

# Making a Difference... ...in McMullen County

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



**Isaac J. Cavazos**  
Agriculture &  
Natural Resources

Dear Court Members,  
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 strategic 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 McMullen 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

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee in conjunction with the McMullen County Soil and Water Conservation District have identified invasive species such as mesquite that affect rangeland health. Programs such as EQUIP and the Nueces Watershed Brush Management Project have provided an opportunity for cost share assistance for local landowners to utilize chemical brush control. Over 4000 acres were in planning stages for treatment with aerial application. Twelve producers participated in the respective programs. Educational program efforts focused on educating landowners and managers on the importance of timing factors involved for effective aerial application of foliar treatments. Soil temperatures, foliage and pod stages of mesquites were monitored on a weekly basis beginning in May through the first part of the month of July. Fifty five percent of the producers increased their knowledge on the factors associated effective control of mesquite with aerial foliar treatments of mesquite. Consultations revealed differences in physiological stages of mesquites within treatment sites throughout the county. 55 percent of these landowners no longer focus solely on herbicide selection, rates, and generalized timing windows for effective control of mesquite with aerial application.



THE TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH &  
EXTENSION CENTER AT WESLACO

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña  
District Administrator  
2401 E. Highway 83  
Weslaco, Texas 78596  
956.968.5581  
956.969.5639 fax  
rjsaldana@ag.tamu.edu

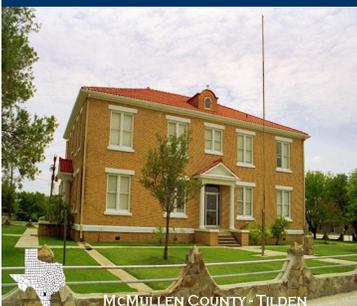
**2008  
Educational Outreach**

Education in Group Settings	
Number of Sessions	116
Number Contacts	1,773
Hrs Instruction	3,256

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<http://McMullen-tx.tamu.edu>

**2008 4-H Enrollment**

Club Members	71
School Enrichment	23
Special Interests	21
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>115</b>



## 4-H & Youth Development

The Texas Building Character curriculum was implemented in the fall of 2008 targeting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at McMullen County I.S.D. Lectures and teaching activities were conducted once a week for each of the respective grade levels which occurred between September thru November. The Texas Building Character curriculum teaches students about the virtues of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

A pre-test and post-test questionnaire was utilized to measure knowledge gained by students. Teachers observations were used to document behavioral changes. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the test questionnaire reflected a 27 % increase in knowledge gained related to virtues associated with good character. 66 percent of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students could define the “Golden Rule” as opposed to none in the pre-test. Fifth grade students increased their knowledge level 29 % as reflected on their pre-test and post -test scores. 99 % of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students could define the “Golden Rule” on the post-test as compared to 15 % on the pre-test.

Teachers testimonials describing behavioral changes include students being more respectful towards each other. Students being more aware of their consequences for their behaviors. Students being more aware that they can make a difference in their community. Several students now walk away from confrontational situations. Students following directions the first time they are told to do something and being more



McMullen County's shooting sports program is among the strongest in the District.