TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Extension Education in Live Oak County

Making a Difference

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.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions

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.

Live Oak County – Summary of 2015 Educational Contacts

Total Educational Programs Conducted	49
Total Participants	450
Total Contact Hours	203
4-H Members	236
4-H Clubs	7
4-H Volunteers	31
Curriculum Enrichment	14
Office Contacts/ Site Visits	462
4-H Newsletter Contacts	3000
Web Contacts	1713
News Releases	312
CEU's Offered for Applicators	17

2015 Multi-County Water Quality Education Program

Relevance

Water quality and water quantity has emerged as the predominant issue across the state as presented through local input, legislative efforts, and numerous other indicators. Private water well owners were concerned with contaminants (arsenic, nitrate, fecal coliform bacteria, and salinity) due to the ongoing drought. Concerned residents depend on well water for human and livestock consumption as well as for irrigation and recreational use. For this reason, implementing water education and screening is and continues to be a vital part of this multicounty effort which provides well owners with peace of mind.

Response

Nine water well owners from Live Oak County were involved in the water well education and screening project. One of the 9 water well owners submitted multiple samples for screening. Water samples were collected by each well owner following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Water Sample Information Form for collecting and submitting water samples although we did ask that the well owners use an uncontaminated water bottle to collect their water samples. The reason was to make it easier to pour in the different sample cups to conduct the testing. Water samples were labeled and prepared for screening of contaminants. Well owners received their water well results and were provided with educational publications explaining the contaminants screened and options available to them.

Results

The following data are from samples received from well owners. The overall water well screening results showed a high level of salt concentrations. The recommended EPA/TCEQ salinity water standard is no greater than 500 parts per million (ppm). The high level could be contributed to the heavy rainfall that we received just a few weeks prior to the soil sample collections and testing. The average salinity level of the 10 samples screened was 1582 parts per million.

The nitrate level was a little higher this year than last year. EPA/TCEQ nitrate water standard is no greater than 10 parts per million. The average was 4.3 parts per million.

Slight amounts of Arsenic was present in four (4) of the Live Oak County water samples submitted. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) maximum allowed arsenic standards are at 0.01 parts per million. This year 40% of the samples submitted were positive for the presence of bacteria.

Landowners do understand that the water screening numbers change from year to year. Participants in the program were given a retro-post knowledge evaluation. One hundred percent of the evaluations were returned by landowners participating in the Private Water Well Screening program. Below is the summary of the evaluation:

- 10% of the participants knew that it is recommended for water well to get screened annually
- 100% of the participants had knowledge of the contaminates (arsenic, nitrates, fecal coliform bacteria, and salinity) being screened
- 80% of the participants had their water wells screened by another entity other than Extension. The average time lapse was 10½ years ago
- 100% of the participants indicated that if the results were not within Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) drinking water standards they would correct the problem

The economic benefit to the implementation of this water well screening has vastly helped residents understand and take proper measures towards their water quality and quantity concerns. Participants were asked to indicate the value in participating in this water education/screening program.

- None indicated Same Value ($100 - $250)
- 20% indicated Considerable Value ($251 - $1,000)
- 80% indicated Tremendous Value ($1,001 – more)

Twenty percent of the participants indicated that their well water was used for human consumption. Seventy percent said their well water was used for livestock consumption. Twenty percent indicated they use their well water for irrigation only. Having safe water for the land is imperative to a productive land.

Future Plans

The multi-county water well screening will continue into the future as long as private water well owners and our local committees continue to support these programming efforts. Our mission is to provide more resources and awareness to private well water owners. The plan next year will be to provide several water publications along with the news releases. The Water Publications that will be accompanying the news releases next year are listed: {**E-176** What's In My Water, **SP-464** Private Drinking Water Well Basics,**B-6186** Drinking Water Standards, **B-6184** Drinking Water Problems: Nitrates, **ER-004** Disinfecting Water Wells by Shock Chlorination, **L-5467** Drinking Water Problems: Arsenic}

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Family and Consumer Sciences

Car Seat Safety Event

Relevance:

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 14 and under. Although safety belts and child restraints are the single-most effective tool in reducing these deaths and injuries, almost half of children killed in vehicle crashes are unrestrained. In rural areas there are a higher percentage of crash incidences in comparison to urban areas. Minority children and low-income families are at a greater risk of being unrestrained.

Most parents think they are using child safety seats correctly, but studies show that an estimated three out of four seats are used incorrectly. Over the period 1975 through 2010, an estimated 9,611 lives were saved by child restraints. However, misuse and non-use of child restraints remains high. Child safety seats are 71 percent effective in reducing fatal injury for infants and 54 percent effective for toddlers. The Passenger Safety Project works to reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes by providing educational training and increasing the correct use of child restraints and safety belts.

