



**Cooperative Extension Program
Prairie View A&M University**



Extension Education in Starr County *Making a Difference* **2011**

*Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.*

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service 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. 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 professional educators and more than 100,000 trained volunteers, Extension 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 Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to 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. Here are just a few highlights of Extension's impacts on this county and its people:

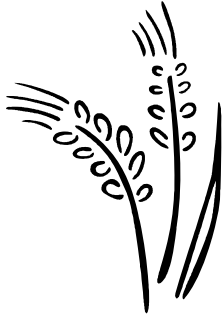
Starr County – Summary of Educational Contact

Program Area Committees – 5
Organized 4H Clubs – 7
4H Club Members – 207
4H Special Interest – 1,381
4H Curriculum Enrichment – 327
4H Total Volunteers – 121
Starr County Youth Fair Board - 32



Cooperative Extension Program
Prairie View A&M University

Agriculture and Natural Resources



- Agriculture Distance Learning Program
- Sustainable Agriculture Production

Making a Difference 2011

Agriculture Distance Learning Program Starr County 2011

Developed by Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR
Rolando Zamora, Extension Agent -CEP (AGNR)

Introduction. Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been offering distance learning educational programs for many years. These educational programs have been mostly offered to Extension personnel but are suitable for use with Extension clientele. We are now beginning to see this technology applied to producer type programs. Many local producers have not been exposed to this type of innovative distance learning. The advantage of this technology is to be able to access the expertise of specialists all over the state while minimizing travel time and costs.

Program. The following educational activities were organized, with the input and assistance of the Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee and Leadership Advisory Board, to achieve the program objectives.

1. Agents conducted five (5) educational programs for Starr County ranchers that focused on wildlife management. These programs were held as part of the Wildlife for Lunch workshops that were sponsored by the Texas A&M Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and the Texas Wildlife Association. All five educational workshops were offered online through the Texas Forestry Portal (something similar to Centra). These workshops were projected on to a screen with the sound amplified through a speaker system. The educational activities were interactive as participants could ask questions through a chat room that was available to the person making the presentation.
2. The five workshops were selected by the AGNR committee. The committee met earlier in 2011 to select the workshops from a list and then planned for the location and program evaluation strategy.
3. Agents compiled summary of the agriculture distance program based on the results of the evaluations that were collected from each of the participants that attended the educational programs.
4. Developed interpretation marketing piece will be shared with members of the county commissioner's court, task force members and general public in the month of December.

Evaluation Method. A one page retrospective post- design evaluation was administered to each of the participants. The survey was used to determine the level of clientele knowledge change acquired by participating in each of the educational programs. The evaluation was developed with input from all AGNR committee members. The key focus was to determine how comfortable the participants were with the delivery of the program.

Collaborators. The following groups assisted with resources to make this program possible:

- Starr County IT Department
- Economic Development Corporation
- Starr County Farm Bureau
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition

Results. The following results are shared from the program evaluation to indicate the achievements of the project.

- 94% of participants gained knowledge of wildlife management.
- 98% of participants felt comfortable with the way this program was presented using long distance technology.
- 92% of the participants felt that their questions, or of any participants, could be satisfactorily answered using this type of program delivery.
- 96% of the participants indicated that they would attend another distance education program.

Summary. This program did appear to build knowledge and change perceptions concerning distance learning programs. Producer responses indicate that they have a better appreciation for new technology and the way these programs are now being delivered. This program will continue next year, focusing on range and wildlife management.

For More Information Contact:
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VALUE	
Wildlife Management	
	Texas AgriLife Extension Programs targeted to large and small scaled agriculture producers helped generate more profitable and efficient management systems. The result is quality, consistent, affordable products and industries that support the state's rural economies.



Making a Difference 2011

Starr County Sustainable Agriculture Production 2011

**Developed by; Rolando Zamora, Extension Agent -CEP (AGNR)
Vidal H. Saenz, Extension Agent-CEP (Farm Advisor)
Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR**

Introduction - The primary purpose of this plan is to identify and to enhance the delivery of technical assistance, and education efforts to socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers and ranchers . This plan will address a wide range of activities i.e. beef production, financial management, pesticide trainings, brush management, marketing, and applying for assistance under USDA programs.

