



Extension Education in Cameron County

Making a Difference

2013

Making a Difference

Cameron County

2013

Table of Contents

Page

Agriculture

2013 Cameron/Hidalgo/Willacy County Crop Production Program	3-4
2013 Rio Grande Valley Beef Development Program	5
2013 Cameron/Hidalgo County Pesticide Safety Program	6
2013 Sustainable Agriculture Program	7
2013 County Water Education Program	8-9
2013 Water Quality and Conservation	10
2013 Master Gardener Program in Cameron County	11
2013 Horticulture Education in Cameron County	12-14
2013 Master Gardener Training Program in Cameron County	15-16
2013 Junior Master Gardener Education in Cameron County	17-18

Family and Consumer Science

Friend to Friend in Cameron County, 2013	19-20
! Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes! 2013 Cameron County Report	21
Parenting Connections Outcome Summary – Cameron County Report, 2013	22-23
Get the Facts – Evaluation of Curriculum on Nutrition Label Reading	24-26
Income Generation Projects Output Program	27

Making a Difference

Page

4-H and Youth Development

2013 Junior Master Gardeners Outcome Summary-Cameron County 2013	28
Youth Higher Education Awareness Outcome Summary- Cameron county 2013	29
Annual 4-H Youth Development	30-32
2013 Eat4-Health in Cameron County	33-34
2013 Take A Stand Program in Cameron County	35-36

Coastal and Marine Resources

Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalist and texas Coastal Naturalist Program	37-38
Cameron County shrimp Fleet Saves Millions Fuel, Reduces Bycatch & Addresses	39-40
Invasive Species in 2013	

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

2013 4-H/EFNEP Road to Success Dual County Nutrition Camp-Cameron/Willacy County	41
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program Cameron County Outcome Summary Report	42-43
<i>Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Staff</i>	44

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and its partners have 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

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

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.

Cameron County – Summary of 2013 Educational Contacts

County	# of Sessions	*Goal 1	**Goal 2	***Goal 3	Total
Contacts By Faculty					
Faculty	2,390	49,735.30	11,849.35	4,900.35	66,485.00
Faculty & Volunteer	366	2,294.00	7,146.00	8,925.00	18,365.00
Total Group Methods	2,756	52,029.30	18,995.35	13,825.35	84,850.00
Individual Methods		301,383.70	73,547.90	40,509.40	415,441.00
Material Distributed		50,367.50	12,623.50	170.00	63,161.00
Total Contacts	2,756	403,780.50	105,166.75	54,504.75	563,452.00
Contact by Volunteers					
Group Method	63		788.00	3,133.00	3,921.00
Individual Methods		13,173.00	36,019.50	14,352.50	63,545.00
Materials Distributed			100.00		100.00
Total Contacts	63	13,173.00	36,907.50	17,485.50	67,566.00
Newsletters/Announcements Contacts					
Marketing/Promotion		174.00	410.00	2,985.00	3,569.00
Educational Methods		400.00			400.00
Total Contacts		574.00	410.00	2,985.00	3,969.00
Total All Contacts	2,819	417,527.50	142,484.25	74,975.25	634,987.00

- * Agriculture
- ** Family & Consumer Science
- *** Youth Development

2013 Cameron/Hidalgo/Willacy County Crop Production Program

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Cameron County; County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Hidalgo County and County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Willacy County

Relevance: Nutrient management is an important economic and environmental issue that affects water quality, soil quality and crop productivity. Sugarcane, cotton, grain sorghum and corn are important agronomic crops for the Rio Grande Valley. An estimated 70 percent of sugarcane producers could improve their yields which could enhance the profitability of this crop for all producers. New/underutilized crops need to continue to be investigated such as soybeans and sesame.

Response: AgriLife Extension provides educational resources for crop producers to gain knowledge which gives them the information necessary to become more efficient, economically sustainable and environmentally friendly. The Rio Grande Valley Nutrient Management Education Program is a multi-county soil testing program conducted by specialists and agents with Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The primary objective of the program is to educate producers about the economic and environmental benefits of soil testing and proper nutrient management. Over the past twelve years, this project has collected over 5,300 soil samples representing a total of more than 206,000 acres of crop land in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy counties. In addition, through educational workshops and field days, growers have received training enabling them to implement effective nutrient management strategies.

Results: A total of 10 group methods resulted in 2080 contact hours of education. The economic impact of the RGV Nutrient Management Education Program was measured in terms of potential fertilizer savings that have resulted from increased adoption of soil testing. Using soil test recommendations and producer-planned fertilizer rates, the potential savings in nitrogen and phosphate are estimated to be 5.2 and 6.2 million pounds, respectively. Reduction in fertilizer application rates translates into an average cost savings of \$25.77 per acre, depending on crop and management history. Total potential economic benefit to producers since the program began in 2001 are estimated at \$5.3 million. This analysis does not include the value of environmental benefits.

Ag producers were educated on a wide variety of topics using a number of different methods. Topics included cotton, soybean, grain sorghum, corn, sesame, sunflower and guar production; conservation tillage; risk management; fertility management; marketing and many others. Methods included field days, educational meetings and publications. These included: Cotton Pre-Plant Conference, Grain Sorghum, Corn and Sunflower Field Day, Cotton and Sesame Field Day, Sugarcane Field Day and a Fall Corn Field Day. Research demonstrations conducted on producer farms are used to collect an unbiased source of performance data that is use by growers to help determine the most profitable varieties to select for this area. New efforts to increase producer profits included conducting an irrigated guar hybrid result demonstration.

Important collaborators included: Dr. Dan Fromme, Dr. Gaylon Morgan, Dr. Mark McFarland, Dr. Calvin Trostle, Dr. Tom Isakeit, Dr. John Robinson, Dr. Mark Welch, Dr. Paul Baumann, Dr. Luis Ribera, Dr. Roy Parker, Dr. James Grichar, Danielle Sekula, Allan Berthold, Ashley Gregory, Rio Farms, Inc., Lower Rio Grande Valley Cotton and Grain Producers Association, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Grain Sorghum Association, National Cotton Council, Texas Water Resources Institute, numerous local ag industry company representatives and the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Future Plans: Continue soil testing campaign, contingent upon funding and continue important hybrid trials for the major crops. Conduct sesame, soybean or guar variety trials in cooperation with Rio Farms, Inc., local producers and private industry.



2013 Rio Grande Valley Beef Development Program

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Hidalgo County and County Agriculture Extension Agents in Cameron, Willacy, and Starr Counties

Relevance: Beef producers can improve their herd or the herds of their customers through more rigid sire selection. Replacement heifers will perform to higher levels when in optimum body condition. Beef producers want to increase the value of bulls by collecting feedlot performance data and carcass characteristics.

Response: Texas A&M Agrilife Extension conducted an official 112 day bull gain test and a 126 day heifer development program. Numerous data are collected on all animals including: initial and final weights, average daily gain, body condition score, scrotal circumference, sheath score, reproductive tract score, pelvic area measurements, hip height and ultra-sound measurement of backfat thickness and ribeye area. All data is provided to consignors.

Results: A total of 4 group methods resulted in a total of 99 contact hours of education. A bull gain test and heifer development program has been conducted each year from 1998 through 2013. Participants indicate a positive economic benefit to their beef cattle operations as a result of their participation.

A total of 1133 bulls, 964 heifers and 142 steers have been entered in the 16 years the program has been conducted. Currently, 33 bulls and 65 heifers are entered in the program by cattlemen participating from throughout south and central Texas.

Recognition events are conducted during the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show in order to recognize the award winners in front of their beef cattle producer peers. The Santa Gertrudis breed awards were presented prior to the breed sale held at the Livestock Show and the Simbrah breed awards were presented during the Open Simbrah judging at the Livestock Show. A feeder pen of steers is in it's third year and adds a new dimension to the program.

