



AgriLife Extension
South Region



Texas A&M System

South
District
12



Making a Difference... ...in Brooks County

District Extension Newsletter for Commissioners' Courts in South Texas



Celia G. Salinas
Family and Consumer
Sciences

In 2007, Texas Cooperative Extension celebrated the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent and of the Texas 4-H Program. In 2008, we launched a new initiative that included a name change to AgriLife Extension. I want to thank you for your continued support of Extension and its many programs. I hope you find this newsletter helpful in updating you about the difference that Extension education is making in Brooks County and the public benefits these differences mean economically, socially, and environmentally to the community. We feel strongly that these preventive, educational approaches to community issues provide present and long term value to the County and its residents. Again, thank you for your support and please call whenever we may be of service.

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña
District Extension Administrator



Manuel Sonny Perez III
Agriculture

Supporting Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agents Rogelio Mercado, Sam Gavito, Sonny Perez and Larry Perez (CEA-Ag., Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks and Jim Hogg Counties, respectively) coordinated a Water Quality Screening Workshop in San Diego on April 28 - 30, 2008. Mr. John Smith from Texas A&M Soil and Crop Sciences Department, traveled to conduct the screening. The screening was held at the San Diego Municipal Utilities District. Eighty-five water samples were collected and submitted for screening from water wells in the four county area. More specifically twenty-nine Brooks County samples were tested for soluble salts, arsenic, nitrates and fecal coliform (bacteria). The average nitrate level in the water samples was 1 ppm with a range of 0 to 3 ppm. The average arsenic level was 0.067 ppb with a range of 0 to 1 ppb. Salinity averaged 616.41 ppm with a range of 490 to 860 ppm. No wells were considered problem wells with nitrates, arsenic and salinity. Thirteen of the samples (44.83%) tested positive for bacteria in general. Six out of the 29 samples (20.69%) tested positive for the fecal coliform bacteria. Agents decided to coordinate an effort to conduct one on one education with these well owners to perform best management practices which will assist them in cleaning their wells. Private well owner feedback indicated a 93% commitment to shock well chlorination treatment recommendations. Fifteen percent of respondents were intent on following up with home filtration systems as a precautionary measure. Agents will coordinate a second screening or testing to ascertain changes in the presence of the bacteria in 2009. Water quality and quantity of groundwater is important because municipal, domestic and agricultural use comes from underground water sources. This issue is critically important in determining existing options for preserving and protecting the local groundwater resource for sustainable use. A multi-county Water Quality Screening Workshop was coordinated and Mr. John Smith from Texas A&M Soil and Crop Sciences Department, traveled to conduct the screening. Eighty-five water samples were collected and submitted for screening from water wells in the four county area. More specifically twenty-nine Brooks County samples were tested for soluble salts, arsenic, nitrates and fecal coliform (bacteria). The average nitrate level in the water samples was 1 ppm with a range of 0 to 3 ppm. The average arsenic level was 0.067 ppb with a range of 0 to 1 ppb. Salinity averaged 616.41 ppm with a range of 490 to 860 ppm. Thirteen of the samples (44.83%) tested positive for bacteria in general. Six out of the 29 samples (20.69%) tested positive for the Fecal Coliform Bacteria. No wells were considered problem wells with nitrates, arsenic and salinity. Educational materials and treatment suggestions were forwarded to well owners with positive fecal coliform tests and one-to-one assistance provided as needed.



THE TEXAS A&M
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**2008
Educational Outreach**

Education in Group Settings	
Number of Sessions	290
Number Contacts	6,806
Hrs Instruction	8,261
Education for Individuals	
Office Visits	1,024
Site Visits	2,882
Phone Consultation	1,800
Mail/Email	3,077
By Volunteers	3,097

Visit us at:
<http://brooks-tx.tamu.edu>

2008 4-H Enrollment

Club Members	208
School Enrichment	1,119
Special Interests	580
Total Enrollment	1,979



BROOKS COUNTY - FALFURRIAS

Family & Consumer Sciences

In Brooks County, an estimated 35% have incomes that are 185% of poverty or below; 2,729 receive food stamps benefits. BLT is delivered through a variety of teaching methods that will reflect the audiences need. In Brooks county 10 adults participated in the Eat Better to Live Better series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that will reduce food borne illness. The program impact consisted of that of the 10 participants were following suggested food resource management behaviors either sometimes or always when they began the program, there were noticeable improvements in the use of a shopping list 30 days later. Food Safety-Adoption behaviors these individuals, the largest increases in adoption of food safety behaviors appear to be in the area of food storage. No participants were leaving cooked foods sit out for longer than 2 hours, there was a noticeable increase in the number who stored their prepared foods immediately after cooking or eating. Average monthly of out-of-pocket food expenses reported by participants Before BLT: \$105 After BLT: \$146.50. Based on all 10 participants who reported monthly out-of-pocket food expenses at the beginning of BLT and 30 days after the program ended. Although out-of-pocket food expenses were higher post compared to when participants first entered BLT, the difference between the two numbers were not significantly different.

4-H & Youth Development

In Brooks County, an estimated 35% have incomes that are 185% of poverty or below; 2,729 receive food stamps benefits. BLT is delivered through a variety of teaching methods that will reflect the audiences need. In Brooks county 10 adults participated in the Eat Better to Live Better series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that will reduce food borne illness. The program impact consisted of that of the 10 participants were following suggested food resource management behaviors either sometimes or always when they began the program, there were noticeable improvements in the use of a shopping list 30 days later. Food Safety-Adoption behaviors these individuals, the largest increases in adoption of food safety behaviors appear to be in the area of food storage. No participants were leaving cooked foods sit out for longer than 2 hours, there was a noticeable increase in the number who stored their prepared foods immediately after cooking or eating. Average monthly of out-of-pocket food expenses reported by participants Before BLT: \$105 After BLT: \$146.50. Based on all 10 participants who reported monthly out-of-pocket food expenses at the beginning of BLT and 30 days after the program ended. Although out-of-pocket food expenses were higher post compared to when participants first entered BLT, the difference between the two numbers were not significantly different.

Brooks County Fair

Extension supported the Fair Improvement Association to improve the fairgrounds and expand its appeal to the community as a whole.

