



Extension Education in Dimmit County

Making a difference
2009

Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.

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

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

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 Dimmit County and its people:

Dimmit County – Summary of Educational Contacts



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 though out 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 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 training 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 training 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 training. The HEB Produce Safety Training for producers and middle buyers continued in 2009 with 4 training 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 training 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 training included test averages of 82.6 and 78.9 in two of the four training 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.

Dimmit County Agriculture Plan

Dimmit County Agriculture Plan Provided a number of programs for the Producers of Dimmit County. Programs consisted of the following:

- Private Applicator Training
- Managing Livestock and Wildlife through Drought
- Utilizing Pastures in Rotational Grazing For Livestock and Wildlife
- Last chance CEU training
- Site Visits
- Individual Consultations
- Pesticide Recommendations
- Fence Line Result Demonstration on Brush



Output Program Summary for Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County Horticulture Plan: This plan was conducted in order to assist landowners and home owners in the county with horticulture questions.

Relevance: Due to our geographical location, and distance from nurseries and landscaping maintenance companies, numerous questions are fielded by the County Extension Agent for the Clientele of Dimmit County.

Response: This agent assisted landowners and home owners by answering questions via telephone, office visits, and making numerous site visits in order to assist clientele with questions on trees, shrubs, lawns, and insects. Agent was able to assist individuals with numerous problems, many of which were caused by drought. Agent conducted Private Applicator training, in order to assist both homeowners and producers with the need for gaining a private applicator license to assist them in purchasing the needed herbicides needed to maintain their desired botanicals. Agent will be conducting Last Chance CEU training on December 21, in order to assist licensed individuals with their credits needed.

Future Plans: Agent will continue to offer private applicator trainings, along with CEU opportunities in the county. Site visits and phone calls will be answered in order to assist clientele with problems as they arise.



Output Program Summary for Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County Natural Resource Plan: Conducted to assist landowners with questions and programs on how to manipulate and manage rangelands to further their profitability.

Relevance: Over 700,000 acres of rangeland are managed in Dimmit County for wildlife and livestock. Of these acreages, over 600,000 are used for recreational and commercial hunting. The need to assist landowners with questions on brush management, and other wildlife questions is needed.

Results: As a result of this plan, this agent assisted landowners by answering questions via telephone, in the office, and made numerous site visits where as this agent assisted landowners by assessing parcels of land and giving input on to what changes needed to be made. Landowners had the opportunity to inquire about brush control methods, plant identification, and general questions about food plots and wildlife. Agent conducted Result Demonstration on the JX Ranch, in order to determine the % kill of mixed brush species on fence lines. The project consisted of a simulated helicopter spray, where as spike was sprayed at 3 and 8 feet intervals along a fence line. All brush was indexed for species and individual plants were counted. Agent meet with Dimmit County Wildlife committee in order to gain input on what type of programming efforts needed to be conducted in the county. As a result, Dimmit County offered the Managing Wildlife and Livestock through Drought program, where as landowners had the opportunity to learn about stocking rates, and grazing systems to help them in time of pasture stress. Agent also gained professional development by attending South Texas Buckskin Brigade and Bobwhite Brigade and was able to learn more about population dynamics, plant ID, and a wealth of information from professionals from across the state.

Future Plans: Agent will continue to meet with wildlife committee to gain input on future programming efforts. Programs will be conducted in order to assist landowners with the ever changing challenges that they face in their operations. 2010 White Tail Deer 101 outcome plan came from the suggestion on the wildlife committee.



Family and Consumer Sciences

Title: Better Living for Texas (BLT)

Relevance: The BLT program is an educational program offered to food stamp recipients, applicants, and other approved audiences. The program addresses nutrition education, meal preparation and planning, as well as food safety. The percentage of the population in Dimmit County whom receive supplemental nutrition assistance is significant; 58.28% in Carrizo Springs, 78.57% in Big Wells, and 66.95% in Asherton.

Target Audience: Food stamp recipients, applicants, and other approved audiences.

Response: In March 2009, the Extension office was contacted by the Carrizo Head Start Center seeking assistance with health and nutrition programs. The FCS Agent met with the agency and scheduled 6 programs which ran from March through May.