Important collaborators are: Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist, Rio Beef Feed Yard management and personnel, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show officials & volunteers and the members of the Rio Grande Valley Beef Improvement Association.

Future Plans: In cooperation with the Rio Grande Valley Beef Improvement Association, plans are to continue the program and perhaps consider marketing alternatives for participants. Another future possibility will be to offer an artificial insemination program for heifers.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

2013 Cameron/Hidalgo County Pesticide Safety Program

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Cameron County and County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Hidalgo County

Relevance: Ag producers have a statutory requirement to obtain and maintain a pesticide license issued by Texas Department of Agriculture in order to use crop protection chemicals, important tools for agricultural producers. Extension is relied upon to provide the education needed in this process. Training is provided for those needing to obtain a license and continuing education is provided to local producers in order to renew their license.

Response: Educational training events were conducted to meet statutory requirements for producers to be able to obtain a license. Continuing education units were also provided to all participants at educational events conducted which contained applicable subject matter.

Results: A total of 6 group methods resulted in a total of 875 contact hours of education. Four Pesticide Safety Trainings were conducted in 2013. Ninety-eight percent of the 40 students received a passing grade on the exam administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture. The average grade for all students was 86.

Numerous continuing education credits were provided to ag producers during the course of the year at almost every agriculture-related educational meeting conducted.

We also provided Certified Crop Consultants (CCA) continuing education through the CCA certification program. New requirements for continuing education for aerial applicators continued to be a problem for local aerial applicators and educational training was provided to meet their specific needs.

Important collaborators were: Dr. Don Renchie and Dr. Mark Matocha, Agricultural & Environmental Safety Specialists; local personnel with Texas Department of Agriculture and Donnie & Kay Dippel with the Texas Certified Crop Advisor Program.

Future Plans: This effort will continue in the future to meet the needs of local agricultural producers and others needing a pesticide license.

2013 Sustainable Agriculture Program

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent-Agriculture

Relevance: Sustainable Agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley is a major interest among small acreage agriculture. The dramatic population increase and the continuation of the South Texas drought in the Rio Grande Valley has created an interest on sustainable agriculture. Today, with limited resource small acreage landowners are interested in ways for making land usage optimal. Land owners interested in agriculture continue to lack knowledge of agriculture programs and management for production. The need to implement a variety of educational agriculture programs is important in order to sustain the future of agriculture.

Response: Cameron county small agriculture scale acreage agriculture producers under the support of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation, USDA-Farm Service Agency and the Texas-Mexico Border Collision partnered to conduct various educational programs; EQIP, Organic Farming, USDA Program/Loans, Small Acreage Farming/Ranching and TDA registration as Texas Producer.

Results: Due to the efforts, the group of 42 individuals organized to meeting once per month at the county Extension meeting room. The results were that the group was interested small acreage production. This year the small acreage land owners were interested in organizing into an agriculture group that represented their interests. They formed the TIP of Texas Agriculture Producers Association, which meets every month at the San Benito Annex Building. There major focus is to produce agriculture commodities and serve local restaurants and participate at local Farmers Market. This past year the Tip of Texas Agriculture Producers had a success in the organization of a Agriculture Cooperative. The Agriculture Cooperative provided the access of Network Marketing for small acreage agriculture producers. Another success of the group provided easier access to federal and state programs through awareness of Networking Marketing. Acreage averages are between 2 ac to 300 acres. The group met 12 times organized which resulted completing more than 2, 475 contacts on volunteer hours in education. The Texas AgriLife Extension provides leadership to the group with subject matter expertise and Extension Specialist. Other partners include Texas Mexico Border Coalition, University of Texas-Pan Am, USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Cameron County.

Future Plans: The Sustainable Agriculture Producers continue to meet once a month at the Extension meeting room. Plans continue to develop as the newly formed association increases knowledge and skill in agriculture production by participation in seminars, workshops and tours.

2013 County Water Education Program

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Cameron County, County Extension Agent- Agriculture, Hidalgo County, County Extension Agent, Willacy County.

Relevance: Water quality and quantity have emerged as the preeminent issue across the state including the South Region, as indicated through local input, legislative efforts, and numerous other indicators. Agriculture is the largest water user in the state, and agriculture is under close scrutiny because of the potential for negative environmental (water quality) impacts. Water use in the municipal environment including irrigation of athletic fields, in parks, and home landscapes, as well as, in the home proper constitutes a significant portion of water used in Texas. Programs designed to educate all adult and youth water users on water conservation will help reduce overall water use and increase water use efficiency.

Water conservation in production agriculture continues to be a priority issue for this area due to the importance of irrigated agriculture to this area and the critically low irrigation supplies available from the Rio Grande River, the primary source for this region.

Response: An Irrigation Conference was held to provide important and timely information to local irrigated agriculture producers designed to help them make the most informed decisions possible as irrigation water supplies are forecasted to be extremely low for the coming crop season.

A seminar on Water Rights and Public Policy on the Rio Grande was held to provide both agricultural and municipal users the opportunity to learn more about the legal side of the water issues on the Rio Grande River from three experts in the field.

Results: A total of 5 group methods resulted in a total of 973 contact hours of education. Irrigation Conference topics were: Current Water Supply Situation and Forecast for the 2013 Season, Status of Cost Share Funds for Growers through the EQIP Program, Weather Forecast for the 2013 Growing Season, Making the Most of Limited Irrigation, Crop Selection: More Important than Ever, Practical Use of Soil Moisture Sensors to Conserve Water, Trade Show from Private Industry, What's New in On-Farm Irrigation Technology and Will it Pay and Irrigation District Water Conservation Improvement Projects Session.

Water rights and Public Policy education was delivered to a diverse audience of both ag and municipal users and policymakers. The primary issue was the 1944 International Water Treaty with Mexico. It was discussed from the water planning and legal perspective, from the regulatory perspective and from the international relations perspective.

Important collaborators are: Dr. Guy Fipps, Extension Agriculture Engineer, RGV Water District Managers Association, Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association, Rio Grande Regional Water Authority and Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.

Future Plans: Continue to provide education on both water conservation techniques and water policy.

Agriculture and Natural Resources



2013 Water Quality and Conservation

Developed by Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent-Agriculture, Lillian Mezquida, County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Sciences, Jennifer Herrera, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Marco Ponce, County Extension Agent- 4-H and Youth Development, Roxie M. Salinas, 1890 Extension Agent-4-H and Youth Development, Tony Reisinger, County Extension Agent-Coastal and Marine Resources.

Relevance: Texas is subject to numerous disasters, whether they are natural, accidental or intentional. These hazards are somewhat unpredictable. During 2005, Texas experienced a drought and continues in extreme drought conditions throughout south Texas. Water availability is very limited in Texas.

Response: In response to water quality and conservation issues the Cameron County Extension staff developed plan to address water quality and conservation issues in the county in 2013. Consumers, homeowners, agriculture producers, communities, and agriculture irrigation districts understand and adopt best management practices to protect water quality and enhance conservation so water supplies will meet future water needs in Texas including the Rio Grande Basin that are essential for expanding agriculture growth, jobs, and the economy in both rural and urban communities across Cameron County. Plan supports all efforts to water quality and conservation measures. Successful efforts were implemented through programs addressing water quality and conservation issues. Cooperation from different entities, such as Cameron County, agriculture industry, agriculture businesses, municipalities, and communities developed strong partnerships to address water quality and conservation issues.

