



## Extension Education in Jim Hogg 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 Jim Hogg County and its people:

## **Jim Hogg County – Summary of Educational Contacts**

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- 52 4H Members (63% increase from 2008)
- 7 Adult Volunteers in the 4H program
- 1 4H club and 1 new shooting sports project group
- \$ 268.33 In-kind donations by supporters
- Quarterly 4H newsletter
- 10 Educational Programs
- 244 Participants in those programs
- 99 Office Contacts
- 153 Site visits
- 388 Phone calls
- 290 Newsletter/Mail/E-mail contacts
- 21 News Articles



Jim Hogg County is one of the few counties in Texas that have problems with arsenic indigenous to its water supply. It is an extremely rural county that depends on underground aquifers for well water for agricultural enterprises. It is also one of the main sources of safe drinking water for a large percentage of homeowners. Other contaminants are also found in well water in these counties, and few residents are knowledgeable about what constitutes a safe level of these particular agents.

**Response:** A program was developed by extension agents Samuel Gavito(Duval County), Larry Perez(Jim Hogg County), and Rogelio Mercado(Jim Wells County) in cooperation with the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University to test for unsafe compounds in local wells that are sources for household drinking water, and agricultural uses such as livestock or horticulture. In Jim Hogg County, a high school environmental science class was invited to participate to gain first hand knowledge of scientific processes and protocols. It is hoped that by teaching the young men and women of Jim Hogg County, they will be able to help alleviate any misinformation.

**Results:** Sterile samples of water were collected in the 3 participating counties. After transport, they were logged in, and assigned a sample number. A total of 35 samples were submitted from Jim Hogg County. When the students arrived, we began testing for 4 items: 1) nitrates, 2) fecal coliform, 3) arsenic, and 4) measureable salinity. Of the samples turned in from Jim Hogg County, none were positive for fecal coliform. Only 6 returned positive for arsenic and of those positive samples, all were within the acceptable limits except one. The average salinity was 731 ppm(parts per million), and the average nitrates was 3.02 ppm with 14 samples having no nitrates at all. The comment about this program that was the most striking was from the high school teacher. He said: "This was the best activity that these students could have taken part in. It shows the real world applications of everything that they are studying in school. You can't get this type of experience inside a high school lab."

**Future Plans:** Future plans are to expand this program in Jim Hogg County and include a pre test and post test with the high school students that will be participating in this program.

Jim Hogg County is an extremely rural county that depends on agriculture for a large percentage of the population's income. The two agricultural commodities in this county are cattle and wildlife and the need to continue to develop these two income generators is great.

**Response:** A program was developed by extension agents Samuel Gavito(Duval County) and Larry Perez(Jim Hogg County) for landowners to increase their knowledge of the management of white tailed deer, therefore increasing the value of the deer for a more economically valuable deer lease. The target audience for this program were landowners interested in white-tailed deer management. Participants were from Jim Wells county, Jim Hogg county, Duval county, and Hidalgo county. County Extension agents, USDA employees as well as Texas Parks and Wildlife personnel also attended for professional development from counties representing the brush country area. The seminar was a "hands on" learning



experience for the attendees. Participants were divided into groups of 4-5 and were given a pre test before each session to determine knowledge of the subjects to be covered. Presenters covered 4 subjects advertised to be evaluated:

- 1) Scoring antlers on the hoof.
- 2) Scoring antlers after harvest.
- 3) Aging of deer through tooth wear, and
- 4) Identification of deer preferred food plants. Collaborators included the local game wardens, the Duval County Parks and Wildlife biologist and the Wildlife biologist with the National Resource Conservation Service.

**Results:** A pre-test was given before each topic was presented. After the topic was presented and the "hands on" portion was completed, a post test was given on the respective subject matter. This pre-test showed that the attendees knowledge level was very low with the exception of two individuals. Thirty three out of thirty five attendees had an increase in knowledge of nearly 100% in antler scoring after harvest, and there was a 40% increase in knowledge of aging deer through tooth wear after harvest. There was also a 40% increase in knowledge of identifying plants preferred by deer.

Landowners are trying to earn more capital per acre by leasing their property for white-tailed deer hunting. Therefore increased knowledge in white-tailed deer management is crucial for making sound management decisions. Customer satisfaction was measured thru verbal discussions after the seminar. Everyone seemed to agree, this was a good way to learn and we were asked to continue this type of educational program.

Acknowledgements go to Mr. Sam Gavito, County Extension Agent in Duval County and Rogelio Mercado, County Extension Agent in Jim Wells County, for their cooperation in this multi-county event.

