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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.

These are just a few highlights of AgriLife Extension's impacts on Webb County and its people

Agriculture & Natural Resources

During 2009, Webb County agricultural producers were faced with the impact of the drought, marginal market prices and production costs exceeding prices received for agricultural commodities such as beef cattle. Educational programs that were planned, implemented and conducted by the Webb County Extension Agriculture/Natural Resources committee this past year included: Strategies for Ranching Sustainability: Webb County Agricultural Sector Outlook Workshop, Enhancing, Rainwater Capture on Rangeland Field Day, Cattlemens Ranch Management Field Day, Ranch Estate Planning Seminar, Pond Management Field Day, Bi-National Ranchers Conference, Urban Horticulture Programs, Youth Wildlife Camp, Pesticide Safety and Licensing Education Courses. These agriculture & natural resources educational programs resulted in **4,037** educational contacts, **315** clientele office visits, **987** site contacts with clientele, **882** phone calls, **1395** mail/e-mail contacts and **158** volunteer based contacts in 2009. Over 85% of these program participants indicated that they received much or extreme educational value from their participation in 2009 educational programs and that programs saved them an average of **\$4.63** per acre with an approximate documented economic impact of **\$296,955.00** from the respondents revealing actual data. The overall economic impact was probably much larger. **305** local, area and northern Mexico agricultural producers continued to receive periodic newsletters and other informational letters to keep them current with the fastly changing agricultural industry.

Educational programs planned for 2010 will include: 2010 Ag. Outlook Workshop, Youth Wildlife/Natural Resources Camps, Field Days on the Future of Cattle Ranching, Fever Tick Situation Updates, Drought Recovery and Management, Range and Improved Pasture Management, Rainwater Capture and Harvesting and other programs as needed to address ranching sustainability.

Family & Consumer Science

For the past several years Texas AgriLife Extension Service has hosted the National Weather Service Storm Spotters Program with about 40 participants per year. This program is of great benefit to Laredo and Webb County since the weather service depends on trained storm spotters and rain gauge monitor for this area. 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 Sciences subject matter. In 2009, the summer youth activities included a segment on Walk Across Texas especially designed for young people.

Cooperative Extension Program

Through the use of the Project D.E.A.P. curriculum and assistance of advisory committees, collaborators, partners and volunteers **2,611** residents in Webb County were served with educational classes, such as Monitoring Your Body, Get Up and Move, Meal Management, just to name a few. The D.E.A.P. Diabetes Walk a Thon in El Cenizo was first of its kind to be implemented; we had a total of **158** participants. The D.E.A.P. Diabetes Education Awareness Prevention lessons listed above were conducted and implemented at Mercy Ministries Clinic, St. Teresita Community Center and GEAR UP Parents Cigarroa Recreational Center. A total of **37** participants that included **15** lessons were conducted. The Webb County Employees Health Fair, Mercy Ministries Health Fair and the Laser Eye Clinic Health Fair at Dr. Michael Hochman's office were all events where the Cooperative Extension Program played a vital role in participation, coordination, assistance in locating health partners and conducting nutritional information on portion control for carbohydrates (in our daily meals). These events were attended by a total of **627** participants.

Teen Leadership Connection for GEAR UP Ambassadors, 4-H

The Teen Leadership Connection, also known as TLC in Webb County was an after school enrichment program managed and conducted by Cooperative Extension Program Extension Agent and the GEAR UP II Coordinators from Texas A&M International University. The TLC program was designed to teach skills so the students could become responsible individuals in their schools and communities. On a daily basis students are faced with: bullying, peer pressure, gang violence, lack of leadership mentors and lack of professional opportunities. A total of **26** lessons and **629** contacts were made for this particular program.

OrganWise Guys Program, 4-H

Childhood obesity places youth at higher risk for developing health problems associated with heart disease, diabetes, blood pressure, depression and low self-esteem. The Cooperative Extension Program has partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas and implemented the OrganWise Guys Program. The goal of the program was to make youth aware of unhealthy snacking and dietary choices and introduce them to healthy alternatives. **997** contacts were made by volunteers and a total of **227** lessons were taught.

Keep Laredo Beautiful

Keep Laredo beautiful is a collaborative effort of the non-profit group. The goal was twofold, first is to ignite the desire to grow and plant trees within the school environment in order to benefit the campus and the surrounding neighborhood, second is to educate the students in a broad range of horticultural and environmental topics so that their knowledge base is expanded and behavioral change occurs. Keep Laredo Beautiful events gave the opportunity to engage the youth of the community and their parents in a beautification program that will educate and perpetuate the concept of trees being essential to the cooling of their community, we had **274** contacts.

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Since 1969, the federally funded Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has assisted limited resource families and youth in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and changed behaviors necessary to improve their total family diet and nutrition welfare. (EFNEP) is designed to assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed-behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development. The following centers and schools have been targeted to assist limited resource participants. Santa Teresita, Heights Elementary, Kawas Elementary and Lamar Middle School. Also we have been working with Mercy Ministries, United Independent School District as well as La Presa Community Center to start programs. **46** contacts were made on an individual basis to educate participants.

4-H & Youth Development

The Webb County 4-H and Youth Development Program during 2009 consisted of an enrollment of **482** youth members and **165** adult volunteer leaders. The program enrollment consisted of **14 4-H clubs** ranging from **16** members up to **72** members. 4-H members participated in a variety of projects ranging from traditional livestock projects to non traditional projects such as photography. In 2009 4-H members raised and exhibited approximately **350** livestock and poultry projects. 4-H Club Managers also participated in 4-H club manager meetings with County Extension Agents on a monthly basis and as needed to coordinate tasks such as 4-H enrollment, volunteer screening, eligibility compliance, annual club chartering and county, district and state educational activities.

4-H events in the area of Family & Consumer Sciences in 2009 included summer camps for youth with about **750** youth participating in nutrition and food safety activities. About **450** youth participated in the youth component of Walk Across Texas. Other summer camps included a food camp, clothing camp, photography camp and a leadership day. About 50 individual participated in each event with a total participation of about **200**. More recent Webb County 4-Her's have participated in the District 12 Food Show and District 12 Food Challenge with about 28 participants in all.

Last of all in 2009 the Webb County 4-H Parent/Leaders' Association was reorganized and elected new officers to provide leadership to the association. The primary focus of the association is to provide adult leader training based upon the needs of volunteer leaders, provide opportunity for fellowship and exchange of ideas and to recognize and promote a feeling of unity of purpose among volunteer leaders.