Results: Completion of the Cameron County Water Quality and Conservation Plan this past fall of 2013 provided effective results addressing water quality and conservation issues. The plan served as a model to all program areas in Cameron County. The plan provided outreach education to families, communities, businesses, and agriculture producers to better understand different methods of implementing water quality and conservation measures. This year 2013 resulted in an average total of 1300 individual direct contacts through education efforts in the county. More than 2500 Extension publications were distributed in 2013.

Future Plans: Efforts are to continue to provide education to all families, communities, businesses, and agriculture producers through a variety of educational methods. Care must also be taken into consideration to reduce risk of water quality and contamination from production agriculture, as well as urban/suburban settings.

2013 Master Gardener Program in Cameron County

Developed by Jennifer Herrera, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Cameron County

Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts: The county horticulture program major programmatic goal is to increase knowledge and skills of homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners a series of educational activities supported through demonstrations and evaluation of research based programs that measure economic and knowledge gain of environmental stewardship. In order for more homeowners to be reached the Master Gardener program was established. The Master Gardener Association provides leadership to horticulture programming in Cameron County. Master Gardeners offer a variety of teaching methods; workshops, training's, seminars, and tours.

Results of Efforts: This year 17 Master Gardener Interns graduated and became certified Texas Master Gardeners. The Master Gardener course consisted of 75 hours of instructional training and education and a minimum on 50 volunteer service hours in Cameron County. In Cameron County, the Master Gardener interns and Master Gardener's volunteers contributed 2746 service hours equating to \$60796.44 savings to the county in volunteer service in horticulture programming. The Cameron County Master Gardener committee this year implemented a series of educational activities. Target audience included local homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry. The Cameron County Master Gardeners program provides leadership and guidance to offer programs to assist homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry in making sound, economical decisions. The Master Gardener program goal is address needs and concerns in horticulture and update on new management tools.

For the first time in the Rio Grande Valley the Cameron County Master Gardener's along with Hidalgo County Master Gardener's hosted the 2013 Texas Master Gardener Association Conference. This Conference was available to Master Gardener in Texas, out of state, and to the general public

Future Plans: In 2014, the Master Gardener Program will continue to expand in volunteer efforts and recruit new Master Gardener volunteers. Cameron County Master Gardener Association will implement, plan and evaluate a variety of educational programs addressing horticulture environmental stewardship and increase community/ backyard vegetable gardens. Target audience; homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry.



2013 Horticulture Education in Cameron County

Developed by Jennifer Herrera, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Cameron County

Relevance: Nursery production in the county is a million dollar industry next to agriculture production. Cameron County homeowners, landscapers, and home gardeners lack the knowledge and skills to effectively maintain horticulture management decisions. The Master Gardener Association provides leadership to horticulture programming in Cameron County. Master Gardeners offer a variety of teaching methods; workshops, training's, seminars, and tours. The Master Gardener Arboretum serves as a demonstration learning garden. In Cameron County, the Master Gardeners interns and Master Gardeners volunteers contributed more than 2746 service hours equating to \$60796.44 savings to the county in volunteer service in horticulture programming. The county horticulture program major programmatic goal is to increase knowledge and skills of homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners a series of educational activities supported through demonstrations and evaluation of research based programs that measure economic and knowledge gain of environmental stewardship. Our goal was to reach over 800 people with horticulture programming. In Cameron County, the Master Gardeners reached over 1000 adults and over 1200 youth. The Master Gardeners is a volunteer service program that is supported by utilizing trained volunteers to provide sustainability, economic viability, and sound horticultural principles to residents of Cameron County.

Response: The Horticulture committee this year implemented a series of educational activities. Target audience included local homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry. The Cameron County Master Gardeners program provides leadership and guidance to offer programs to assist homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry in making sound, economical decisions. The Master Gardener program goal is address needs and concerns in horticulture and update on new management tools. The Extension Horticulture Committee meets quarterly to plan, implement and evaluate programs.

- Master Gardener Course, 75 hours of training and education (January through October 2013, 17 Interns)
- 2013 Texas Master Gardener Association Conference (October 2013, 350 participants)
- Horticulture Educational Programs
 - Butterfly Gardening in the Rio Grande Valley (March 2013, 50 participants)
 - Water Conservation In and Around the Home- Rain Water Harvesting (April 2013, 27 participants)
 - La Posada Community Garden
- Series of Small Acreage Production Educational Programs- Hidalgo and Cameron County
 - Goat Production- Cheese (July 2013, 4 participants)
 - Goat Seminar (July 2013, 8 participants)
 - Preserving the Harvest- Canning Class (July 2013, 5 participants)
 - Preserving the Harvest- Pickles (July 2013, 6 participants)
 - Preserving the Harvest- Drying Fruits (July 2013, 4 participants)
- Emerging Issue
 - Citrus Greening (February 2013, 23 participants)
 - Citrus Greening Biological Control for Master Gardeners (August 2013)
 - Citrus Greening Article- Biological Control (August 2013)
- Youth Basic Gardening Cabbage Nutrition Workshop- Garden Park Elementary (January 2013, 120)

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Youth Nutrition in the Garden- Brownie Park (June 2013, 20 participants)
- Youth Nutrition in the Garden- Miller Jordan Middle School (February 2013, 7 participants)
- Earth Day/ Arbor Day Educational Program (April 2013, 13 participants)
- Arbor Day Autism Walk (April 2013, 200 youth)
- Arbor Day Tree Planting Gutierrez Elementary (April 2012, 19 youth)
- Junior Master Gardeners School Gardens (12 total)
- Master Gardener Horticulture Weekly News Articles, (Approximately 150,400 residents 18+ read the Valley Morning Star each Sunday)
- Master Gardener Webpage (2,753 unique visits)
- Master Gardener Social Media Efforts (140 Followers)
- State Master Gardener Conference Social Media Efforts (388 Followers)
- Self-Guided Garden Tours (monthly)
- Civic and Garden Club Programs (monthly)
- Arboretum Demonstration Garden (monthly)
- Compost Demonstration Garden (monthly)

Evaluation Strategy: A retrospective post survey was administered face to face to all program participants at the end of various horticulture educational programs; Butterfly Gardening in the Rio Grande Valley, Citrus Greening, Rainwater Harvesting and Small Acreage Production Programs.

Results:

- 90% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the Citrus Greening Educational Program.
- 45% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Citrus Greening Educational Program.
- 95% of respondents said that the information provided by Extension in the Citrus Greening Educational Program were quite or extremely valuable to them.
- 86% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the Preserving the Harvest- Drying Fruits Educational Program
- 86% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Preserving the Harvest- Drying Fruits Educational Program
- 86% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the Preserving the Harvest- Pickles program
- 86% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Preserving the Harvest- Pickles program
- 71% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the Preserving the Harvest- Canning program.
- 72% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Preserving the Harvest- Canning program 75% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the Preserving the Harvest- Jam program.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- 92% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Preserving the Harvest- Jam program.

Future Plans: In 2014, the Extension Horticulture Committee with support from the Cameron County Master Gardener Association will implement, plan and evaluate a variety of educational programs addressing horticulture environmental stewardship and increase community/ backyard vegetable gardens. Target audience; homeowners, landscapers, home gardeners, owners and employees within the landscaping and nursery industry.



Water Conservation In and Around the Home- Rain Water Harvesting



Citrus Greening Educational Program



La Posada Providencia Garden

VALUE

Earth-Kind® Landscaping



The Earth-Kind® program teaches participants how to care for gardens and landscapes with environmentally friendly, research-proven techniques. Instructional topics include water conservation, responsible fertilizer application, and non-chemical options for controlling pests. Use of Earth-Kind® practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.

