



AgriLife Extension South Region



South District 12



Making a Difference... ...in Webb County

District Extension Newsletter for Commissioners' Courts in South Texas



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In 2007, AgriLife Extension celebrated the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent and of the Texas 4-H Program. I want to thank you for your continued support of Extension, but more importantly, for the opportunity it provides us to serve the people of Webb County. I hope you find this newsletter helpful in updating you about the difference Extension education is making in Webb 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.

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña
District Extension Administrator

Agriculture & Natural Resources

In 2008, major programming emphasis centered on strategies for ranching sustainability. This program area was ranked as one of the highest priorities during the Texas Community Futures Forum held in March of 2004. Educational programs planned, implemented and evaluated by the Webb County Extension Agriculture/Natural Resources committee during 2008 included: Strategies for Ranching Sustainability: Rebuilding the Cow Herd: Workshop, Maintaining Ranching Sustainability: Rangeland Restoration Field Day, Bio-Security/Foreign Animal Diseases Field Day, Ag. Trade Show, Annual Water Well and Stock Tank Water Screening Days, Annual Webb Soil and Water Conservation District/Extension Ranch Tour. These programs addressed the local Texas Community Futures Forum priority issues and were attended by over **250** local and area producers and other interested clientele. **75%** of these program participants indicated that these educational programs helped to save them money with an approximate economic impact of **\$494,004.00**. Approximately **3,466** local and area clientele received educational assistance in general agriculture, natural resources, wildlife and horticulture and general agriculture related subject matter in 2008. Over **1,600** youth participated in ag./natural resources programs. Many local program collaborators, sponsors and partners have worked with Extension insuring program success and further improving the local quality of life for all residents. The annual Water Screening Event for Water Wells and Stock Tanks had about **30** samples screened this past October for fecal coliform, nitrates and bacteria, arsenic and hydrocarbons. Samples were from local and area land owners. A Watershed Management (water catchment plots) demonstration is established on the Cerrito Prieto Ranch and is evaluated annually and as needed to evaluate land use management practices and how these changes impact our rural and urban water quality in terms of sedimentation etc. **352** local and area ag. producers are receiving periodic newsletters and informational letters to keep them updated on the agricultural industry and county Extension programs conducted for their benefit. Programs planned for 2009 include: Webb County Agricultural Sector Outlook Workshop, Enhancing Water Capture on Rangeland Field Day, Current Issues Facing Cattlemen Field Day, Ranch Estate Planning Seminar, Pond Management Field Day, Wildlife Issues Conference, Urban Horticulture Programs, Youth Wildlife Camp, Pesticide Safety and Licensing Education Courses. Other programs will also be conducted on an emerging needs basis.



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

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2008 Educational Outreach

Education in Group Settings

Number of Sessions	873
Number Contacts	31,381
Hrs Instruction	91,970

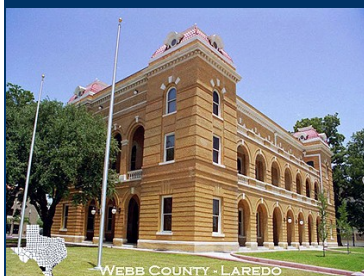
Education for Individuals

Office Visits	1,103
Site Visits	45,750
Phone Consultation	2,557
Mail/Email	7,915
By Volunteers	7,884

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

2008 4-H Enrollment

Club Members	488
School Enrichment	6,258
Special Interests	1,897
Total Enrollment	8,643



WEBB COUNTY - LAREDO

Family & Consumer Science

For the past several years county employees and other first responders received the Weapons of Mass Destruction/IM/UC training provided by TEEEX and NRRETC. This is a federal and state sponsored training which represents a cost saving of between \$25,000 and \$28,000 to the county each year. In addition, this year Texas AgriLife Extension Service hosted the National Weather Service Storm Spotters Program. For several years, Webb County has participated in the Walk Across Texas program. Webb County averages about 20 teams annually, reaching about 160 individuals each year. Webb County, with a population of 190,000, according to the 2000 census, has 110,000 residents below the 185% of poverty and 48,000 food stamp participants. Webb County has two paraprofessional educators reaching approximately 9000 individuals annually through the Better Living for Texans Nutrition program representing a benefit of \$60,954 each year. Volunteer educators reach an estimated 100 individuals per month in diabetes awareness, high blood pressure awareness and food and nutrition information. Summer youth programs make approximately 700 contacts annually in Family and Consumer Science subject matter. In 2008, the summer youth activities included a segment on Walk Across Texas especially designed for young people.