Marketing Efforts: Program advertisements were posted in the local newspaper; flyers were distributed to local Head Start centers, school campus & other agencies throughout the county.

Collaborators: Carrizo Springs ISD, Head Start, and the First United Methodist Church.

Evaluations: Basic customer satisfaction evaluations were administered to the participants.

Results: As a result of the BLT program, participants were able to select healthy foods, plan and prepare nutritious meals, read and understand food labels as well as distinguish between portion and serving sizes. Participants adopted specific behaviors which include price comparison when grocery shopping, reading food labels to determine nutritional value, and measuring food to assure appropriate serving sizes. Various teaching methods were utilized; interactive PowerPoint presentations, food demonstrations, and hands-on activities. A total of 58 parents participated throughout the programs.

Interpretation: Agent presented the program result to the Dimmit County Commissioners Court, Dimmit County FCS Committee and Leadership Advisory Board.

Future Plans: Do Well Be Well with Diabetes will be the new addition to FCS programming in Dimmit County for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The expansion of the BLT program to all areas of Dimmit County is also a key focus.



Family and Consumer Sciences

Title: Teen Parent Education

Relevance: Reproductive and prenatal education was provided to teen parents enrolled in the Life Skills program at Carrizo Springs High School. Educational topics included the reproductive system and a wide range of prenatal and postnatal topics on labor and delivery, breastfeeding, and caring for your baby. For the 2009-2010 school year there are 43 teen parents in high school and 1 in junior high. This is a significant reduction from the 62 parents at the high school level during the 2008-2009 school year.

Target Audience: Teen Parents

Response: The Parent Officer for Life Skills for Student Parents at Carrizo Springs ISD contacted the Dimmit County Extension office seeking assistance with programs for teen parents. The FCS Agent met with the Parent Officer and scheduled 4 programs for the months of April and May.

Marketing Efforts: Program advertisements were posted in the local newspaper; flyers were distributed to local Head Start centers, school campus & other agencies throughout the county.

Collaborators: Carrizo Springs ISD

Evaluations: Basic customer satisfaction evaluations were administered to the participants.

Results: The teen parent program resulted in a better understanding of the reproductive system, fetal development and it's relation to maternal health. Teen parents expressed a positive change in attitude and comfort when communicating with their partner and physician in regards to contraception. Female participants stated they would commit to breastfeeding in the future due to health benefits for both mother and child. A total of 40 teen parents participated throughout the programs.

Interpretation: Agent presented the program result to the Dimmit County Commissioners Court, Dimmit County FCS Committee, Carrizo Springs ISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Leadership Advisory Board.

Future Plans: Future plans include meeting with teen parents more frequently than once a month. Agent is working with the parent officer and school counselor to coordinate a support for teen parents. This support group would provide the teen parents the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns they may be having.



South Texas Brigades

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:



4-H and Youth Development

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.

TAKE A STAND

Take a Stand: Take a Stand for grades 3-5, an anti-bullying program, was conducted at Carrizo Springs Intermediate School.

Relevance: With the number of youth suicide and youth depression cases on the rise as a result of youth bullying, Take A Stand was implemented to every 4th and 5th grader at the Carrizo Springs Intermediate School. Agents spoke with school principal and teachers over the summer and found out that the amount of in school bullying was on the increase, and something had to be done.

Response: In addressing the need from the school, the Take a Stand Pilot program was conducted to the youth that taught them the following:

- Keep your cool
 - Recognizing signs of anger in themselves and in others
 - Understanding the consequences of violence
 - Identifying ways to control anger
- Walk in my shoes
 - How to explain their point of view
 - Think about other people's perspective
 - Consider several ways to looking at a problem
 - Listen and acknowledge what another person says
 - Solve specific problems
- A manner of speaking



4-H and Youth Development

- The ten basic manners for kids
- Definition of respect
- How to give respect
- How to write tank you notes
- The golden rule
- Get in the Game
 - Students learned the importance of team work in groups
 - Students learned how to be a good team member
- You + Me = Harmony
 - Students learned to identify ways in which we are alike and different
 - Learned to appreciate how traditions, customs, and gestures differ among cultures.