2013 Master Gardener Training Program in Cameron County

Developed by Jennifer Herrera, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Cameron County

Relevance: Horticulture education continues to be a major interest among county homeowners. The Cameron County Master Gardener Program began in 2001 as an official group or Master Gardener Association. The Master Gardener Training major programmatic goal is to increase knowledge and skills of homeowners, landscapers, city employees, county employees and home gardeners a series of educational activities supported through demonstrations and evaluation of research based programs that measure economic and knowledge gain of environmental stewardship. Through the Master Gardener program participants increase their gardening knowledge to support and assist Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by providing the community with information and guidance on good gardening practices through personal contact, news articles, clinics, presentations at garden clubs, schools and other community groups. Master Gardener Interns are encouraged to find beautification projects throughout their community and establish new gardens.

Response: Due to the interest by Cameron County residents in horticulture education. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service began implementing horticulture education through Master Gardener classes, programs, tours and special events. This year 17 Master Gardener Interns graduated and became certified Texas Master Gardeners. The Master Gardener course consisted of 75 hours of instructional training and education and a minimum on 50 volunteer service hours in Cameron County. In Cameron County, the Master Gardener interns and Master Gardener's volunteers contributed 2746 service hours equating to \$60796.44 savings to the county in volunteer service in horticulture programming.

Master Gardener classes are held annually, starting in January and ending in October. Classes are held only once per year in which MG projects are assigned to participants in which they in turn serve as community service hours and extend horticulture education out in the communities.

Evaluation Strategy: A retrospective post survey was administered face to face to all Master Gardener Intern at the end of the Master Gardener Program on Butterfly Gardening, Citrus Greening, Rainwater Harvesting and Small Acreage Production Programs. vegetable garden and landscape under drip irrigation, Plant propagation, Soils and Soil Fertility, Establishing a Raised Bed Garden, Landscaping with Native Plant, Establishing a Butterfly Garden, Establishing an Herb Garden, Tree Management, Home Fruit Tree Care for Lawn.

Results:

- 80% of respondents had knowledge gain on the subject tree care and management in the landscape
- 71% of respondents had an increased understanding of soil and soil fertility.
- 93% of respondents had a knowledge gain on the subject of plant growth and development
- 86% of respondents had a knowledge gain on plant diseases
- 80% of respondents had an increased understanding of insects in the garden
- 79% of respondents had a knowledge gain on the subject on herb gardening
- 80% of respondents had a knowledge gain in vegetable gardening
- 13 out of 15 respondents will definitely or have already adopted the practices discussed throughout the Master Gardener Program

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Future Plans: In 2014, the Cameron County Master Gardener Association will implement, plan and evaluate the 2014 Master Gardener Intern Class. The Master Gardener Interns will continue to find projects throughout Cameron County and continue to share horticultural Earth-Kind practices.



2013 Junior Master Gardener Education in Cameron County

Developed by Jennifer Herrera, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Cameron County

Summary of Issue and Extension Efforts: The Junior Master Gardener program is an international youth gardening program of the University Cooperative Extension network. JMG engages children in novel, “hands-on” group and individual learning experiences that provide a love of gardening develop an appreciation for the environment, nutrition in the garden and cultivate the mind. Due to the high obesity rate amongst Hispanic youth the Nutrition in the Garden Program has been adopted in all youth programs. This year a Junior Master Gardener Teacher training was provided for all teachers interested in starting a Junior Master Gardener program in Cameron County. This year 51 adults from both Cameron and Hidalgo County became certified Junior Master Gardener leaders. 24 of 51 teachers were from school throughout Cameron County. Cameron County now has 54 certified Junior Master Gardener Teachers. This year in Cameron County the Cameron County Master Gardeners, Junior Master Gardener Teachers and the Horticulture agent reached over 1200 youth. Several youth educational programs were provided throughout Cameron County to promote the Junior Master Gardener Program and Nutrition in the Garden.

- Youth Basic Gardening Cabbage Nutrition Workshop- Garden Park Elementary (January 2013, 120)
- Youth Nutrition in the Garden- Brownie Park (June 2013, 20 participants)
- Youth Nutrition in the Garden- Miller Jordan Middle School (February 2013, 7 participants)
- Arbor Day Autism Walk (April 2013, 200 youth)
- Arbor Day Tree Planting Gutierrez Elementary (April 2012, 19 youth)
- Junior Master Gardener School Gardens (12 total)
- Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training (May 2013, 24 Teachers)

Results of Efforts: In 2011 St. Mary’s Catholic school adopted the Junior Master Gardener program with four small vegetable beds and how now expanded with six more gardens. The Junior Master Gardener program involves 600 students. St. Mary’s Catholic school now utilizes an individual vegetable bed for each of its classes. Last year four science teachers from St. Mary’s Catholic school became certified Junior Master Gardener leaders and these teachers continue to implement the Junior Master Gardener Program in all science classes. The garden is now a used as an outdoor classroom and science lab for the students. The students are learning soil science, plant science, and nutrition in the garden. St. Mary’s Catholic school has also started a student driven Farmer’s Market in which the students learn about financial management for their math class. Currently, 12 Cameron County schools have also adopted a gardening program.

Future Plans: In 2014, the Junior Master Gardener Program with support from the Cameron County Master Gardener Association and Certified Junior Master Gardener Teachers will implement, plan and evaluate a variety of Junior Master Gardener educational programs addressing horticulture environmental stewardship and nutrition in the garden. Target audience; school children, at risk youth, home schooled children, and 4-H youth.

Agriculture and Natural Resources



Friend to Friend in Cameron County, 2013

Developed by Lilian Mezquida, County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences

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.

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 (CPRIT) to fund screenings and transportation to uninsured and underserved women in need of screening services.
- The county Extension agent, regional cancer prevention specialist, and patient navigators plan and implement a *Friend to Friend* event. Women attending are given the opportunity to sign a commitment card to obtain a mammogram and/or Pap test within the next year and the option to complete a help request form for assistance in obtaining screening services.

Impact of the Program:

- *Friend to Friend* was implemented in 42 Texas counties in 2013.
- 141 women attended the *Friend to Friend* events on October 4, 2013 at the Browne Park Social Service Center in Brownsville, Texas, and on October 30, 2013 at the Los Indios Community Center in the city of Los Indios, Texas.

Demographics of women who attended the events:

- Median age was: 45.
- Ethnic breakdown:
 - African American: 0%
 - American Indian/Native American: 0%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%
 - Latina/Hispanic: 91%

Family and Consumer Sciences

- White: .8%
 - Multiple race/ethnicity: 2.5%
 - Other/missing: 5.7%
- 13 total volunteers assisted at party/events.
 - A Nurse Practitioner, a Survivor, and Other Health Care Professionals urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the events.
 - At the end of the event 78.6% of women, aged 40 or over, correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year.
 - 127 Women requested help to navigate screening and diagnostic services.
 - Four Clinical sites for screenings, diagnostics, radiologists and lab services were contracted including the following:
 - Valley Baptist Medical Center – Breast Center
 - Dr. Ruben Lopez, MD
 - Harlingen OB/GYN, Dr. Ruben Torres
 - Valley Radiology and Assoc.
 - 46 Mammogram screenings and 7 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
 - 13 Pap screenings and 2 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
 - A total of \$8, 723.24 has been paid for both mammogram screenings, Pap Screenings, and diagnostics through CPRIT funds.
 - 14 Women were referred to other available sources for Breast and Cervical screenings and diagnostics.





¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes!