Family & Consumer Sciences - CEP 1890 Program

2008 marked a great year for the Cooperative Extension Program for Prairie View A&M University in Webb County, we focused on the parenting, nutrition and childhood nutrition education. Our main focus was providing tools to the limited resource audiences in the education and prevention of Diabetes. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States with African and Hispanic Americans being disproportionately affected by this disease. The Cooperative Extension Program of Webb County has focused on six lessons with its Diabetes Education and Awareness Program, DEAP. We have reached over 250 families served, El Cenizo, La Presa, South Laredo areas. The Diabetes Education Awareness Program has provided 22 lessons with over 1,300 local and area residents attending all lessons. The Cooperative Extension Program has increased awareness of diabetes and diabetes related illnesses, we applied the 2005 Dietary guidelines from the American Dietetic Association. In planning family meals, practicing balance between food and physical activity based on the My Pyramid Plan. Parental Involvement workshops were held at several schools this past year. Student Success equals Parent Success, parents in Webb County listened to topics such as Behavior in Children, Families Communicating Effectively, How to Help your Overweight Child, How can Parents and the Community assist with the Prevention of Bullying. Local teachers and parents have attended over 34 sessions and contacted 1,489 students.

4-H & Youth Development

There is great concern about the effect on youth of the breakdown of the family. When adults and children face a crisis, they have no guidelines to follow to resolve their issues or have knowledge of various stress management techniques. Critical issues generated by the Texas Community Futures Forum ranked 4-H Youth Programs and Adult Education Programs among the top five. In response to this issue, the Webb County 4-H Program, Youth Advisory Board, United Way Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service held a program on "Building Strong Families" in South Laredo. Outcome results indicated that 94% of participants plan to take action or make changes based on the information they received at this program and 100% would recommend this particular program activity to others. 2008 experienced a 10% (494) increase of youth members enrolled in 4-H and more representation in 4-H adult male leadership positions. 2008 4-H special interest programs indicated an increase of 30% participation at both the county & district contests (Fashion Show-13, Photography Contest-113, Roundup-13, Food Show-32, Recordbook Judging-19). Youth participation in major junior livestock shows (San Antonio & Houston) increased by 27% and a 14% increase of participation in the Laredo International Fair & Exposition Junior Livestock Show in 2008. Youth Leadership Day held in June 2008 experienced more than 3 times the participation than in 2007, about a 270% increase! Participation in youth summer camps (food camp, clothing camp, and photography camp) indicated an increase of 16% participation in 2008. 4-H marketing and promotion efforts were substantial in 2008. Starting in 2008, 4-H newsletters are being produced on a monthly basis in response to spreading more awareness of 4-H activities and events in Webb County. 4-H newsletters are for the first time available for viewing online on the Webb County Extension Service website and updated monthly. Local 4-H members participated in National 4-H Week during October 5-11, 2008. 4-H clubs produced displays for viewing by the general public in downtown Laredo at the Webb County Justice Center to recruit new membership and to recognize the spirit of 4-H in the county. All 4-H members are very involved in community service throughout Webb County.

4-H and Youth Development CEP 1890 Program

One student, Dorothy Chavez was selected to attend the 4-H National Convention in Washington, DC this past April. Six middle school students attended the Career Awareness Youth Leadership Lab in Prairie View A&M University, this past summer for a three day workshop on Careers for the Future. Two local elementary schools hosted the "OrganWise Guys" along with a special guest appearance by Blue Bear. Farias and Macdonnell students turned out in full force to hear about healthy eating habits and the importance of diet and exercise in your life no matter what age you are....! These schools were selected based on socio-economic demographic criteria and the alarming increase of diabetes in Webb County. City of Laredo Health Dept. reports indicate that our local percentage is more than double the national average. One family from Laredo (Macdonnell Elementary School) was chosen to be highlighted on the Blue Cross Blue Shield national website, Be Well BeSmart.com In 2008 we reached over 4,816 local elementary age children in Webb County. The partnership between Prairie View A&M University, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield has opened so many doors in this community, and most importantly for our kids...!