Program - Sustainable Agriculture is an Emerging Issue identified in the 2004 Texas Community Futures Forum (TCFF). As a result, though planning of the Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee, we plan to increase knowledge and attitude of agriculture producers by making them aware of programs that can help them compete in today's economical industry while concurrently minimizing negative impact on the environment. We will identify producers interests that will benefit from our services and offer programs that will address their specify production concerns.

The following educational activities were organized to achieve the goal of the Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee objectives.

1. We organized a task force to discuss educational programming efforts and individuals involved to address issues.
2. We identify potential USDA programs to add value to their farming and ranching operations and kept update information on government assistance programs to enhance conservation practices to their land.
3. Agents conducted six (6) educational programs for Starr County limited resource farmers and ranchers that focused on sustainable agriculture. Programs ranged from Best Management Practices to Control Brush, Meeting The Divers Needs, Hay Forage and Feeding, Wildlife Management For White Tail Deer, Proper Feeding Nutritional Practices For Beef Cattle, Bio-security on Poultry and Pesticide Trainings.
4. The following educational activities were organized, with the input and assistance of the Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee and Leadership Advisory Board, to achieve the program objectives.
5. Agents evaluated data that was gathered from participants, task force members and other stake holders which will be used to evaluate program.

*Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

6. Developed interpretation marketing piece will be shared with members of the county commissioner's court, task force members and general public in the month of September.

Evaluation Method - A retrospective test evaluation form was administered to each participant. The survey was used to determine the level of clientele knowledge change acquired by the educational programming and the attitude change.

Collaborators - The following businesses assisted with resources to make this program possible:

- Starr County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition
- Starr County Farm Bureau
- USDA Farm Service Agency

Results - The following results are shared from the program evaluation to indicate the achievements of the project:

- 86.4 % of participants gained knowledge of range land insurance coverage's to assist them in financially.
- 92 % of participants identified ways to improve their pastures by learning brush control practices and using them more cost efficiently.
- 81 % of participants gained knowledge on livestock management practices to improve their beef cattle operations.
- 84 % of participants gained a better understanding of available USDA government assistance programs.
- 94 % of participants indicated that the pesticide trainings keep them informed of rules and regulations and increased their knowledge of following proper safety practices on the farm and ranch.

Summary - In summary, this program did appear to build knowledge and change attitude towards continuously participating participants. Results measured indicated that they were better informed of current USDA assistant programs and guidelines to comply with government programs. Participants indicated that they have a better understanding of livestock and pasture management practices that will allow them to ranch and farm more effectively and in the same process keeping the land environmentally sound.

VALUE

Sustainable Agriculture



Cooperative Extension Program is building knowledge and understanding of livestock and pasture management practices that will allow them to ranch and farm more effectively and in the same process keeping the land environmentally sound.



- Strengthening Families Programs – Child Care Conference
- Texas Communities Putting Prevention to Work
- Better Living for Texans Program
- Yo Puedo Contralar Mi Diabetes - Diabetes Education
- Friend to Friend – Cancer Prevention
- Emergency Preparedness
- Family Consumer Science Study Groups
- RGBI-Fix A Leak Campaign

Making a Difference 2011

Strengthening Families Programs – Child Care Conference Starr County

Relevance

Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6(not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is the 16th largest industry in the state, generating over 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans.

Findings from longitudinal research have clearly established the fact that quality does matter when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care (e.g. warm sensitive care giving, well educated child care staff, low child-to-adult ratios, small group size) develop better language, math, and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

Response

Child Care Conference

On August 6, 2011, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Rio Grande City, Texas for 164 child care providers and directors who provide care for 1,596 children enrolled in 33 child care centers or family day homes. One hundred and sixty-four participants completed a written evaluation of the conference: A total of 1,312 clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

Results

Child care providers nurture and care for our future, our children. These workers play a vital and important role in children's development by caring for them and attending to their needs. They help children explore individual interest, develop talents and independence, build self-esteem, and learn how to get along with others.

The conference helped organize activities, and implement curricula that will stimulate children's physical, emotional intellectual and social growth.