2013 Cameron County Report

Developed by Lilian Mezquida,
County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences

¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes! (Si, 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, *Si, 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.¹
- Texas Hispanic/Latinos 45 to 64 years of age are disproportionately affected by diabetes prevalence (11.0 percent) than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts (16.8 percent).
- In 2007, mortality rates were more than double among Texas.¹ Hispanic/Latinos (40 per 100,000) than Whites, non-Hispanics (19 per 100,000).¹
- Among persons with diabetes, a higher proportion of Texas Hispanic/Latinos (32.5 percent) could not see a doctor in the last 12 month due to cost compared to Whites (16.5 percent).²

2013 Si, Yo Puedo Class

In 2013, 10 individuals registered to for the *Si, Yo Puedo* class offered in Cameron County, TX. The findings below summarize the program outreach of the *Si, Yo Puedo* program delivered in Cameron County.

Demographic characteristics: 60% (N=6) of the participants were females. The average age was 55 years, and 70% (N=7) of the participants were Hispanic/Latino. Among the program participants, 30% (N=3) had a High school diploma or GED or less. A total of 60% of participants (N=6) reported their yearly income as \$20,000 or less. Moreover, 70% (N=7) did not have any health insurance.

References:

1. Texas Diabetes Council, Texas Department of State Health Services. *Changing the course: A plan to prevent and control diabetes in Texas*. Austin, TX: TDSHS Publication No. 45-10524.
2. Texas Diabetes Council, Texas Department of State Health Services. *Diabetes: A comprehensive approach*. Austin, TX: TDSHS Publication No. 45-10524.

Parenting Connections Outcome Summary – Cameron County Report, 2013

Developed by Lilian Mezquida, County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences

Relevance: Although children are influenced by many different elements in their environment, parents are the primary influence in the lives of their children. Parents' contributions to their children's development are unparalleled, especially during their early childhood years. Research indicates that children who grow up with actively involved and nurturing parents (as opposed to uninvolved parents) reap numerous benefits, including better school performance, increased self-esteem, healthier relationships with peers, healthier sex-role development, and greater access to financial resources. In addition, children who are raised in environments in which parents are fully involved are less likely to engage in behaviors that put them at risk for a variety of physical and mental health problems.

Research suggests that quality educational programs can assist parents in developing the skills they need to effectively raise their children. The qualities/skills that are common to effective parents (e.g., unwavering love, sensitivity to a child's needs and feelings, clear and consistent limits geared toward a child's stage of development, firm but not harsh discipline, encouragement of child's emerging independence, parental involvement in child's education, being a positive role model) can be taught through a series of parenting education classes that allow parents the opportunity to discuss and practice the desired skills.

Response: From late 2012 through November 2013, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted multiple parent education workshop series' in Cameron County utilizing the *Parenting Connections* curriculum. Topics covered included guidance/discipline, parent-child communication, promoting a healthy self-esteem in children, and child development. Two hundred and four (**204**) single session parenting evaluations were completed by participants. Sixty-one (**61**) parents and/or other relatives completed the 4-week program (see Table 1 for outcomes).

Results: Participant Characteristics

The average age of participants was 28.0 years. Parents who attended the classes had an average of 2.9 children. Sixty-three percent of attendees were female and 24% were male. Approximately 63% possessed a high school diploma and 5% some college. Nearly 31% did not possess a high school diploma. Ninety-two percent of the participants identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, 3% Caucasian, 2% African American and 2% "Other." Seventy-three percent reported household incomes under \$20K, 16% between \$20-29K, and 6% over \$30K. Forty percent of participants were married (1st time), 15% divorced/separated, 2% remarried, and 40% single. Eighty-four percent identified themselves as the child's custodial parent, 10% as the non-custodial parent, and 5% as a relative or "other" caregiver.

Parent/Child Behaviors

Participants were evaluated after completing the parent education series using a retrospective evaluation tool. Results indicate that the program had a very positive effect on specific parenting practices. **Significant behavioral changes from pre to post occurred in the following areas: parent-child communication, parental self-confidence, and parental use of positive disciplinary practices. In addition, parents reported a significant improvement in their children's behavior after participating in the program.** The following tables demonstrate the positive changes that occurred:

Family and Consumer Sciences

Table 1. Percent reporting “frequently” or “almost always” from pre to post (N = 61)

Parenting Behavior	Pre	Post
Compliment child	54.8%	87.1%
Encourage child	65.0%	82.3%
Listen carefully to child	71.0%	89.0%
Communicate clearly & directly	52.0%	76.0%
Confident in parenting skills	53.2%	77.4%
Set limits (rules) for child	50.0%	73.0%
Consistently enforce limits	37.1%	65.0%

Table 2. Child’s behavior pre vs. post (N = 61)

Child’s Behavior	Pre	Post
Excellent or Very Good	34.0%	61.3%
Adequate, Fair, or Poor	53.2%	24.2%



For more information contact:

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***Get the Facts* - Evaluation of Curriculum on Nutrition Label Reading**

Developed by Lilian Mezquida- County Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences

2013 Cameron County Report

Relevance: Health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. These health conditions can be improved thru consumption of a healthy eating plan as affirmed in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. However, dietary behavior change can be difficult and requires knowledge, skills, motivation and an environment conducive to change.

Response: Basic food buying skills enable clients to consider more healthful food choices when shopping. *Get the Facts*, a three-lesson series on the Nutrition Facts food label, was developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists to enhance participant skills necessary for positive dietary behavior change. The skills-building series focused on comparing serving size, fat and sodium information when selecting food choices. These three items were specifically selected as they relate to obesity, heart disease and hypertension.

Session goals were:

- Serving size: Understand the difference between a serving and a portion; estimate common serving sizes; use serving sizes to create healthy, balanced meals using the plate method.
- Fat: Gain knowledge of the basic components of the Nutrition Facts label; understand the health consequences of consuming saturated and trans fat; compare food labels to select products lower in saturated fat and trans fat.
- Sodium: Explain that most (more than 70%) of the sodium in the American eating plan comes from processed foods; understand the effects of sodium on blood pressure; compare food labels to consistently select products with less sodium.

The evaluation of knowledge and intent to change behavior among *Get the Facts* participants was accomplished thru the use of pre/post/follow-up survey instruments. *Get the Facts* participants could opt out of the evaluation process if desired. Nonetheless, 103 *Get the Facts* pre/post survey sets, of which 102 included the follow-up survey, were received from Cameron County.

The typical *Get the Facts* participant (n=103) was Hispanic (100%) and female (84%) with a mean age of 36 years. Participants described themselves as white (98%). Most participants (64%) had a high school diploma, GED or less. Many participants (45%) had been told by a health professional they needed to lose weight.

The typical household had 4.5 members, of which 2.3 were children. Of those participants (n=38) who reported receiving food stamp benefits the typical monthly amount was \$349. Participants reported other program use: food stamps (31%), free or reduced price school meals (51%), WIC (25%), and food banks or pantries (4%). Most participants (72%) reported Better Living for Texans (BLT) was the first AgriLife Extension program they had attended. Most participants (84%) rated the *Get the Facts* lesson series as excellent.

Results:

Change in Knowledge

There was a statistically significant ($p < .001$) increase in mean knowledge during the time *Get the Facts* was taught (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean correct knowledge scores (out of 6)
Pre/post/follow-up survey sets (n=102)

Pre-survey	Post-survey	Follow-up survey
3.1a	5.4b	5.4b

a and b are statistically different at $p < .001$

Change in Behavior

Many participants reported increased label reading during the time the series was taught (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of *Get the Facts* participants who reported always or almost always checking the food label while shopping for food.
Pre/post/follow-up survey sets. (n=102)

Behavior question	Pre Survey %	Post Survey %	Follow-up Survey %
How often do you use the information about <u>SERVING SIZE</u> on the food label to determine the amount of food you will eat?	15	95	93
How often do you use the information about <u>FAT</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	20	99	97
How often do you use the information about <u>SODIUM</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	17	94	96

Self-reported behavior improved ($p > .001$) regarding serving size, fat and sodium food label usage during the time this lesson series was taught (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean food label usage scores (5=never thru 1=always)
Pre/post/follow-up survey sets (n=102)

Behavior question	Pre Survey	Post Survey	Follow-up Survey
How often do you use the information about <u>SERVING SIZE</u> on the food label to determine the amount of food you will eat?	3.3a	1.5b	1.6b
How often do you use the information about <u>FAT</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	3.2a	1.4b	1.5b
How often do you use the information about <u>SODIUM</u> on the food label when shopping for food?	3.4a	1.5b	1.6b

Answers coded: 5=never; 4=almost never; 3=sometimes; 2=almost always; 1=always

a and b are statistically different at $p > .001$

Statewide Results:

Positive behavior change was reported by participants (Table 4).