4-H and Youth Development

Audience:

Youth Consisted of the following:

4th Graders: 85 Male 78 Female

13 Anglo 150 Hispanic

5th Graders: 80 Male 72 Female

6 Anglo 3 Asian 143 Hispanic

Total: 315 Youth

Results: As a result of this program, 48% of the youth showed a significant increase in awareness of ways to identify Anger, along with controlling it. Youth were given the opportunity to reflect on the most important reason that was covered through the class. More than half of the responses noted that they learned how to act without being a bully, and that Manners and Respect were key to acting in this way. Youth also made note that being recognized by raising your hand was a means of showing respect for the teacher. Youth also had the opportunity to discuss what they found least eventful from the program, where as Manners was noted 5 times from individuals that said, "I already have good manners".

Future Plans: The Take a Stand Program was very well received by the School, and hopes to implement the program at the Intermediate school next year as well. The plan was interpreted to the PTO, with them feeling the need to continue programming in this field. The Carrizo Springs Junior High School has since contacted the Dimmit County AgriLIFE office, asking for program to be conducted at the Junior High School as well.



Output Program Summary for Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County 4-H, Expanding the Local Quality Experience: Expanding the Local Quality 4-H Experience in Dimmit County was a top priority of Dimmit County for 2008-2009

Relevance: .Increasing not only enrolment, but youth participation was one of our key goals. Dimmit County 4-H grew from 147 to 189 total members in the past year. Youth had the opportunity to take part in new programs that were brought to the county, such as shotgun, sports nutrition, and quality counts was Livestock Judging was revamped this past year.

Response: In addressing the need to increase enrollment, Dimmit County AgriLIFE Extension conducted several marketing opportunities to gain exposure to new clientele. Rally Day was conducted on August 16 at the Carrizo Springs Public Swimming Pool. Youth had the opportunity to view display boards that showcased different programs that Dimmit County 4-H had to offer, along with the opportunity to enjoy hot dogs and swimming time. This event was sponsored by the Dimmit County Parent Leaders Association. And 25 new families visited that day to find out what all 4-H Had to offer.

Career Days: Agents conducted several Career Days at Carrizo Springs High School and Carrizo Springs Intermediate School. At these events Agents were not only able to tell youth about AgriLIFE Extension, but also able to show them a little about 4-H. Youth at the schools had the opportunity to view slide shows that highlighted 4-H events throughout the year. Enrollment forms were available at these events, and youth were able to gain contact information from agents for more information.

Future Plans: Dimmit County AgriLIFE Extension will continue finding new programs to bring into the county, in order to try to find niches for new clientele. Rally days, career days, and Meet the County Agent nights are planned for the upcoming year.



Output Program Summary For Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County Leadership and Volunteer Development: Leaders and youth gained leadership skills through trainings and events that were offered at county and district levels.

Relevance: In order to develop leaders of tomorrow, leadership training is key for our youth. The opportunity to empower youth to make decisions, delegate responsibilities, and follow through with commitments is essential in developing these leadership skills.

Response: Dimmit County AgriLIFE Extension meet with Parent leaders group monthly in order to gather input on upcoming events such as awards nights, club meetings, county events, fundraising opportunities, and our Dimmit County Classic Prospect Show. Leaders were able to voice opinions and concerns on these events and agents stepped back and took more of an advisor roll this year. Ownership of the programs was felt from the Parent Leaders whom assisted in planning and implementing programs. Dimmit County Council meets in order to plan events such as the Christmas tree decoration at the Court House.

Results: County Council made a motion to conduct awards night at club meeting this year, due to the lack of participation from the county in the years past. By conducting awards recognition at the club level, which consists of an Elementary Club, Junior High Club, and High School Club, youth were able to recognized in front of their contemporaries' and 90% of the awards actually went home with the youth.

Leadership opportunities were marketed through the Dimmit County 4-H News Letter, giving youth the opportunity to take part in such programs. As a result 4 youth took part in District 12 leadership lab. This has been the first year that multiple youth have attend this district event, which was well received by the youth who went and relayed back to the county as an event that was well worth the time. Dimmit County 4-H was also represented in the District 12 4-H Council Elections held in conjunction with Election Convention. Though they 4-H member did not receive the office she sought, she will be representing Dimmit County as an advisor/assistant to the group.