The evaluations showed that child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. Over 90 percent of participants plan to utilize the information gained at the conference, considered the training

to improve their programs, and now consider themselves better equipped to work with the children in their care. Moreover, 82% of providers rated the training “Better” to “Much Better” compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of items related to the training. One hundred and sixty-four participants completed written surveys (See Table 2 for participant responses).

Table 2. Child Care Provider Conference Outcomes (N = 164)*

Item	Percent in Agreement*	Percent not in Agreement*
Acquisition of New Information		
Learned new information	96.3%	1.8%
Will utilize new information to strengthen program	94.5%	1.8%
Intent to Use Information		
Will use now	96.3%	0.6%
Will use in future	96.3%	0.0%
Training's Influence on Provider/Program Quality		
Will be more effective provider	95.7%	0.6%
Will lead to improvements in quality of care offered	96.3%	0.6%
Relevancy of Training		
Helped provider obtain required clock hours	93.3%	2.4%
Topics relevant to daily work	95.7%	0.6%
Other		
Training cost-effective	86.0%	4.9%
Plan to attend another Extension conference	96.3%	0.6%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

Value

Child Care



The conference was dedicated to help providers give better support to children as they grow. It explained how providers can work with parents and talk about many different issues.

Making a Difference 2011

Texas Communities Putting Prevention to Work- Addressing Childhood Obesity – Starr County

Relevance

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, rate of childhood obesity are among the worst in the Mexican-American population, and Starr County is 98 percent Mexican-American. The US Department of Health and Human Services, among other sources, also shows that as socio-economic status falls, rates of childhood obesity rise, and Starr County is desperately poor. Not only is Starr County in Texas – one of the fattest states in the Union – but it also on the US-Mexico border, the fattest part of Texas. The overall effect is devastating: almost half the adults in Starr County have Type 2 diabetes.

Response

The project goal of the Texas Communities Putting Prevention to Work was to create a sustainable, effective model of obesity prevention in Starr County based on policy and environmental and system changes. Dr. Mario Ramirez Elementary was selected to serve as the community access point to fresh fruits and vegetables and a safe place for free physical activity. The school selected six strategies to implement in collaboration with Extension and community partners in 2011.

Results

The task force made up of parents, school staff members, agency personnel, collaborators, farmers and Extension staff member agreed on six strategies they would implement. They are as follows:

X	Gardening programs increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables
X	Hosting Farmer's Markets; Farm to School programs, etc.
X	Physical Activity Programs (75 mile)
X	Cooking Healthy Food Series/Demos
X	Building walking paths/tracks to increase access to physical activity
X	Signs for Walking Trail and Updating Walking Trail with exercise equipment or an obstacle course.

All of the planned strategies were completed and the community response was very note worthy.

The final surveys and results are being tabulated, but the pre and post returns have been really successful. There has been over 80% return of the parent surveys and over 90% of the school staff surveys.



Gardening



Farmer's Market



Fitness



Food Demos



Walking Paths/Tracks



Signs for Obstacle Course

Making a Difference 2011

Better Living for Texans Program – Starr County

Relevance

The Dietary Guidelines, MyPlate and the Nutrition Facts label form the basic nutrition education constructs for the American population. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-ED) recipients need sound nutrition education so that they can make healthful food choices. Basic food buying skills enable clients to consider more healthful food choices when shopping. This skill is important because health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease, diabetes and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. More than 60% of adults are overweight or obese and heart disease is the leading cause of death. Hypertension affects approximately 1 in 3 adults in the United States.

Response – Better Living for Texans (BLT)

The BLT Program is a cooperative endeavor among Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. A component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), BLT offers food and nutrition education to SNAP recipients, applicants, and other low-income audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely. BLT also incorporates in its program physical activity.

Results

The typical client attending in Starr County was Hispanic (99%), female (93%) and had less than a high school education (53%). WIC (29%), free/reduces school meals (18%) Head Start (16%) and SNAP (14%) were programs most utilized by these participants. Many clients (70%) indicated that this was the first Extension program that they had attended.

Behavior

Data suggest self-reported behavior regarding serving size, fat and sodium improved during the time this lesson series was taught. The percentage of participants who indicated that they always or almost always check food labels increased (serving size from 32% to 67%; fat from 52% to 75% and sodium from 28% to 65%). The percentage of participants who indicated that they never check food labels decreased (serving size 4% to 1%; fat 6% to 1% and sodium 15% to 1%).