Table 4. Selected Statewide Comments

Participant responses to: "What changes have you made?"
<i>Changed to smaller portions, buying frozen vegetables instead of canned, changed to 2% milk from whole, use whole wheat bread.</i>
<i>Paying attention to servings and portions, look at labels more before I buy</i>
<i>Buying more fresh vegetables and fruits, stop buying sodas and junk food, no more hot Cheetos or chips. How to read the food labels and serving sizes.</i>
<i>Take time to read labels and compare products for sodium and saturated fats.</i>

Other participant comments were captured. For example:

- Participants stated that they learned the difference between a recommended serving size and a portion which is the amount consumed. Participants stated they now eat smaller portions. Consistently eating smaller portions can help reduce the risk of obesity.
- Participants mentioned that they now use the Nutrition Facts labels to identify saturated fat in food products. Some clients stated that they switched to lower fat milk. Whole milk is a major source of dietary saturated fat, therefore this behavior change can significantly reduce dietary fat intake in these clients.
- Many participants commented that they did not know 70% of dietary sodium comes from processed foods. Selecting food products with lower sodium content while shopping can significantly reduce dietary sodium intake. While a reduction in sodium intake will not cure hypertension, it can help reduce its severity and consequences.

Get the Facts is a Texas SNAP-ED approved curricula available to help meet the needs of local county Extension agents. Evaluation results (n=1453) suggest *Get the Facts* curriculum was effective (p>.001) at increasing participant knowledge and improving behavior related to nutrition label reading.

Label reading skills are necessary for clients to make healthful food choices and thereby reduce their risk of chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease and hypertension.



VALUE	
Obesity Prevention and Reduction	
	<p>The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service engages children and adults in programs that teach them how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to promote health and reduce their risk for obesity. The Texas public benefits through a healthier population, reduced health care costs, and increased productivity.</p>

Family and Consumer Sciences

Income Generation Projects Output Program

Developed by Lilian Mezquida, County Extension Agent – Family & Consumer Sciences/Family Resources

Plan Name or Title: Income Generation Projects Program Cameron County 2013

Response: From January to December 2012, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service conducted multiple programs in Cameron County utilizing the Income Generation Projects and Master Clothing Volunteer Program. For the Income Generation Program the participants were able to learn: 1. How to make crafts 2. They learned that they can be made with very little expense and 3. To use what they already have at home that they are no longer using. For the Master Clothing Program the participants learned sewing machine essential parts, Basic sewing and stitching. The participants were able to sew items for the kitchen and Jean bags.

Results: Participants found the projects practical and very beneficial. They said that making their own crafts or decorations will help them to save money. The sewing group at the “Brownsville Housing Authority” were able to make different items for the kitchen and jean bags to sell.

Contacts for this program: 519



Junior Master Gardeners Outcome Summary - Cameron County 2013

Developed by Marco Ponce, county Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development

Relevance: 4-H youth who are at the elementary and middle school grade level are increasingly unaware of how fruits, vegetables, and ornamentals are produced. Many are unfamiliar with the processes involved in producing fruits and vegetables. They are unaware of basic of gardening techniques such as site selection, planting, watering, and fertilization. It is important that youth be aware of how important the preservation of the environment is in relation to producing these products. Youth must also be made aware that fruits and vegetables grown at home are tastier and healthier as they are free of chemicals and preservatives that can be harmful to one's health. Students need to understand the nutritional requirements needed for them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Response: Agent planned and implemented a Gardening and Horticulture program for 4-H youth who are members of the Santa Rosa 4-H club. Topics of discussion were planting seeds, basic gardening and management, nutrition, and harvesting. Students also did some hands on activities such as planting seeds in small cups that they were able to take home. 4-H members also expressed interest in creating a vegetable garden for the 4-H club and some members expressed interest in competing in the horticulture division at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show.

Results: Students learned about the importance being good stewards of the land while also learning about establishing a vegetable garden. Students were administered a pre-program questionnaire in which they had an average of -6.0 or 55% of the questions wrong. Students were then given an identical post program questionnaire at the conclusion of programming. In the post-program questionnaire, students averaged -2.3 or 21% of the questions wrong. In addition, in the pre-program questionnaire, no one answered all the questions correctly and two students got all the questions wrong. In the post-program questionnaire, four students answered all the questions correctly and 100% of the students answered at least some of the questions correctly.



Youth Higher Education Awareness Outcome Summary

Developed by Marco Ponce, County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development

Relevance: There are many at-risk and underprivileged youth in Cameron County who are unaware of the many higher education opportunities available to them here in South Texas. They are also unaware of the finances needed and the funding that is available to them in order to acquire a higher education degree. These groups of students are often overlooked by school counselors and are not given the individual attention they need by instructors. Thus many fail to graduate high school and in most cases fail to attend an institution of higher education. They are then often relegated to mostly low paying jobs that have little or no opportunity for career advancement.

Response: Educational lessons were conducted at the Darrel B. Hester Juvenile Justice Center (Boot Camp) utilizing the College for Texans curriculum. Lessons were delivered using power point technology as well as handouts that were given to the audience in order to take notes and follow along. Some individual instruction was also conducted with students who needed special attention in order to fully understand the topic. Educational lessons included local higher education institutions, financial aid 101, financial impact of college degrees, careers in demand, and possible degree programs and related careers. Students were informed about the expected salaries that they should expect to earn related to their level of education obtained. They were also informed about the many expenses that can be expected to be incurred once they are living on their own and having to pay for all of their own expenses. This made them realize that trying to live comfortably on a salary of a high school drop- out would be extremely challenging if not impossible.

Results: Students gained a greater understanding of the many opportunities available to them that would support them in their path to obtaining a higher education degree. Students specifically gained a greater knowledge in financial aid, careers, and salary differences as related to their responses in a pre and post program questionnaire. Students missed an average of -5.1 or 43% of the questions on the pre - program questionnaire. On the post – program questionnaire, students missed an average of -2.5 or 20% of the questions. Two students answered every one of the questions correctly. Two of the students had said they had not planned on attending college in the pre-test while all of the students said they planned on attending college in the post-test.

Future Plans: The future plans for this program in to interpret the results to our key stakeholders and county leaders. We also have plans to continue this program at the Darrel B. Hester Juvenile Justice Center and other after school detention centers in the county.