Future Plans: Dimmit County AgriLIFE Extension would like to continue to strengthen Dimmit County Council and give them the tools to make them a productive group that thrives to make the best better.



Output Program Summary for Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County 4-H Management: Conducted in Dimmit County

Relevance: The management of a 4-H program in tells much consideration to details, organizing volunteers, and delegating job responsibilities to individuals that can follow through with the given tasks.

Response: This years management of the 4-H program consisted of numerous activities that included: monthly newsletters, news articles, news releases, marketing events, checking youths eligibility, livestock show committee meetings, project group meetings, fundraising, and most importantly interpreting event to key stake holders.

Results: Results from the management plan include the following: Newsletters were sent monthly to all youth enrolled in the Dimmit County 4-H program, news articles and news releases were sent to the newspaper in order to recognize youth for their accomplishments throughout the year, 4-H events were marketed through club meetings, newsletters, and newspaper, project groups and livestock associations meet as needed in order to plan and implement programs, fundraisers included: BBQ luncheon at County Livestock Show, Silent Auction at county Livestock Show, and Dimmit County Classic Prospect Show. Interpretation has been conducted once a month to commissioners' court not only in written form, but also an oral presentation by the agents. Fundraising efforts this year included \$11,000 profit from the county show fundraisers and our recent Dimmit County Classic prospect show which netted \$4,800. Monies from these fundraisers will be used to assist youth in paying entries for district and State 4-H events, registration fees for these events, and hotel accommodations to these events. Incentive trips for youth who have attended 100% club meetings were also offered.

Future Plans: Dimmit County AgriLIFE extension will continue marketing and interpreting highlights of programs in the county. Scholarship accounts will continue to build in order to assist graduating youth with financial assistance for higher learning. Volunteer involvement will continue to grow, as our ever-changing responses to emerging issues emerge.



Output Program Summary for Dimmit County

2009 Dimmit County Projects and Curriculum: The amount of projects and curriculum implemented in Dimmit County is constantly growing. Youth have a wide array of different projects and activities to choose from.

Relevance: As time changes, so do youths interests. Keeping a blend of core programs and incorporating new programs can be a challenge with leaders that are set in their paradigms. Finding ways to evoke change and make it appealing to our volunteers is the key to success.

Response: Programs this year consisted of the following: Shooting Sports (rifle and shot gun* new this year), photography, food and nutrition, clothing, horse, livestock, *livestock Judging (new), illustrated demonstrations, *Take a Stand (anti-bulling), *Sports Nutrition, and natural recourses. Youth were given the opportunity throughout the year to take part in these projects, in order to further their knowledge and gain valuable life skills.

Results: As a result of the following projects youth had the opportunity to compete at local level, district level, and some advanced to state competition. New projects for this year consisted of Shot Gun, livestock judging; Take a Stand, and Sports Nutrition. Dimmit County has been represented at all major contest offered by the District, with youth competing and accomplishing great recognition. Youth have also participated in the following Major Livestock Shows: State Fair of Texas, San Antonio Livestock Show, Star of Texas Livestock Show, Houston Livestock Show, and Mercedes Livestock Show. Along with competition, youth have had the opportunity to attend clinics and workshops at the local level in order to help them achieve their goals.

Future Plans: Dimmit County will continue to look for new programs to bring to youth, in order to find new niche markets for new clientele, along with retaining core programs that have been a staple in the 4-H Program.



Resource Development

Dimmit County Junior Livestock Show:

The Dimmit County Junior Livestock Show generated over \$200,000 for the youth of Dimmit County during the Livestock Show Sale. Youth had the opportunity to sell show projects prior to the show. Funds were generated from donors in and outside the county.

Dimmit County Classic Prospect Show:

Dimmit County Classic generated \$4800 to the Dimmit County 4-H program. More than \$3000 in donations was received in the form of buckle donations and sponsors for awards.

Emergency Managing:

Dimmit County AgriLife Extension placed a display at the County Court House in order to allow individuals from the community to gather information on Preparing for The Unexpected, a help guide on what plans are needed in preparing for a disaster. Agents also distributed flyers on Swine Flue to all Feed Stores and to the court house, prior to N1 H1 being the official Diagnosis. Agents answered question from the community on Swine flu.

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Dimmit County**

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