Rated their perceived ability to prepare nutritious meals as either “good” or “very good” was 63% (n=20) before BLT (pre-survey) and 91% (n=29) after BLT (post survey).

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

Of the 32 individuals who could be contacted 30 days after the program ended, 29 of them (91%) rated the BLT program as “excellent”.

Success Stories

Story 1: As a parent it is hard to make the proper food choices for my family. My problem is giving in to my kids and husband too much and their relentless requests. I really liked the classes because it gave me some answers. I can use when trading off French fries for carrots on their dinner plate.

Story 2: My children never want to eat at school. They say they do not like the food. What really alarmed me was that my daughter told me she tossed away the plum they gave her for lunch. This is why I made it a point to go to the classes. I knew I was doing something wrong when I sent them with bags of chips and candy bars. I am a long way from learning how to feed my family but this class has convinced me I need to make some real changes.

Story 3: I was never taught how to cook or buy groceries for my family. The way I took care of feeding my children was to buy things already fixed or something I could just warm up. We have all suffered because this is very expensive. I had never understood or seen a recipe until the lady teaching, class went over one with our group. I now buy magazines and are trying new things, and my family likes what I prepare. I now trust my cooking.

VALUE

Better Living for Texans



These nutrition programs teach low-income audiences to prepare nutritious meals, stretch their food resources, improve their food-safety practices, and participate in regular physical activity. This not only improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease for participants, but lower public health-care costs.

Making a Difference 2011

¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes! 2011 Starr County Report

¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes! (Yo Puedo) is an evidence-informed, culturally competent educational program targeting low-literate Hispanic/Latinos with diabetes. The curriculum is predicated on the American Diabetes Association's national standards of care and employs the Social Cognitive and Self-regulation theories as its foundational support. Empowerment is an overarching theme of the program, and, to this end, *Yo puedo* aims to equip participants with knowledge and lifestyle skills to better control their diabetes.

Relevance

- Diabetes cost Texas more than 12 billion dollars.
- Texas Hispanic/Latinos over the age of 18 are disproportionately affected by diabetes prevalence (12.3 percent) than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts (8.5 percent).
- In 2005, mortality rates were more than double among Texas Hispanic/Latinos (52 per 100,000) than Whites, non-Hispanics (21 per 100,000).
- Among persons with diabetes, a higher proportion of Hispanic/Latinos (32.5 percent) could not see a doctor in the last 12

month due to cost compared to Whites (16.5 percent).



Response

- Proper management is critical to minimize the potential negative effects of diabetes.
- Self-management education is the cornerstone for diabetic care and vital for blood glucose control.
- Recognizing the need for a culturally-relevant type 2 diabetes self-management education targeting Texas Hispanic/Latinos *Yo Puedo* was developed to address this gap in health programming.
- In Starr County, we delivered four classes reaching 52 participants with type 2 diabetes.

Impact of Yo Puedo

The findings below summarize the impact of the *Yo Puedo* program delivered in Starr County. Outcome indicators include HbA1c,

(baseline and 3-month follow-up), diabetes knowledge, self-efficacy, acculturation, and diabetes self-care behaviors.

- Demographic characteristics: 87% were female, average age was 49 years, 94% were Hispanic, 48% yearly income was \$20,000 or less, 25% had less than a high school education, and 52% had private insurance.
- Program participants were minimally acculturated: more than half the sample had a score of 12 out of 20, where a total score of 20 indicated highly acculturated.
- Diabetes self-care scores reveal that participants improved in performing

routine health behaviors to better manage their diabetes: Pre-test median score: 20 out of total score of 40; Post-test: 28 out of 40.

- Self-efficacy scores improved with participants reporting increases in their confidence to engage in diabetes self-care behaviors): Pre-test 2.52 M; Post-test 3.48 M. (Scale: 1 = I don't feel sure; 5 = I feel very sure.)
- HbA1_c (collected at an average of 3 months) revealed a decrease from 7.49% at baseline to 6.69% at follow-up.
- Diabetes knowledge remained the same at both pre- and post-test: 7 (out of 10).

