



AgriLife Extension  
South Region



**South  
District  
12**



## Making a Difference... ...in Hidalgo County

### District Extension Newsletter for Commissioners' Courts in South Texas



**Brad F. Cowan**  
Agriculture &  
Natural Resources



**Barbara A. Storz**  
Horticulture



**Adelita Muñoz**  
Family & Consumer  
Sciences



**Luisa G. Colin**  
Nutrition Program



**Nora A. Garza**  
Family Resources



**Vidal H. Saenz**  
Small Farmer Program



**Douglas W. Denny**  
4-H & Youth  
Development



**LeeRoy Rock**  
Integrated Pest  
Management

Dear Court Members,  
In 2007, Texas Cooperative Extension celebrated the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent and of the Texas 4-H Program. I hope you find this newsletter helpful in updating you about the difference that Extension education is making in Hidalgo 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

### Supporting Agriculture and Natural Resources

Hidalgo County Agriculture outreach includes resources in all aspects of production agriculture including agronomy, water conservation, irrigation systems, nutrient management, food safety, integrated pest management and risk management. Horticultural outreach includes home gardening, the Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener Programs. The Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program assists small farm and ranch producers with loan preparation and financial counseling.

**2008 Highlights:** Master Gardeners contributed 6,116 hours to conduct educational programs for adults and youth, monitored **turf grass and rose trial** research and conducted **education seminars**. Partnered with County Pct. 2 to design and implement native plant landscaping, butterfly gardens, Rainwater Collection Demonstration sites, and an outdoor classroom in the **North San Juan Park**. Utilized the park classroom for **Grow'n Growers** program for area residents to improve family nutrition and provide economic resources through development of a Farmer's Market. **Beef Development Program**- Assisted beef producers to develop bulls and heifers that increase profits; **Nutrient Management Program**- Documented a projected potential savings of \$1.6 million to local farmers and reduced potentially harmful impacts to the environment; **Pesticide safety training** provided to ag producers; **Crops Field Days**- Cotton, corn, sorghum, soybean and sugarcane producers received timely production information; Loan Assistance- 35 Ag producers were assisted in completing **loan packages** totaling \$4.4



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Judge J.D. Salinas provided leadership for a panel of county judges who discussed emergency management at a conference in Laredo.

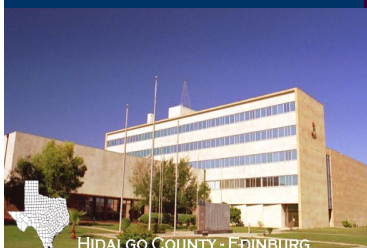
## 2008 Educational Outreach

Education in Group Settings	
Number of Sessions	6,882
Number Contacts	223,328
Hrs Instruction	51,670
Education for Individuals	
Office Visits	3,503
Site Visits	120,816
Phone Consultation	8,432
Mail/Email	13,408
By Volunteers	11,148

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

## 2008 4-H Enrollment

Number of Clubs	18
Club Members	522
School Enrichment	17,824
Special Interests	7,590
Total Enrollment	26,087



HIDALGO COUNTY - EDINBURG

## Strengthening Families & Improving Health

Provides expertise in family and child development, foods and nutrition, money management and health to diverse audiences made up of individuals, families, child-care workers, school staff, and nutrition and health professionals. Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a food stamp education program that teaches participants how to get the most nutrition and value from their limited food budget; The Expanded Nutrition Program provides basic nutrition education to families with young children and teenagers through a federally funded program available in only nine Texas cities.

**2008 Highlights:** \$6,000 was saved by 82 uninsured women participants in Cultivando la Salud. All received a free mammogram. 250 participated in **Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) Program** and learned the importance of spending quality time with their children. 325 people with Diabetes shown remarkable glucose readings that reflect they are managing their diabetes from **Do Well Be Well With Diabetes** workshops and Walk Across Texas program. **Master Clothing Volunteers** continue with their outreach into impoverished colonias and schools. Many of these volunteers have become successful entrepreneurs and are supplementing the family's income by selling the items they constructed valued at over \$130,000. **Better Living for Texans** teaches nutrition, food safety and wellness to food stamp recipients. 14,182 families were reached. 850 senior adults have participated in **Fiestas Patrias Con Salud**, and **Senior Prom Health Event** and received expensive health screenings. 15 **food service directors** became state certified as food managers. 65 youth participated in **Leadership Quest** and heard speakers advise them on college readiness. Child care providers received training that enabled them to maintain their state licenses.

## 4-H and Youth Development

4-H is one of the largest youth organizations, serving youth from ages 8 to 19. 4-H'ers learn valuable life skills such as responsibility, character, ethics and leadership through their 4-H projects, programs, competitions, school curriculum and summer camps. Extension agents recruit, train and involve hundreds of volunteers in conducting the 4-H program. 4-H'ers also participate in a variety of community service projects.

**2008 Highlights:** Currently there are over 200 adult volunteers and 522 4-H'ers in Hidalgo County 4-H clubs. Through volunteers, agents and program assistants we reached a total of 26,078 youth through all 4-H programs conducted in 2008. 4-H volunteers donated 1,480 hours of their time and knowledge to local youth in 2008. They help manage local clubs, conduct youth trainings/clinics, and event judges. Our **school curriculum** is TEKS-aligned and aids the teachers of Hidalgo County. Our most successful curriculum enrichment is the **Egg-to-Chick** program where teachers actually hatch eggs in the classroom. Working closely with schools, many teachers are using a variety of different curriculums, including water conservation, wildlife, consumer education, and aquatic ecology. This year's **teacher training**, reached 38 teachers from 6 different school districts and 12 different campuses.



Extension assists county with San Juan Park Project