



**Extension Education in Dimmit County**  
*Making a Difference*

## EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension 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 hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts on this county and its people.

## **Dimmit County – Summary of 2015 Educational Contacts**

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### **2015 In-depth Summaries:**

#### Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Multi-County Water Screening
- Multi-County Quail

#### Agriculture & Natural Resource Outreach Summaries

Dimmit County 2015 Horticulture Plan

Dimmit County 2015 Natural Resource Plan

#### 4-H & Youth Development

- Take a Stand - *Against Bullying*
- One Day 4-H

**2015 In-depth Range Ecology Plan**

**Developed By, Richard Griffin CEA Dimmit County, and Shelly Elfelt, La Salle County**

**Relevance:** Over 700,000 acres of rangeland are managed in Dimmit County for wildlife and livestock. Of these acreages, over 600,000 are used for recreational and commercial hunting. The need to assist landowners with questions on brush management, and other wildlife questions is a key concern in the county, and was addressed through Dimmit County TCCF issues in 2015

**Results:** As a result of this plan, Dimmit County Extension and La Salle County, teamed up to provide several learning opportunities for individuals in the region. On April 1, 2015 Extension partnered with Dimmit County Soil and Water Conservation District to provide the 2015 Range Tour, that provided an opportunity for landowners to learn about Planning Chemical Brush Management procedures, Setting Goals on target species kill rates, herbicide effects on non-target species, and a panel discussion on producer's perspectives. At this event we had 34 individuals who signed in, we had approximately 52 individuals present, but several individuals flew into the ranch, and several vehicles containing multiple individuals did not sign in on the official sign in sheet. Of the 34 that signed in, we had 5 Hispanic, 31 Anglo, with 2 Females and 32 males present.

**Multi County Quail Appreciation Day:** At the Quail Appreciation Day held at the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the group focused on providing education to the clientele about Quail Population status, Mechanical and Chemical brush management treatment, the importance of Native bunchgrasses in quail nesting, prescribed fire legal issues, and utilizing herbicides for better habitat management. 12 individuals were present at the event including 3 Hispanics 8 Anglo, and 1 Asian with 2 females. At the event, the group was able to take a tour of the Chaparral and have firsthand experience of a wildfire, thanks to the neighboring ranches petroleum production. Results from the field day are as follows:

9 individuals completed the survey

**Participant Satisfaction Results**

**Activity Title:** Quail Management

**Activity Date:** October 2, 2015

**Number of Participants:** 10

Percentages based on 9 respondents to the survey (Response rate = 90%).

**Overall:**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity.

**Content:**

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being accurate.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being easy to understand.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information given on each topic.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information in decisions about your own situation.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the relevance of the examples used.

**Anticipated Changes & Economic Impact:**

- 78% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from this activity.
- 67% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this Extension activity.

**Value of Activity:**

- 100% of respondents would recommend this activity to others.
- 100% of respondents would attend another subject offered by Extension if it addressed a specific need or interest of theirs.
- 100% of respondents said that the information and programs provided by Extension were quite or extremely valuable to them.

**Demographics of Participants:**

- 20% female  
80% male
- 0% Black  
22% Hispanic  
67% White  
0% Other  
11.111111111111111% Multiracial

- 22% under age 30
- 11% ages 30 to 49
- 33% ages 50 to 69
- 33% age 70 or older

**Level of Understanding: (% of respondents who increased their understanding of . . .)**

- (100%) – <<q1a item>>
- (78%) – <<q1b item>>
- (78%) – <<q1c item>>
- (56%) – <<q1d item>>
- (100%) – <<q1e item>>
- (43%) – <<q1f item>>

In addition to the educational programs, agent have been continuing to work on the Quail Index Program, a result demonstration that looks at the factors affecting quail number declines in Texas. Agents have been monitoring quail numbers through several means of counts, and surveys, along with looking at habitat and predation issues. Results of the Quail Index result demonstration can be obtained in January, upon request.

**Future Plans:** Agent will continue to meet with Range and Wildlife Committee to gain input on future programming efforts. Programs will be conducted in order to assist landowners with the ever changing challenges that they face in their operations. Quail Index program will continue to be conducted next year.

