



## Extension Education in Zapata 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 Zapata County and its people:

## **Zapata County – Summary of Educational Contacts**

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- Total Educational Programs Conducted – 4
- Total Participants – 33
- 4-H Members
  - 2008-2009 – 273
  - 2009-2010 – 249
- 4-H Leaders
  - 2008-2009 - 10
  - 2009-2010 - 9
- 4-H Clubs – 3
- Office Contacts – 42
- Site Visits – 21
- Phone Calls – 88
- Newsletter contacts
  - ANR – broadcast monthly to 21 subscribers
  - 4-H – broadcast monthly to 249 subscribers
- E-Mail Contacts – 85
- Web Contacts – 20
- News Releases – 8



## 2009-2010 Zapata County Agriculture/Natural Resource Plan

Developed by Caleb L. Eaton, Zapata County Extension Agent - ANR



**Response:** Due to the extended absence of an agent in the Zapata County Extension Office, the new agent's first priority was to become familiar with the county's agricultural infrastructure and meet with local stakeholders who are involved in agriculture to gain feedback on both past and future programming efforts. A monthly newsletter was started and broadcast to local stakeholders. Weekly crop reports were compiled and turned into the United States Department of Agriculture. The agent also went on several horticultural house calls throughout the time period. The agent also met with other agency representatives (NRCS,FSA) that were located in the county to gain more perspective on the county's agricultural infrastructure. Beginning in October, the agent began to interview potential ANR Program Area Committee members to inquire about committee membership interest and to get feedback on 2010 program planning efforts. This feedback was critical in the planning of the 2010 Beef Cattle Improvement Plan. In November the agent assisted several other agents in collecting data for a multi-county Bull Gain Test and Heifer Development Program that will conclude in the spring of 2010. A weekly news column was started to inform local residents of issues and events that are related to Agriculture/Natural Resources, 4-H/Youth Development and Extension in general.

**Results:** The county ANR program is now a more organized program and communication between the extension office and local stakeholders has greatly improved through the monthly newsletters and local newspaper columns. A Beef Improvement Outcome Plan has been organized for 2010 and the Zapata County ANR Program Area Committee will meet for the first time in January.



## 2009 Zapata County 4-H Administration Plan

Developed by Caleb L. Eaton, Zapata County Extension Agent – ANR



**Response:** The majority of the work done during this plan was aimed at re-organizing the county 4-H program after the absence of an extension agent for an extended period of time and for the new extension agent to gain knowledge and experience on the current status of the 4-H program. The first major task completed in this plan was enrolling 273 4-H members and volunteers onto the new 4-H Connect Database for the 2008-2009 year. A monthly 4-H newsletter began circulation in August. Enrollment for the 2009-2010 year occurred during the Zapata County Fair Parent Feeder Meetings in September and October. The new agent made contacts with the local school system and an adjunct faculty agreement was approved by the ZCISD School Board. The agent attended a 4-H Shooting Sports Adult Leader Training and received certification in the .22 Rifle discipline. A 4-H Recognition Banquet was held in early October to kick off National 4-H Week along with the official proclamation by the County Judge on the Courthouse steps. Sheep and goats were validated for major stock shows for the first time in the county in October as well. In November a Club Officer's Training was held in which incoming club officers were educated on their roles and duties as club officers. A meeting was also held in November for families who validated animals for major stock shows. The agent began writing a monthly news column for the local newspaper that featured 4-H related content and announced upcoming 4-H dates/events. Monthly club meetings and county fair validations occurred throughout the time of this plan.

**Results:** The county 4-H program is now a more organized program and communication between the extension office and 4-H members has greatly improved through the monthly newsletters and local newspaper columns. Steps have been taken to get youth more involved in the administration of the county 4-H program (officer trainings, county council). 4-H members are also showing more interest in competing in events at the district/state level.

# Texas AgriLife Extension Service

## Zapata County

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