



Extension Education in Frio 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 Frio County and its people:

Frio County – Summary of Educational Contacts

- Total Educational Programs Conducted – 133
- Total Participants – 4,595
- Contact Hours via Educational Programs – 8,818
- 4-H Members – 147
- 4-H Leaders – 68
- 4-H Clubs – 3
- Curriculum Enrichment Participants – 178
- Office Contacts – 878
- Site Visits – 700
- Phone Calls – 1,935
- Newsletter/Mail/E-Mail Contacts – 866
- Web Contacts – 605
- Radio Programs – 10
- News Releases – 70
- Cash and In-Kind Donations by AgriLife Extension Supporters and Collaborators – 2,500 dollars



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 Frio County Agriculture Plan

Developed By: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Frio County Agriculture Plan provided a number of educational opportunities for clientele to participate in. The Frio County Ag Committee, South Texas Peanut Producers Board and the Frio County Adult Leadership Advisory Board hosted a number of educational programs including the following:

- * Multi -County Irrigation Program
- * Multi - County Cotton Program
- * Private Applicator License Training
- * South Texas Peanut Growers Annual Tour
- * Pesticide Applicator Quarterly Newsletters
- * Worker Protection Standard Training
- * Frio Co. Range Tour
- * Food Safety for Vegetable Handlers
- * Peanut Breeding and Variety Demonstrations
- * Frio Co. Farm & Ranch Workshop
- * Chemical Control of Mesquite Demonstration

Over 50 Frio County producers attended the numerous educational programs.



Result:

Frio County Agriculture producers received the latest educational information in Irrigation, Cotton, peanuts, Range Management, Pesticides, and Livestock production. All Frio County Pesticide Private Applicator License holders were reached with a quarterly Pesticide Newsletter and 20 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEU's) were offered this year. This agent also completed the Ag Increment Report for Frio County at the Farm and Ranch survey for the Texas Comptrollers office. Due to our efforts Frio County producers were able to get the latest information to help them succeed in their own operations.



2009 Frio County Youth and Safety Education Plan Plan Summary Report

Date of Summary: November 18, 2009

Relevance:

Youth Safety and Education is one of the top three main concerns in Frio County. Early safety education is an important way to reduce accidents at home or on the farm. The Frio County Youth Advisory Board identified the problem and decided to sponsor a safety education program. The program targeted all youth in Frio County between the ages of 8 years old and 13 years old.

Target Relevance: Youth - 8 years old thru 13 years old.

Response:

The Frio County Youth Leadership Advisory Board teamed up with the Progressive Agriculture Foundation to help sponsor a Safety Day in Frio County. The following program areas were covered at this year's Safety Day. July 7, 2009.

*Electrical Safety *Boat & Water Safety

*Farm Safety *Drug Awareness

*Tractor Safety *Fire Safety

*Gun Safety

*First Aid

Partnerships and

Collaborators:

*Progressive Agriculture Foundation *Medina Electric

*Texas Parks and Wildlife *Texas Health Dept.

*City of Pearsall *John Deere

*Frio County *City of Pearsall Recreation Dept.

*H. E. B. *Dilley Fire Dept.

*Wal-Mart

Outcome Results: A customer satisfaction survey for Youth(retrospective survey approach) was utilized to measure programmatic impact. A total of 54 of 60 (90%) returned the retrospective post instrument.

The first section focused on overall satisfaction of the Safety Day, the results are as follows.

1. Overall Satisfaction with this activity:

Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at All	Total Response
42.6%	31.5%	3.7%	5.6%	1.9%	85.3%

2. Satisfaction with the activity being enjoyable:

Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at All	Total Response
55.6%	18.5%	16.7%	5.6%	3.7%	100%



3. Satisfaction with accuracy of the information:

Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at All	Total Response
63.0%	18.5%	74%	74%	0.9%	63%

4. Satisfaction with information being easy to understand:

Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at All	Total Response
48.1%	25.9%	3.7%	9.3%	9.3%	96.3%

The last section focused on intentions to change, based on what the participants learned at the Safety Day.

1. Do you plan to take any action or make any changes because of what you learned from this activity?

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total Response
50%	5.6%	31.5%	87.0%

2. Do you think that what you learned from this activity will help you make money or reduce cost in the future?

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total Response
29.6%	13.0 %	38.9%	81.5%

Summary of Results: Results indicate that the Frio County Safety Day Program met its objectives of increasing knowledge and behavioral changes with the youth that participated 91% of the youth that participated also indicated that they were mostly or completely satisfied with the entire program.

Acknowledgements: Special Thanks go to the Frio County Youth Leadership Advisory Board members and Chairperson Mr. Mike Morse and local cooperators and sponsors such as Medina Electric Cooperative, Frio County, City of Pearsall, John Deere, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Dilley Fire Department, Wal-Mart, H. E. B., and the Pearsall Recreational Department. Additional thanks goes to the Progressive Agriculture Foundation for helping us sponsor this event.

Future Program Actions: As we continue to address this local issue in Frio County and identify other areas of concern, we will continue to identify local resources that can help in future programmatic effort.



South Texas Buckskin and South Texas Bobwhite Brigades

Summary developed by Jaime Lopez, County Extension Agent - Natural Resources, 4-H and Youth, Frio 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:



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.

For More Information Contact:

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2009 Frio County 4-H Projects & Curriculum Plan

Developed By: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Frio 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
- * Frio Co. Jr. Livestock Show
- * Frio Co. Commercial Heifer Show



4-H and Youth Development

- * San Antonio Livestock Show
- * Houston Livestock Show
- * Embryo Life Science Curriculum
- * 4-H District and State Events

Over 426 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 Frio County 4-H program continues to work with the local school districts to help them offer 4-H enrichment curriculum like Embryo Life Science to try to reach more youth in the county and promote the Frio County 4-H program.

2009 Frio County 4-H Leadership & Volunteer Development Plan

Developed by: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Frio 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
- * Club Manager Training
- * Frio County 4-H Council
- * District 12 4-H Council
- * District 12 4-H Council Retreat
- * District 12 4-H Leadership Lab
- * District 12 Election Convention

Approximately 45 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 Frio County 4-H program.

2009 Frio County 4-H Management Plan

Developed by: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent - Ag

Response:

The Frio County 4-H Management Plan was developed to address the day to day needs of the Frio County 4-H program. This agent along with Junior 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 Club Management requirements (Financial Review, Charter Renewal, Monthly Manager Reports, Volunteer Screening, Etc.)

A total of 147 4-H members participated in 4 different 4-H Clubs and 132 had livestock projects.



Results:

Due to our efforts in managing the Frio County 4-H program, the 4-H program continues to be the largest youth organization in the county. This year the 4-H enrollment grew by 10 percent and we established a new 4-H club to meet the demands of a growing membership. 4-H members and volunteers continued to work on providing a quality 4-H experience for all participants.

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

Developed by: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent-Ag

Response:

The Frio County 4-H Program continues to use every means possible to promote the 4-H program in Frio County. In the last four years a plan was developed to set goals on increasing the 4-H enrollment in the County by 10 percent. 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

A major effort to promote the Frio 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 Frio County 4-H program met its goal of increasing the 4-H enrollment by 10 percent to 147 total youth. 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 Frio County Emergency Management Plan

Developed by: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent- Ag

Response:

The Frio 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. Frio 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 4-H families
- * 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 90 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 Frio County

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