*2015 Multi-County In-Depth Water Quality Education Plan  
(Related to Oil & Gas)*

**Developed By: Jaime Lopez, Frio County Extension Agent-Ag  
Dale Rankin, Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag  
Richard Griffin, Dimmit County Extension Agent-Ag  
Shelly Elfelt, La Salle County Extension Agent-Ag  
Marcel Valdez, Zavala County Extension Agent-Ag  
Isaac Cavazos, McMullen County Extension Agent- Ag**

**Relevance:**

Water quality and quantity have emerged as the preeminent issue across the state including the Eagle Ford Shale area in South Texas. Agriculture and Oil & Gas industries are the largest water uses in South Texas, and both are under close scrutiny because of the potential for negative environmental (water quality) impacts. The goal is for homeowners and landowners to adopt best management practices to protect water quality and enhance water conservation so water supplies will meet future water needs in the Eagle Ford Shale area.

**Response:**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Frio, Atascosa, Dimmit, McMullen, Zavala, and LaSalle counties developed the following activities to address this relevant issue:

- “Update from Wintergarden Groundwater Conservation District”, Ed Walker
- Frio County Soil/Water Conservation District Monthly meetings
- Spring Water Sample Screening Program for Frio, Atascosa, LaSalle, McMullen, Dimmit, and Zavala counties.
- Water Screening Kit Agent Training
- Nueces River Authority Public Meeting on the San Miguel Creek Project
- Fall Water Sample Screening Program for Frio, Atascosa, LaSalle, McMullen, Dimmit, and Zavala counties.
- The Zavala County Extension Agent utilized the Uvalde Leader News and the Zavala County Sentinel with a combined circulation of 6, 452 (Texas Press Association) to promote water well testing.
- Atascosa County Quarterly Newsletter on Water Conservation.
- Water Shed Simulator demonstration at the Atascosa County Ag Day reaching 667 youth.
- Atascosa County Living Series, “Water Run Off and Maximizing Rainfall through good forage management”.
- Water Sample screening demonstration to District 12 4-H Leadership Lab participants.
- McMullen County Jr. Master Gardner – Water Conservation Practices

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Frio, Atascosa, Dimmit, Zavala, McMullen and LaSalle Counties, would like to recognize and thank the partnership and cooperation of the above mentioned individuals, company reps, association and governmental agencies.

**Results:**

**Table 1: Changes in Knowledge of Participants**

	Your Understanding of ...	Mean Before	Mean After	Percent Change
1	TCEQ is required to enforce the safe drinking Water Act in Texas	3.00	5.00	50.0%
2	Knowing who to contact if I have an abandoned water well to plug	2.33	5.00	66.8%
3	That TCEQ maintains the list of EPA-certified NELAP labs for potable water analysis	2.67	4.67	50.0%
4	Maximum Containment Level (MCL)guidelines for public health	2.33	4.67	58.5%
5	TCEQ considers a water well to be abandoned if it has not been used for how long	2.33	4.67	58.5%
6	Critical factors regarding fecal coliform levels in private water wells	2.00	4.67	66.8%
7	Minimum distance separation between a drain field of conventional septic or spray field of an aerobic wastewater treatment system and a water well	2.33	4.67	58.5%
8	Maximum Contaminant Level for fecal coliform is zero	2.67	4.67	50.0%
9	Elevated levels of Nitrate-N cause Methemoglobinemia	2.67	4.67	50.0%
10	Secondary drinking water standards differ from primary standards, which deal with contaminants that effect human health	2.67	4.67	50.0%

Percent Change = ((Post Mean – Pre Mean)/4)\*100

**Table 2: Plan to Adopt:**

	Percent
Test my well water once a year	33.3
Pump my septic system regularly	33.3
Remove hazards from well house	66.7
Plug or cap any abandoned wells on property	33.3
Apply Best Management Practices to address high nitrate, if found present, from screening	33.3
Apply Best Management Practices to address positive reading of fecal Coliform bacteria	33.3

## 4-H and Youth Development

Water screening results provide critical information on current status of water. Fecal Coliform is the most common problem private well owner's experience. The presence of fecal coliform in water indicates that feces (bodily waste from humans or animals) may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with feces have microorganisms present that can cause a number of "waterborne" diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. Of the samples, 16 positive for fecal coliform (21.6%). Nitrate level was .7 average, with 20pm with an average 1-3pm high nitrate sample. Nitrate is converted to nitrite which combines with hemoglobin, the chemical that carries oxygen in the blood, to form methemoglobin. Oxygen cannot bind with methemoglobin, therefore, oxygen is not carried throughout the body. As a result, oxygen starvation occurs. This condition is called methemoglobinemia. If left untreated, death may result. Infants less than 6 months in age and young livestock are most susceptible. Salinity in the form of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) was also determined on each sample. 583ppm TDS have salinity with range from 29 to 5500 TDS salinity.

