12.5		2 25%	1 12.5	0	2 25	3 37.5
Program Book	2 25		2 25	1 12.5	3 37.5					8 100%
Council Meeting	1 12.5		1 12.5	2 25.0	4 50.0					8 100%

Quotes

“Willingness to help & guide us through projects.”

“The interaction with kids, adults, and our 4-H leaders.”

“Good cooperation of club leaders with Mr. Taylor, he is very dedicated to the kids of Atascosa County.”

“They include us all adults & youth.”

“The level of involvement (lots of opportunities).”

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**South Texas Buckskin and
South Texas Bobwhite Brigades**



4-H and Youth Development

Summary developed by Joe G. Taylor , County Extension Agent - Natural Resources, 4-H and Youth, Atascosa County.

Relevance

More than ever, today's youth are the future of tomorrow and need to develop an understanding, an appreciation, and a true desire to conserve our renewable natural resources. The world only has so many acres of land for which we, as humans, can live. We must also be stewards of our natural resources and protect them for use for future generations.

Response

The Texas Brigades were formed as a dream by Dr. Dale Rollins. Several county extension agents, and wildlife enthusiasts provide a week long summer education experience to promote wildlife conservation in Texas. The South Texas Buckskin and Bobwhite Brigades are camps that have survived the test of time and endure as two of the five most prestigious, state-recognized, natural resource youth camps in Texas. This agent has served on the South Texas Brigades Committee for the past six years to plan, implement and evaluate the South Texas Brigade camps. Four meetings were held in Pearsall Texas to develop the camp schedule, plan fund-raising, coordinate responsibilities, and review camp participant applications.

Results

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the South Texas Buckskin Brigade and the 12th anniversary of the South Texas Bobwhite Brigade camps. During the two camps this agent responsibilities were helping cook for all camp participants, help with judging campers projects such as tri-folds, recordbooks, etc., This agent also helps with one presentation title "Special Presentations/Mock Educational Programs". This year Frio County 4-H had one member at South Texas Buckskin Brigade and one assistant herd leader, one member at South Texas Bobwhite Brigade and one covey leader and one member at Bass Brigade. Each member indicated that the brigades camp they attended was the best educational camp they have ever been involve with. Also a pre-test and post-test were given to each of the thirty cadets attending camps each year. Questions on the test include plant identification, scoring antlers, jaw aging, plant pressing, photography, wildlife ethics, wildlife legislation, predator tracks, nutrition, anatomy and physiology, census techniques, and population dynamics. Pre and post-test scores at the two camps are as follow:



Camp	Pre-Test	Post-Test
South Texas Buckskin	42%	82%
South Texas Bobwhite	48%	84%

Texas AgriLife Extension Agents and Specialists providing leadership to South Texas Buckskin and South Texas Bobwhite Brigades include Sally Allen, Chris Boleman, Dale Rankin, Jim Gallagher, Omar Gonzales, Richie Griffin, Jeff Hanselka, Jaime Lopez, Larry Perez, Larry Pierce, Dale Rollins, and Joe Taylor.

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2009 Atascosa County 4-H Projects & Curriculum Plan

Developed By: Joe G. Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County 4-H program worked with 4-H members, volunteers, and project leaders to increase 4-H participation thru traditional and non-traditional 4-H programs that include:

- * Livestock Project Training
- *Livestock Judging Practices
- * Atascosa Co. Jr. Livestock Show



4-H and Youth Development

- * Atascosa County Fair
- * South Texas Double Trouble Prospect Show
- * Triple L Booster Club Lamb and Goat Show
- * Summer Sizzler Prospect Steer Show
- * San Antonio Livestock Show
- * Houston Livestock Show
- * Fort Worth Stock Show
- * Star of Texas Stock Show
- * 4-H District and State Events

Over 2100 contacts were made with the different projects and events that were offered.

Result:

Due to an increase in 4-H participation we had more 4-H members participate in different events at the county level as well as the District and State level. The Atascosa County 4-H program continues to work with the local school districts to help them offer 4-H enrichment curriculum like Preparing for the Unexpected, and Fred (Fathers Reading Every Day) to try to reach more than 1200 youth in the county and promote the Atascosa County 4-H program.