4-H and YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



Making a Difference 2013

Annual Cameron County 4-H Program Summary

County 4-H Youth Involvement

- 17 Chartered Community Clubs
- 378 Members Enrolled in 4-H Clubs
- 9,780 Youth Reached through Community-based Programs
- 998 Youth Reached through School-Based Enrichment Curriculum

Total Youth Reached

11,156

County 4-H Leadership, Advisory, and Support Organizations

- 13 Youth Board Members attended 2 Meetings
- 24 County 4-H Council Members attended 10 Meetings
- 13 Adult Leaders & Parents Organization Members attended 10 Meetings



of Youth Attending

Participation in County 4-H Events

County 4-H Bay Fishing Tournament	225
Kids Kows and More Program	425
4-H Showmanship Clinic	44
County 4-H Awards Banquet	125
County 4-H Roundup	37

County Participation in District Events

4-H Shooting Sports Postal League	16
4-H Round Up (All Events)	43
4-H Record Books	24
4-H Food Show/Challenge	34
4-H Leadership Lab	26

County Participation in State/National Events

Texas 4-H Round Up	13
Texas 4-H Photo Contest	8
Texas 4-H Record Book	6
Texas 4-H WHEP Contest	4
Texas 4-H Horse Show	1

Most Popular Club Projects in the County

Photography	89
Swine	74
Horticulture	65
Rabbits	66
Meat Goats	62

Most Popular Curriculum in the County

Food & Nutrition	7,487
Science of Agriculture	1,630
Eat4-Health	775
Junior Master Gardener	750
Take a Stand	286

County 4-H Volunteer Support

- 235 Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs
- 60 Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders
- 12,177 Hours Contributed by Volunteers in Support of Clubs

Livestock Show Premium Sale Proceeds*

\$127,560

Includes all projects (4-H and FFA)

Value of Volunteer Time Supporting 4-H

\$260,101



County 4-H Leadership & Personal Development Programs

- 38** Attended State-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 124** Attended District-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 26** Attended District Leadership Lab
- 7** Received 4-H Scholarships valued at a total of **\$32,000**

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

- 13** CEP 4-H Youth Advisory Board
- 15** 4-H Leaders 4 Life Training
- 60** Take A Stand- Anti Bullying Training Teachers Inservice Training
- 20** County 4-H Record Book Training

Significant Leadership & Personal Development accomplishments from county Events & Activities

We had state recognition with a 4-H member that received a scholarship for \$18,000 for college. 4-H is all about leadership and we continue to train and develop great leaders that advance to state completions.

County 4-H Agriculture & Natural Resource Programs

- 315** Livestock Projects (all species)
- 320** Participated in County Livestock Shows
- 46** Attended State-level Livestock Shows
- 35** Attended District-level Agriculture & Natural Resources educational or competitive events
- 26** Youth Trained through "Quality Counts" Program

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

- 47** 4-H Livestock Judging Training
- 37** 4-H Beef, Lamb, and Goat Clinic
- 28** 4-H Horticulture Project Clinic
- 15** 4-H Rabbit Project Clinic

Significant Agriculture & Natural Resource accomplishments from county Events & Activities

Out of all the participates in this program numerous of them received: Grand Champion, Reserve Champion, 1st, 2nd etc. at the local county fairs, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show, and major stock shows. The participation in this program continues to grow every year. These projects give 4-Hers a better understanding of responsibility, organization, and respect.

County 4-H Family & Consumer Science Programs

- 6** Attended State-level educational or competitive events
- 24** Attended District-level educational or competitive events
- 49** Attended County-Level educational or competitive events
- 775** Attended Eat4-Health Program

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

- 27** County 4-H Food Show Training
- 28** County 4-H Food Challenge Training
- 11** County 4-H Fashion Show Training

Significant Family & Consumer Science accomplishments from county Events & Activities

This program area is increasing in popularity. We had a Cameron County 4-H Food Challenge Team qualify and participate in State Food Challenge Competition in College Station, TX. We also had a program through our curriculum enrichment efforts that had more than 750 participates learning about healthy choices and physical activity.



The kids above are learning about drinking more milk instead of sweetened drinks at the Eat4-Health Week.



In the picture are 4-H Agents and a couple 4-Hers conducting a presentation to commissioners court in Brownsville, TX.



The Cameron County 4-H Council stops to take a quick picture at the Emergency Preparedness Day at Tractor Supply in San Benito, TX



4-Her's participating at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show.



The Cameron County 4-H Livestock Judging Team, receiving awards in Fredericksburg, TX.



Cameron County Food Challenge Team participating at Texas 4-H Round Up in College Station, TX.

Making a Difference

2013 Eat4-Health in Cameron County

Developed by: Roxanna Salinas- 4-H & Youth Development Extension Agent (CEP)

Relevance: Eat4-Health is a program that teaches healthy eating and activity habits. According to Feeding America, data from 2011 indicate that Texas at 18.5% is among the top three food insecure states in the nation. Twenty-two percent of Texas children under age eighteen are food insecure—the highest rate of any state in the country. The goals of the Eat 4-Health program are to mobilize underserved youth to take action around nutritional deficiencies, healthy food choices, and physical activity in Cameron County.

Response: Educational lessons were conducted at Dr. Rodriguez Elementary in Harlingen, TX utilizing the Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness Curriculum. The Curriculum was conducted on Kinder through 5th grade totaling over 750 kids each day. The lessons included: Drink low-fat Milk and water instead of sweetened Drinks, Eat a Rainbow: Eat more Vegetables and fruits, Read it before you eat it, make half your grains whole, healthier foods fast and power up the day and eat breakfast. Every lesson focused on information and behaviors that lead to living a healthy lifestyle. There are six “choose health” behavior goals:

- Replace sweetened drinks with low-fat milk and water
- Play actively 60 minutes a day
- Eat more vegetables and fruits
- Eat fewer high-fat and high-sugar foods and more nutrient-rich and high-fiber foods
- Eat only as often and as much as needed to satisfy hunger
- Promote healthy behaviors

Results: All 319 participants that were surveyed were in grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th. There were 47.6% female and 52.4 percent male. Majority of the ethnicity at 81.1% was Hispanic. For most of the participants at 77.8%, this was their first year to participate in a 4-H Activity. The participants expressed that the frequency was always through in-school programs. The survey results are as follows:

- 91.3% of respondents increased knowledge on the foods that they should eat every day.
- 75.9% of respondents increased knowledge on what makes a balanced diet.
- 90.2% of respondents increased knowledge on why it is important to eat a healthy diet.
- 89% of respondents increased knowledge on how to make healthy food choices.
- 80.2% of respondent’s behavior changed to eat more fruits and vegetables.
- 77.7% of respondent’s behavior changed to eat more whole grains.
- 60% of respondent’s behavior changed to eat less junk food.
- 89.6% of respondent’s behavior changed to drink more water.
- 69.9% of respondents encouraged their family and friends to eat meals together.

Making a Difference

As a result of the fun field day at the end of the program 86.1% say being active is fun. 84.8% said that being active is good for them. Lastly, 85.4% of the respondents said that being physically active will help them stay fit.

Success Stories:

“This is the kind of program kids need” Dr. Rodriguez Staff

“Thank you for coordinating all of the fun activities for us here at Dr. Rodriguez Elementary. We learned a lot about being healthy. We also got to eat many snacks. The field day was the best. I saw the snacks on the table and it looked good, and when I taste it, it was very good.” 3rd Grade Student



At the Eat4-Health awards ceremony, all sponsors and partners were in attendance. The sponsors were United HealthCare, HEB, Chick-Fil-A, Texas Sweet, and Hygiena.



Eat More Fruits and Vegetables was the lesson for Wednesday so the kids got to taste test bananas!



Every day the kids were asked to wear a different color shirt. This day it was yellow. They got a sticker for telling us what fruit or vegetable was yellow.



After each lesson the kids would rotate stations: taste test, physical exercise and sign the Take a Healthy Step. The lesson would have goals and the kids would sign that they are committed to taking the healthy step.