**Future Plans:** Future plans will be discussed with the Agriculture committees, county agents and local collaborators.



## Family and Consumer Sciences



The addition of a county agent assigned to Jim Hogg County on a full time basis was a welcome addition to the 4H program in this county. There are a few 4H events that are new to Jim Hogg which include a goat showmanship clinic, and a new 4H project group in shooting sports. As of December 2009, there is a **67% increase in enrollment in the 4H program in Jim Hogg County from the previous year**. With the addition of shooting sports, there were 7 4H'ers that participated in 4H that would not have joined 4H otherwise. 2 of these 4H'ers competed in the Texas State 4H Shooting Sports Matches in San Antonio Texas in July. In a county where the previous 4H enrollment was 34, 7 members represents a 20% increase. Jim Hogg County is an extremely rural county that depends on agriculture for a large percentage of the population's income. The two agricultural commodities in this county are cattle and wildlife, and the need to diversify and include the youth of the county is great. Enter the Texas Brigades, specifically the "Bobwhite Brigade."

### Response

The Texas Brigades were formed by Dr. Dale Rollins, Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist. 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.

### Results

This year marks the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the South Texas Bobwhite Brigade camps. A pre-test and post-test are 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 follows:

<u>CAMP</u>	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
South Texas Buckskin	42%	82%
South Texas Bobwhite	48%	84%



## 4-H and Youth Development

The addition of a county agent assigned to Jim Hogg County on a full time basis was a welcome addition to the 4H program in this county. For the first time in many years, a club officer training was held as well as a club manager training. With the addition of shooting sports to the county 4H program, it is necessary to have certified coaches in the specific shooting discipline. In the past, the Hebronville 4H club elected officers at the beginning of the 4H year in September. This meant that the officers were not familiar with specific job duties, or parliamentary procedure at the time when they needed it most.

**Results:** The Hebronville 4H club decided to elect officers in May so that an officer training could be held during the summer months to prepare them for the upcoming year. Officers met as a group, were given job descriptions, and held a mock meeting to practice parliamentary procedure. Along with the club officer training, a club manager training was held also. Club managers reviewed club charter requirements, 4H fiscal policies and procedures, and were given an overview of the state database and event registration system called 4H connect. Two adult volunteers went through a Texas State 4H Shooting Sports certification course held in Hebronville Texas. Jim Hogg County hopes to add the shotgun discipline to the shooting sports project group this coming year, so 1 adult was trained in that area, and one was trained in archery.

Activities are the actual “hands-on” learning activities in 4H projects. We began the year with a goat showmanship clinic open to all 4H’ers and FFA members in the county. Nine exhibitors participated in this first goat showmanship clinic. Exhibition of livestock by members of the Hebronville 4H club is limited. This year however, 4 members traveled to Dallas Texas to show at the State Fair of Texas. This was the first time anyone from Jim Hogg County has shown at the state fair.

**Results:** The goat showmanship was in response to a need from the 2008 show season, and was open to all 4H and FFA students. One of the participants was a senior in high school, and had never shown goats before...she won senior goat showmanship at the Jim Hogg County Fair.

For the annual Jim Hogg County “Vaquero Festival” in November, the Jim Hogg County Extension office set up a booth to promote the local 4H programs. Hebronville 4H’ers made posters with slogans, and an archery exhibit along with a livestock judging test was part of the booth. With local 4H’ers assisting, youth of the county were able to label the parts of livestock animals on posterboard for prizes. A sign up sheet was available for any potential new members. During National 4H week In September, one of the local papers was nice enough to run a half-page ad with a list of projects available through 4H.

**Results:** After the Vaquero festival, the extension office had 4 inquiries about the 4H shooting sports program and 2 asking about a horse program in Jim Hogg County. A direct result of the exhibit at the festival.



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**Results:** As of December 2009, there is a **67% increase in enrollment in the 4H program** in Jim Hogg County from the previous year. With the addition of shooting sports, there were 7 4H'ers that participated in 4H that would not have joined 4H otherwise. 2 of these 4H'ers competed in the Texas State 4H Shooting Sports Matches in San Antonio Texas in July. In a county where the previous 4H enrollment was 34, the addition of just 7 members represents a 20% increase.





The separation of Jim Hogg county and Duval county from what was a jointly administered Agrilife Extension program has posed challenges for this incoming agent. Mandated to put in place an “Emergency Mangement Plan” for Jim Hogg county, we have started with a few individuals that were willing to donate their time. At this time we have yet to meet as a committee due to time conflicts, but the Texas Agrilife Extension remains active in this endeavor.

**Results:** With the outbreak of the H1N1 flu in March/April of this year, the CASHN network was initiated with posters and information disseminated throughout the county. The use of feed stores was the conduit by which the information was communicated. The spread of the cattle fever tick is another example of an event that needs to be addressed through this plan.

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