2009 Atascosa County 4-H Leadership & Volunteer Development Plan

Developed by : Joe G. Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County 4-H program hosted a number of leadership educational programs and activities for 4-H members and volunteers. Some of the programs that were hosted include:

- * Club Manager Training
- * Parliamentarian Procedure Training for Club Officers
- * 4H Club Manager Training
- * Atascosa 4-H Council
- * Atascosa 4H Ambassadors



- * Atascosa County 4H Camp
- * District 12 4-H Leadership Lab
- * District 12 Election Convention

Approximately 75 members and volunteers participated in the different leadership development opportunities.

Result:

The result of the leadership and volunteer development program 4-H members and volunteers that hold leadership positions were able to acquire leadership skills to make them a little better leader.

4-H club officers now have a better understanding in parliamentary procedure and conduct their meetings in a more orderly manner. Volunteer leaders also have a better understanding on their roles and responsibilities as Club Managers or Project Leaders.

As a result, 4-H club officer and volunteers are able to accomplish their roles and responsibilities as leaders in the Atascosa County 4-H program.

2009 Atascosa County 4-H Management Plan

Developed by: Joe G. Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent - Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County 4-H Management Plan was developed to address the day to day needs of the Atascosa County 4-H program. This agent along with and Adult volunteers were able to accomplish this by hosting:

- * Monthly Club Meetings
- * Project Meetings (County & State Validations)
- * Monthly Newsletters and Calendars
- * Office Web Page
- * 4-H Enrollment



4-H and Youth Development

* 4-H Club Management Trainings(Financial Review, Charter Renewal, Monthly Manager Reports, Volunteer Screening, Etc.)

A total of 292 4-H members participated in 10 different 4-H Clubs and 154 members had 271 livestock projects.

Results:

Due to our efforts in managing the Atascosa County 4-H program, the 4-H program continues to be the largest youth organization in the county. This year we established a new 4-H club to meet the demands of a growing membership(Atascosa County Equine Enthusiast. 4-H members and volunteers continued to work on providing a quality 4-H experience for all participants.

2009 Atascosa County Expanding the Local Quality 4-H Experience Plan

Developed by: Joe G. Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County 4-H Program continues to use every means possible to promote the 4-H program in Atascosa County. The following programs and activities are being used to achieve our goals.

- * School curriculum enrichment program for school districts
- * Promote 4-H in local mass media (Newspaper, Public Access T.V.)
- * 4-H Newsletters
- * School Announcements
- * Enrollment Days at Club Meetings
- * 4H Fun Day at the Pleasanton Cowboy Homecoming

A major effort to promote the Atascosa County 4-H programs occurred in the month of September thru October. A number of newspaper and Public Access ads ran in local mass media outlets and school announcements were also accomplished to reach the majority of youth eligible to participate in the 4-H program.

Result:

Due to our efforts the Atascosa County 4-H program met it goal of Maintaining the 4-H enrollment at 290 + Youth Annually. We also started a new 4-H club to help us meet the demand of increase enrollment. As we continue to promote the 4-H program and offer a quality program, we hope we can meet future 4-H enrollment goals.



2009 Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan

Developed by: Joe G. Taylor, Atascosa County Extension Agent- Ag

Response:

The Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan provides guidance for the employment of emergency resources under a local incident commands. Our local emergency management plan includes specific provisions for requesting and employing state resources to aid in managing and resolving situations for which local resources are inadequate. Atascosa County Emergency Management Plan provided outreach education to clientele that helped them reduce their risk during a disaster. The following programs and activities were conducted this year:

- * Reviewed and updated the Animal Issues Committee and Plan
- * Staff Disaster Preparedness Training
- * Office Disaster Preparedness Plan Review
- * National Preparedness week - Media Campaign
- * Patriotism thru Preparedness Program for School Enrichment
- * District 12 Emergency Management Strike Team
- * IS-100, IS-200, IS-300, IS-800, MGT-322-1 and NIMS -700

Result:

This agent updated the County Emergency Management Coordinator on the Animal Issues Committee Plan, Office Emergency Management Preparedness Plan and the Emergency Management Training this agent has attended.

Over 600 4-H families received Disaster Preparedness information through the 4-H monthly newsletters. Over 3500 people were reached through the local newspaper circulation during National Preparedness Week Media Campaign. This agent also volunteered to join the District 12 Emergency Management Strike Team to help co-workers around the state during a disaster. Due to these activities this agent also participated in continued education programs in the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Atascosa County

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