Success Stories:

Story 1: One participant came into the program with an A1C of 10.7 and was having all types of health complications. She had since the class not gained any weight and now has an A1C of 6.5. She felt that having learned what are the best foods to choose from, which are the carbohydrates, correct portion sizes and how to prepare meals has made her diabetes manageable for the first time since she was diagnosed. Her *Yo Puedo* instructor Emiliana Guerra praised her because she kept a notebook of all handouts and took notes diligently throughout all the classes.

Story 2: Another participant says she never knew she had diabetes. When she got a routine screening at a health fair her blood glucose levels were over 300. She started going to the classes and now sees a doctor regularly for her diabetes. She is now on insulin and watches her diet closely. She has brought her glucose levels down considerably to 100 with the additional help and support of the *Yo Puedo* instructor Nora Siller and friends & Family.

Reflections

This study demonstrates that the *!Sí, Yo puedo controlar mi diabetes!* improved participants' ability to better control their diabetes as demonstrated by increases in self-care behaviors, improvements in self-confidence, and a reduction in HbA1c. Given the high rates of diabetes among Hispanic/Latinos, *Yo Puedo* is a program to address this concern in Starr County, Texas. Over the past year Starr County Extension partnered with community stakeholder to extend our reach to disadvantaged populations. We envision this effort to continue that will help ensure the sustainability of *Yo Puedo*.

MI DIABETES LESSON SERIES

- ▣ Free
- ▣ 7 classes
- ▣ Learn how to control your diabetes
- ▣ Learn how to live healthy
- ▣ Taught by health professionals



Making a Difference 2011

Friend to Friend in Starr County, 2011

The *Friend to Friend* program's purpose is to encourage women to get regular mammograms and Pap tests for the early detection of breast and cervical cancer, when the disease is most curable.

Relevance

- Regular screening significantly increases the likelihood of finding cancer early, when treatment is more often successful.
- Women living in rural areas of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Pap test within the past two years.
- Mortality is higher for rural women because of later diagnosis.
- Access to accredited screening is difficult since more than half of Texas counties are primary care health professional shortage areas.
- One-half of Texas counties do not have accredited, permanent mammography facilities.
- Distances to screening facilities are often significant, and operating hours are 8-5 on weekdays.

Response

- This project's goal is to decrease breast and cervical cancer morbidity and mortality for women living in rural Texas counties by improving screening rates and early detection of cancer.



- Funding was applied for and awarded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.
- A research-tested intervention program, *Friend to Friend*, was selected and adapted for use in Texas.
- We started by forming a group of local women to work with the county Extension agent and regional cancer prevention specialist to plan and implement a *Friend to Friend* event.
- The group selected a date and location for the event.
- The event was advertised, and women were invited to attend.
- Mammography and Pap test providers were invited and came to the event to acquaint women with their facilities. Women were given lists of places where they can obtain mammograms and Pap tests, along with the facilities' contact information and hours of operation.
- A local health professional spoke and gave a strong message to get a mammogram and/or Pap test.
- The health professional informed women about current screening guidelines.
- Trained volunteers led discussion groups after the health professional's presentation. Each volunteer offered women in their group a chance to ask questions and discuss their concerns.
- Women were encouraged to help each other follow through and secure these important tests.

- Women were then given an opportunity to sign a commitment card to obtain a mammogram and/or Pap test within the next year.
- Many of the providers offered to make appointments for the women, too.

Impact of the Program

- *Friend to Friend* was pilot tested in 43 Texas counties in 2011.
- 41 women attended the *Friend to Friend* event on March 3rd at the Multi-Purpose Center in Rio Grande City.
- Demographics of women who attended the event:
 - Average age:
 - Under 40: 29%
 - 40-49 years: 17%
 - 50-64 years: 34%
 - 65 years or older: 20%
 - Ethnic Breakdown:
 - White, Non-Hispanic: 2.5%
 - White, Hispanic: 97.5%
- 8 people were on the planning committee or task force and 10 total volunteers assisted at party/event.
- A local doctor and three cancer survivors urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the event.
- At the end of the event 92.10% of women correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year.
- 16 women who had not had a mammogram in the last year signed a commitment card to obtain one within the next year.
- 23 women signed a commitment card to obtain a Pap test within the next year.