The estimated value for each participant in the multi-county water program is \$766.17 mean x 45 samples = \$34,478 value of program participants.

Results indicate that the Multi- County Water Plan met its objectives to increase knowledge and behavioral changes with the homeowners that participated. 91.0% of the participants indicated that they were completely satisfied with the entire program. The average estimate how valuable their participation in the Water Educational Program has been to them is \$766.17 per participant.

### Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to Mr. Drew M. Gholson, John Smith, Diane Boellstroff, Ryan Gerlich and the Texas Water Well Owner Network Program for providing the expertise on screening the water samples and helping with the program. We would also like to thank the San Antonio River Authority and the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District for being part of the program. Additional thanks are also due to Dr. Monty Dozier and Mr. Todd Swift for their guidance with the Multi-County Water Plan and to the agents from Dimmit, La Salle, Frio, Atascosa, McMullen and Zavala Counties.

### Future Program Actions:

Working with agents from Dimmit, La Salle, Frio, Atascosa, McMullen and Zavala counties we will continue to offer water educational programs targeting homeowners and landowners so they can continue to monitor their water resources.

### For more information contact:

<b>Jaime Lopez</b> Frio County Extension Agent-Ag 400 S. Pecan St. Pearsall, Texas 78061 830-334-0099	<b>Dale Rankin</b> Atascosa County Extension Agent-Ag 1003 Oak Street Jourdanton, Texas 78062 830-769-3066	<b>Richard Griffin</b> Dimmit Co. Extension Agent-Ag 303 South 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Carrizo Springs, Texas 78834 830-876-4216
<b>Shelly Elfelt</b> La Salle County Extension Agent-Ag 247 Mars Dr. Cotulla, Texas 78014 830-879-4389	<b>Marcel Valdez</b> Zavala County Extension Agent-Ag 221 North First Ave. Crystal City, Texas 78839 830-374-2883	<b>Isaac Cavazos</b> McMullen Co. Extension Agent P.O. Box 189 Tilden, Texas 78072 361-274-3323

**2015 – Dimmit County Horticulture Plan – Outreach Summary**

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

**Relevance**

Due to our geographical location, and distance from nurseries and landscaping maintenance companies, numerous questions are fielded by the County Extension Agent for the clientele of Dimmit County.

**Response**

This agent assisted landowners and home owners by answering questions via telephone, office visits, and making numerous site visits in order to assist clientele with questions on trees, shrubs, lawns, and insects. Agent was able to assist individuals with numerous problems, many of which were caused by drought. Agent conducted to offer CEU's including Field Days and conducting Last Chance CEU training on December 22 in order to assist licensed individuals with their credits needed.

**Future Plans**

Agent will continue to offer private applicator trainings, along with CEU opportunities in the county. Site visits and phone calls will be answered in order to assist clientele with problems as they arise.



**2015 – Dimmit County Natural Resources Plan – Outreach Summary**

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

**Relevance:**

Over 700,000 acres of rangeland are managed in Dimmit County for wildlife and livestock. Of these acreages, over 600,000 are used for recreational and commercial hunting. The need to assist landowners with questions on brush management, and other wildlife questions is needed.

**Results**

As a result of this plan, this agent assisted landowners by answering questions via telephone, in the office, and made numerous site visits whereas this agent assisted landowners by assessing parcels of land and giving input on to what changes needed to be made. Landowners had the opportunity to inquire about brush control methods, plant identification, and general questions about food plots and wildlife. Agent meet with Dimmit County Range and Wildlife committee in order to gain input on what type of programming efforts needed to be conducted in the county. As a result, Dimmit County offered programs in water quality and quantity. Agent also gained professional development by attending South Texas Buckskin Brigade and was able to learn more about population dynamics, plant ID, and a wealth of information from professionals from across the state.

**Future Plans**

Agent will continue to meet with Range and Wildlife Committee to gain input on future programming efforts. Programs will be conducted in order to assist landowners with the ever changing challenges that they face in their operations.

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**Take A Stand, *Against Bullying* In-depth Summary - 2015**

**Dimmit County**

Developed by Richie Griffin, Dimmit County Extension Agent

**Relevance**

Conflicts among youth and bullying have been increasing. School districts have been mandated by the Texas Legislature through two bills (House Bill 212 and 283) to adopt and implement a dating violence policy and a discipline management policy. Both bills require training for teachers/staff as well as training/curriculum for youth to address these issues. Currently, there is no standard curriculum being utilized by school districts.