Response:

Live Oak County held one Child Safety Seat Checkup Event in October. The event was organized by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Live Oak County and partnered with: Traffic Safety Specialists with TXDOT, George West Police Department, and Live Oak County Sheriff Office. A total of 5 certified technicians helped conduct lessons and inspections and 3 community volunteers helped distribute paperwork. Caregivers and families that participated in the event had their child safety seat fitted and or inspected, along with a one-on-one educational lesson on proper installation and usage.

Results:

- Inspections: 21
- Seats used Incorrectly: 13

The proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, leading to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings, and improved quality of life. These economic benefits are an estimated $634 per child for seat misuse corrected with an assumed 75% continued use. Based on this formula, the total economic impact for the 21 inspections at the event on September 16th is $8,242.

Success Stories:

- “Thank you for doing this event; we need it here in George West.”
- “I’ve had my grandchild buckled in wrong.”
- “I feel so much better now that I know how to install correctly.”

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4-H and Youth Development

2015 Live Oak County Learn, Grow, Eat & Go (LGEG)

Boys & Girls Clubs of George West and Three Rivers

Relevance

With the increase of Obesity related health issues in youth continues to be an issue in South Texas. Nationally, 18 percent of children ages 6 to 11 years are obese. Texas ranks seventh in the nation and has a child obesity rate of 20.4 percent. In addition, there is also an absence of understanding of where food comes from with younger generations. Programs that increase awareness of where food comes from as well as physical activity recommendations to change behaviors associated with obesity are needed.

Target Audience

For this program we targeted the Live Oak County Boys and Girls Club in both Three Rivers and George West. Our targeted audience was 3rd grade students.

Response

As a multi-disciplinary team we have utilized the Learn, Grow, Eat and Go curriculum that was already developed for third-grade students on nutrition and physical activity. The curriculum is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and is titled Learn, Grow, Eat and Go (LGEG). The LGEG curriculum focuses on the following:

- Exposure to fruits and vegetables
- Participation in gardening activities
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Gain knowledge about nutrition benefits
- Responsibility of caring for food garden
- Increase in physical activity

As a team we coordinated with the boys and girls club directors in both Three Rivers and George West. Following our meetings, we sat down and determined the best possible options for scheduling time to dedicate to teaching these lessons in both clubs. We were also able to get all of the supplies needed to conduct the lessons donated by local businesses in both towns. We met with the boys and girls club youth once a week over a ten week period and conducted weekly lessons according to the LGEG curriculum and our given time frame.

Results

At the completion of LGEG, students were more likely to correctly identify the essentials needs of plants, identification of different vegetables, knowledge of where our fruits and vegetables originated and the importance of physical activity. Student behaviors related to physical activity, fruit and vegetable knowledge, basic understanding of plant survival needs and timely planting for the variety of food. All of which are associated with factors that could decrease health complications due to obesity as an adult. Student responses after implementing the 10 week lesson plans:

- "I learned what a plant needs to stay alive."
- "When do we get to plant our garden?"

- "Nobody has ever done anything like this with us before, I really like it!"
- "I have my own garden at home now!"
- "I can't wait to eat the food we grow!"

Future Plans

We will continue to help the Boys and Girls Clubs with their gardens as well as begin Walk Across Texas activities to get them "Going!" We also plan on meeting with school principals in both school districts to provide them with the opportunity to implement the Learn, Grow, Eat and Grow curriculum.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Community Economic Development

Texas Community Futures Forum

Relevance

Developing educational programs based on community needs is the foundation of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's success. Our ability to meet educational needs depends on knowing what local residents see as their issues that impact their lives. There is no way to know the answers to these questions unless they are asked.

The issues that surface should be discussed with county committees, task forces, and subject matter specialists to determine the appropriate action for educational programming. Moreover, they should be shared with other agencies and educational groups to see if a program partnership can be formed to address the issue.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is unique because it has faculty in every area of the state who are dedicated to educating Texans in many areas of need. This uniqueness provides an opportunity to bring together the people of Texas, other service agencies, and educational groups to help provide solutions to the problems and issues facing Texans.

Target Audience

Stakeholders in the community, Community Leaders and anyone who is invested in creating a unified effort to better Live Oak County!

Response

We were able to set the date for the Live Oak County TCFF on Tuesday, July 28, 2015. The meeting was held at the county Fairgrounds in the Annex Building so we had plenty of room to spread out and accomplish this task!

Results

The following are the issues that were brought forth at the TCFF Meeting.

- Day help for Elderly (assist elderly with day to day responsibilities)
- Soil Erosion and Water Quality
- Parenting Related Issues: Drugs, Family Violence, Safe Driving, Money Management
- Assisted Living Resources
- Healthy Living & Nutrition

Future Plans

Agents plan to address these issues within the next 5 years using the Texas A&M AgriLife research based programs.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Live Oak County

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