Success Stories

• Story 1

Even though I go to a doctor every 3 months for my diabetes I had not had a pap smear in over 15 years. My doctor took good care of my diabetes but never encouraged me to do any additional screenings. I thought that when you get to a certain age you do not need them. I almost fell out of my chair at the Friend to Friend Pink Party when the physician told us we never out grow the need for cancer screenings. I never realized how dangerous it was for me to have neglected to get screenings for so many years. I already had my test done and I have them noted on my calendar for next year thanks to Extension who has made me wake up to how important it is to get screened.

• Story 2

I found out I had breast cancer when I became pregnant from my last child. It was a horrible experience that shook my whole world. This year I completed my 5th year of being cancer free. When I found out about the Friend to Friend event I made sure to go. I wanted to share my story. Even though I was not in the program Mrs. Morado gave me an opportunity to share my story. My whole message was about screenings can save your life.

- **Story 3**

As an agent there are stories that hit close to your heart. One of my lifelong friends attributes her diagnosis of a small tumor to the Friend to Friend event. Her commitment card served as a reminder to get her screening which brought about a biopsy and successful lumpectomy and follow up preventive treatments.



Making a Difference 2011

Emergency Preparedness/Starr County

Relevance

In 2011 Starr County was threatened by a severe drought. Some areas have not seen any rainfall for some time. The drought has caused over 90% of the crops to fail and ranches have had to liquidate 80% of their herds. Texas has had its driest year on record in 2011. The dry and windy conditions have brought about wild fires that have burned acres of square miles.

Response

The Starr County Emergency Preparedness Committee met regularly throughout the year. Incorporated into this committee is the Animal Issues Committee.

Over 200 child care providers attended a concurrent session during the 2011 child care conference title "Keeping Kids Safe". The information presented focused on preparing child care facilities and staff for unexpected disasters. The materials used were from the Eden website. Texas licensing division has noted that the materials are excellent for training child care providers.

One request from school officials agent presented 3 programs at elementary schools on the steps to take when a school goes through a lock-down. Extension agent assisted law enforcement officers in the presentation and addressed the importance of helping children recover from such an incident. Many children feel threatened and afraid to return to school so it is important to train staff on steps to take to establish or rebuild trust and confidence. A total of 315 students attended the sessions.

News releases ,educational programs and publications were distributed to inform residents of some preventive steps they can they can take to protect their homes and structures when threatened by wild fires.

Making a Difference 2011

Family Consumer Science Study Groups-Starr County

Relevance

Homemakers met throughout the year to participate in classes and engage in various learning exercises in the area of Family and Consumer Science. Because it has been a very challenging economic time for families many of the programs addressed financial literacy with programs designed to help families find way to generate income and manage their finances.

Response

Women participated in a series of workshop where they developed sewing skills that helped them produce items for their homes and families and also items that could be sold for profit. Four sewing groups met actively for an average of 4-6 classes. Some sewing projects targeted several businesses constructing items for home health agencies, nursing homes, beauty shops, day care centers and churches. They made hospital gowns, bibs, light lap quilts, and small linens and Holiday items were popular especially aprons and holiday napkins and runners.

Extension programs included programs on pricing and the development of price list especially for alterations items. The group also learned how to develop flyers, make business cards and how to design their home working area. One popular program was viewing clothing construction videos on the internet.

Women attend several craft shows throughout the valley and have presentations at their group meetings by crafters who were brought in for sharing and learning events.

Learn & Share program conducted for young parents incorporated the importance of reading to young children and establishing a specific study area in the home and a homework schedule to adhere to.

Nutrition and eating healthy programs conducted were on bread making, grilling vegetables, and the selection and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Making a Difference 2011

RGBI-Fix A Leak Campaign-Starr County

Relevance

Homes can waste more than 10,000 gallons of water every year due to running toilets, dripping faucets, and other household leaks. Nationwide, more than one trillion gallons of water leak from U.S. homes each year. Research shows that 10% of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day.

Response

Fix A Leak Campaign

Every water drop counts was the lesson taught to home owners in Starr County. The Fix A Leak Campaign in Starr County saved thousands of gallons of water. The programs objective was to get homeowners to check their household fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks.