**Response**

Texas 4-H has developed, in partnership with the Texas Rural Mediation Services, a curriculum called Take A Stand! The curriculum is available for elementary, junior high and high school grade levels. The curriculum objectives are for students to increase knowledge and skills necessary to solve conflict peacefully, for teachers to observe students using skills to work out conflict, for schools to experience a decline in discipline referrals and an overall decline in bullying. During the 2015 Fall semester, the Take A Stand curriculum was implemented with all 4th graders at Carrizo Springs ISD Intermediate School. The curriculum content consists of 5 lessons addressing the following topics: conflict management/bullying, communication, etiquette, teamwork & cultural awareness.

## 4-H and Youth Development

### Results

Male	Female	Anglo	Hispanic
132	105	17	220

Question	RESPONSES				Increase of Correct Responses from Pre to Post Test
	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST		
	CORRECT	INCORRECT	CORRECT	INCORRECT	
1	57%	43%	81%	19%	24%
2	22%	78%	83%	17%	61%
3	35%	65%	75%	25%	40%
4	73%	27%	84%	16%	11%
5	9%	91%	42%	58%	33%
6	69%	31%	87%	13%	18%
7	80%	20%	92%	8%	12%
8	36%	37%	85%	15%	22%
9	85%	15%	96%	4%	11%
10	12%	88%	40%	60%	28%

The Pretest and Post Test measured knowledge gained. The test focused on questions that dealt with; identifying anger, actions used to show respect, methods of working as a team, understanding different perspectives, and cultural awareness.

### Future Plans:

Agent Will Continue to Work With Carrizo Springs ISD, in order to provide education in this area of education.

## Day 4-H In-depth Summary - 2015 Dimmit County

Developed by Richard Griffin Dimmit County Extension Agent

### Relevance

The One Day 4-H Community service project is a means of utilizing all 4-H'ers across the State of Texas to conduct a community service project on the same day throughout the State. This is a way of saying “Thank you” to Texas for supporting the program for over 100 years. Members of Dimmit County 4-H decided to give back to Dimmit County, by planting trees at the community park.

### Response

The youth of Dimmit County 4-H focused a beatification project at a Dimmit County Park. The youth planted a tree at the County Park in order to assist in getting trees established shade trees at the New Community Center and Rodeo Arena. The County is in the process of building a \$15 Million dollar Civic Center and Rodeo Arena for the youth of Dimmit County. At this facility, brush was removed, and there are no shade trees, and basically barren ground. The youth decided that planting trees and establishing some type of landscaping would be a means of saying “Thank You” to the County for their generosity.

### Results

- 18 youth and 4 adults participated in the One Day 4-H community service project.
- The 12 youth completed the customer satisfaction survey.

Ethnic Breakdown	
Hispanic	9
White	8
Asian American	5
Other	

Gender	
Males	9
Females	15

## 4-H and Youth Development

- 93% of youth found the event was positive for the community
- 100% of youth found the a better appreciation for community service and willing to do it again
- 75% of youth found that this project had an influence on the community
- 90% of youth said they *would recommend* this activity to others.

### **Future Plans**

- Identify emerging community service projects.
- Increase participation in community service projects.

**2015 - Dimmit County Economic Development Plan - Output Summary**

Developed by Richard Griffin, Dimmit County ANR Agent

**Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts**

In 2015, Dimmit County worked with the Chamber of Commerce in providing venues for yearly festivals that were held at the Dimmit County Fair Grounds. Agents also provided information to Chamber about educational opportunities that AgriLIFE Extension could provide. The County has continued to work on building the new Show Barn and Multi-Purpose Center. Dimmit County Classic continues to be a success, 2015 Dimmit County Classic generated over Four Thousand Dollars to the Parent leaders association, and brought individuals from numerous counties to participate.

**Results of Efforts**

- Dimmit County Commission's Court has almost completed the Multi-Purpose Center and Show Barn(\$15 Million project)
- Dimmit County Classic generated over \$4000 to the Dimmit County 4-H project, and 2014 looks to be just as eventful.

**Future Plans**

- Continue collaborations with Chamber and County to secure new multi-purpose facility for the community.
- Continue to work with parent leaders in order to provide Prospect Shows.
- Strengthen ties between City and County to work together in Community Projects

## Personnel

*Richard Griffin*

County Extension Agent - Ag/NR

[r-griffin@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:r-griffin@ag.tamu.edu)

*Anais De Luna*

Administrative Assistant

[adeluna@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:adeluna@ag.tamu.edu)

### **Contact Us:**

*Address:*

303 South 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Carrizo Springs, TX 78834

*Phone:*

830-876-4216

830-876-4228

*Fax:*

830-876-4233