Water conservation programs covered 25 ways to conserve water in the home and yard. Homeowners who attended the 2 ½ hour programs received water saving shower heads and low flow faucet aerators for their homes.

Homeowners learned through these programs and household audits that saving water at home does not require any significant cost to outlay. The bulk of water saving methods can be achieved at little cost and many of these water saving devices can be installed by the homeowners and often does not even require the use of tools.

Residents learned to read their water meters to determine if they had leaks. They were taught to check their meter before and after a 2 hour period when no water was being used. A total of 75% of homeowners who received the water saving fixtures installed them and household reported they installed additional retro fitting devices.

A total of 1696 signed a pledge to inspect their homes for leaks during the Fix A Leak Campaign in March.



Making a Difference 2011

Office Management/Organizational Plan

Relevance

The effective management of a County Extension Office is critical to a high quality Extension program and the efficient management of human and material resources that support Extension programs. In addition to office operations, a strong Leadership Advisory Board (LAB) is a key program development element of programming that is the foundation for program support, direction, and visibility in the community. Program area committees and task forces were also organized and supported Extension Programming in 2011.

Response

Starr County Staff followed through with plans that included the following educational activities:

- Biweekly Staff Conferences
- Reports to Commissioner's Court
- Civil Rights training for staff
- Web updates
- Leadership Advisory Board meetings
- Futures Forum
- Program Area Committees & task forces

Summary

Staff provided team effort through dedicated support for all programs and activities outlined in their plan.



- Kids & Kows & More – Agriculture Literacy Program
- Youth Agriculture Career Awareness & Opportunities Program



Making a Difference 2011

Kids & Kows & More Agriculture Literacy Program Starr County 2011

Developed by Rolando Zamora, Extension Agent CEP-AgNR
Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR & Yolanda Morado,
County Extension Agent FCS

Introduction - Today's youth are very far removed from production agriculture, many do not understand the importance of the food and fiber industry and how it impacts our daily lives. Therefore, a program was established partnering the Starr County Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension Program (PVAMU) and Texas AgriLife Extension Service to address this need. More specifically, this program was established to educate the teachers, and youth about the value of agriculture in Starr County.

Program - As a result of this concern, Starr County Farm Bureau, and the Starr County Youth Board developed a youth Agriculture Literacy Program entitled "Kids & Kows & More". The program targeted 4th grade students from all the elementary schools in Starr County. This educational event provided the following educational components: Educational material to teachers (Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Curriculum), Ag Field Day for students to acquire hands knowledge about the food & fiber industry, and a teacher evaluation.

The following educational activities were organized to achieve the Kids & Kows & More program objectives.

1. Worked with school counselors, representing each of the elementary school campuses, to select topics for the agriculture literacy field day, set up schedule for the event, and assist with the development of the teacher evaluation instruments.
2. Contacted Texas Farm Bureau Representatives to acquire curriculum for teachers. The name of the curriculum is Agriculture in the 21st Century. Curriculum was distributed to all teachers attending in the form of a CD and many educational material handouts of individual presentations were also provided to teachers.
3. Established a Youth Ag Literacy Task Force to meet and plan youth field day event at the Starr County Fairgrounds. Group identified speakers for the event, secured sponsorships and assisted in distributing and collecting evaluation forms.

4. Agent hosted the seventh annual two day field day event called “Kids & Kows & More Starr County”. Agents worked on gathering sponsors, volunteers, and speakers and other individuals that made this event possible.
5. Agents compiled summary of agriculture literacy program based on the results of the teacher evaluations that were collected from each of the participating teachers
6. Agents shared the results of the agriculture literacy program with residents of the county through the local newspaper where they featured a story about the event. Results were also shared with the Youth Ag Literacy Task Force and 4H Youth board

Evaluation Method - A two page teacher evaluation was administered to the participating teachers. This evaluation was developed with input from several school counselors. The strategy was used to determine the level of knowledge youth acquired through this educational event. A total of 51 teacher evaluations were used to determine the effectiveness of this program.

Collaborators - Starr County Farm Bureau, Southwest Dairy Farmers, Starr County Fair Association, Medina Electric Co-op, Hygeia Company McAllen, Texas and H.E.B.

Results - A total of 930 4th grade students from 13 Starr County Elementary schools and three school districts participated in this event. The scale of responses for these statements was defined as 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent. Based on this evaluation, 91.8 % of all respondents strongly agreed that the students acquired an increased knowledge and appreciation for agriculture. 92 % increased their knowledge of where their food comes from. 92 % of all respondents (teachers) agreed that they too gained knowledge about the different commodities that were represented at this educational program. Furthermore, 88 % agreed to use the provided curriculum and incorporate it in their school educational activities.

Summary - This program did appear to build knowledge and change perceptions concerning agriculture and the environment. Teacher responses indicate that their students have a better appreciation for agriculture, food commodities, agriculture safety and water. This program will continue next year with the support of the Starr County Farm Bureau.

VALUE

Kids & Kows & More



Cooperative Extension Program “Science of Agriculture” programs teach youth about the role agriculture plays in the world and in their lives. Through their participation in these programs, youth become better educated voters and consumers.

Making a Difference 2011

Youth Agriculture Career Awareness & Opportunities Program Starr County 2011

Developed by Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR
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Introduction. Starr County secondary students that have an interest in agriculture have few opportunities to explore career choices and college agriculture programs. The youth involved in Starr County FFA programs are at a further disadvantage to learn about college agriculture programs due to the distance of the universities that offer these type of programs. Starr County high school counselors do not focus or encourage these programs due to lack of knowledge and recruitment communication gaps between the universities and the high schools.

Program. As a result of this concern, the Starr County Youth Board with the assistance of local agriculture science teachers, developed a youth agriculture career awareness & opportunities program. The program targeted high school students from all the three (3) schools in Starr County. This educational event provided the following educational components: Educational material to teachers and students, hands-on workshop for students to acquire knowledge about agriculture careers and university opportunities, and a student evaluation.

The following educational activities were organized to achieve the Youth Agriculture Career Awareness & Opportunities Program objectives.

1. Agents worked with high school agriculture Science teachers, representing each of the school campuses, to select training topics for workshop, set up schedule for the event, and assist with the development of the student evaluation instruments.
2. Contacted Texas A&M University -Kingsville College of Agriculture recruiter, Veronica Garcia, to acquire university application procedures. Veronica Garcia developed a power point presentation for the workshop. Educational material was distributed to all students and teachers attending the workshop.
3. Students participated in a two hour workshop that provided information about agriculture careers and university opportunities. The workshop also featured a hands-on beef cattle health herd training that was taught by Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist.

4. Agents compiled summary of youth program based on the results of the Youth Agriculture career Awareness & Opportunities Program student evaluations that were collected from each of the participating students.

5. Agents shared the results of the Youth Agriculture Career Awareness & Opportunities Program with residents of the county through the local newspaper where they featured a story about the event. Results were also shared with the agriculture science teachers and 4H Youth board.

Evaluation Method. A one page retrospective post design evaluation was administered to the participating students. This type of evaluation design is a popular way to assess learners' self-reported changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, confidence, attitudes or behaviors (Howard, 1980). The evaluation was developed with input from all school agriculture science teachers. The strategy was used to determine the level of knowledge youth acquired through this educational event. A total 42 student evaluations were used to determine the effectiveness of this program.

Collaborators. Starr County Farm Bureau, Starr County Youth Fair.

Results. A total of forty four (42) high school students from three (3) Starr County schools participated in this program. The scale of responses for these statements was defined as 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent. Based on the evaluations, 92 % of all respondents better understand the importance of the agriculture industry. Ninety five percent (95%) understand what Texas A&M University-Kingsville College of Agriculture has to offer them in the form of educational opportunities. It was also evident that students learned, 89% agreed that they now know more, about how they could apply for college. Almost all the respondents (96%) have indicated that they found this program beneficial and will work to seeking more information about obtaining a college education.

Summary. This program did appear to build knowledge and change perceptions about obtaining a college education in an agriculture discipline. Student responses indicate that they have a better appreciation for careers, and educational opportunities in agriculture. This program design will continue next year, possibly addressing another emerging issue, with the support of the agriculture science teachers.

References:

Howard, G.S. (1980). Response-shift bias a problem in evaluating interventions with pre/post self reports. Evaluation Review, 4(1), 93-106.

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VALUE

4-H Career Awareness



Texas AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Starr County

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