4-H and Youth Development

2013 Take A Stand Program in Cameron County

Developed by Roxanna Salinas- 4-H & Youth Development Extension Agent (CEP)

Relevance: Bullying at school is a growing problem among kids of all ages. Statistics about how many children are affected and how often bullying occurs are alarming. Conflicts among youth and bullying have been increasing. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association (April 25, 2001), nearly 1/3 of students surveyed reported that they experience bullying, either as a target or as a perpetrator. 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: Educational Lessons were conducted at Dr. Rodriguez Elementary in Harlingen, TX utilizing the Take a Stand Curriculum Level 3-5 for all of 4th grade. Take A Stand teaches youth how to deal with conflict through skills in communication, teamwork, etiquette, and cultural awareness. This program consists of 5 lessons. The lessons include:

Lesson1: Keep your cool: This lesson teaches students understand the signs of anger in themselves and other; learn how to control anger, and the consequences of violence.

Lesson 2: Walk In My Shoes: This lesson teaches students explain their own point of view and listen to another person's point of view while learning to solve problems through talking and listening.

Lesson 3: A Manner of Speaking: This lesson teaches students learn 10 basic manners kids should use to show respect, and how to show respect through writing thank-you notes.

Lesson 4: Get in the Game: The lesson teaches students understand the importance of teamwork and how to be a good team member.

Lesson 5: You+Me=Harmony: The last lesson is teaching the students to understand ways people are alike and different, and learning to appreciate the traditions, customs, and gestures of other cultures.

These lessons were taught for a two month period and followed by a district wide teacher in-service training for the rest of the school district.

Results:

- 70.7% of respondent's behavior changed on recognizing the signs of anger in themselves and others and knowing how to control it.
- 74.9% of respondent's behavior changed on accepting and understanding the consequences of violence.
- 59% of respondent's behavior changed on explaining their point of view to others and 78.4% on listening to others points of views.
- 44.7% of respondent's behavior changed on comprising to solve a conflict.

4-H and Youth Development

- 88% of respondent's behavior changed on respecting others and 68% on practicing good manners.
- 76.1% of respondent's behavior changed on being a good team member when working with a group and 69.3% on working with others to make decisions.
- 66.2% of respondent's behavior changed on identifying ways people are alike and different and 81% on respecting customs and traditions of others.

Overall, 49.3% of respondents were satisfied with the program. Over 50% of respondents were satisfied with activities being fun, information being easy to understand, and topics being good.

Success Stories:

"The most important thing I learned was to never bully other people and to stand up for one another."
4th Grade Student

"I learned to control my anger and stop bullying." 4th Grade Student

Teachers Inservice Training on take A stand



Making a Difference

Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalists and Texas Coastal Naturalist Program

Developed by Tony Reisinger, County Extension Agent – Coastal & Marine Resources

Relevance: Growth and urbanization will be the preeminent issues facing the Texas coast for the next several decades. Past and present urbanization has led to habitat degradation and loss, which affects water quality, critical habitat, endangered species and harmful algal blooms.

Response: To keep pace with coastal population growth on the Texas coast, the Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalists (RGVCTMN) volunteer program has become an integral part of Texas Sea Grant's efforts. A RGVCTMN is a formally trained volunteer who must complete a minimum of 48 hours of instruction and 40 hours of volunteer service designed to provide them with the knowledge, "how to" skills and tools needed to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. We maintain a Texas Coastal Naturalist Facebook page which has 317 likes.

The chapter also generously supports the Texas Coastal Naturalist program, a volunteer outcome program group of first responders, saving stranded marine mammals, monitoring red tide, responding to sea turtle cold stun strandings, and becoming educated on beach ecology. This program serves as a hook to attract RGVCTMN members.

Coastal Naturalists include the exclusive Red Tide Rangers, who respond primarily to red tide blooms. Activities include collecting, counting and reporting red tide cell concentrations and providing location information on the blooms to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Hazardous Algal Bloom Work Group and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). They further assist these groups monitor red tide blooms by ground-truthing the bloom location, assessing the potential human impacts and predicting bloom movements. In 2012, NOAA recognized the Red Tide Rangers as essential to red tide monitoring in Texas.

Results: During 2013, we trained 48 new intern naturalists with a curriculum requiring 10 three-hour courses, including 32 presentations on different subjects, 12 field trips for 8 required hours of advanced training on the natural history and ecosystems of the Rio Grande Valley. Classes were held in Mission and San Benito.

Evaluations were conducted for 32 educational presentations (either 1.5 or 3 hours) and 11 field trips. Each activity was evaluated by interns and statistical means calculated for: overall quality, scoring 92.8%; presenter knowledge and presentation, 91.8%; and relevance of the topic, 90.8%. All evaluations were conducted by educational committee members, with classes and field trips by volunteers from local universities or experts in their fields of knowledge. Class results from pre and post-tests indicated a 31% increase in knowledge for the interns. Thirty-eight or 79% of the 48 interns became certified Master Naturalists in 2013. The Naturalists conducted 59 outreach/education events in 2013, reaching a total 10,224

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attendees. The Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalists provided sentinel monitoring for a potential red tide bloom, after an upper coast outbreak of the harmful algae, which did not impact our South Texas waters. Total volunteer time contributions from the chapter amounted to 19,151 hours valued at \$424,003 in 2013.

The Texas Coastal Naturalist Program comprised of 105 members held five trainings, partnering with the University of Texas Coastal Studies Laboratory on South Padre Island and responded to a sea turtle cold stun event in December, helping save 100 green sea turtles from drowning. Surveys of this program rate it 4.8 out of 5 in educational quality and opportunities with no changes in educational programing recommended.

Recap: Trained 48 new naturalists, helped monitor red tide, care for stranded marine mammals, monitor sea turtle populations and educate the public on our natural environment, improve our parks. **They reached 10,224 people through direct contact at 59 individual educational events. In 2013 our Naturalists worked 19,151 volunteer service hours in the community at value of \$424,000. 100 green sea turtles saved from a cold stun event in December. A bird-feeder website with our logo and chapter web address on a sign under the feeder < <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/sabal-palm-sanctuary/pop-out> > is funded by the chapter and maintained by our partner, the Gorgas Science Foundation in Brownsville. This site had 66,676 unique worldwide visitors in 2013! Tropical bird species, seen nowhere else, visit the feeder daily. Visitors to the site, peak in March, April and May.**



Master and coastal Naturalist Volunteer, Pam Cornett hold a revived green sea turtle saved from a cold stun event in December, 2013



UTB grad Student and Coastal Naturalist Catheline Froehlich measures freshness of a red drum at the Texas International Fishing Tournament under the watchful eyes of Dr Richard Kline, volunteer lecturer for the Coastal Naturalist program and weigh master Richard Moore

Making a Difference

Cameron County Shrimp Fleet Saves Millions in Fuel, Reduces Bycatch and Addresses Invasive Species in 2013

Developed by Tony Reisinger, County Extension Agent – Coastal & Marine Resources

Relevance: For Gulf of Mexico shrimp trawlers, fuel costs are a major operating expense. Gulf shrimp trawlers can use up to 80,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. Reducing operating expenses through reduced fuel consumption will improve vessel profitability. Bycatch of sea turtles, protected by the Endangered Species Act, is prohibited and turtle excluder devices (TEDs) must be compliant to meet federal regulations. Fish bycatch by shrimp trawlers is mandated to reduce fish bycatch by at least 30%. The invasive tiger shrimp and lionfish, both native to the Indo-Pacific, populations are increasing their range in the Gulf and may present threats to our shrimp fishery.

Response: Since 2003, Texas Sea Grant Extension has been working with cooperating shrimp fishermen in Cameron County to transfer fuel-saving trawl gear technology. Personal visits at the dock and a series of educational seminars for the Shrimp Committee were given on issues pertaining to the industry. In 2013 we conducted 72 individual visits and 15 crew meetings at the ports of Brownsville and Port Isabel in response to increased sea turtle strandings in the Gulf, inspecting turtle excluder devices (TEDs), to assure fishermen's TEDs were correctly installed and compliant with federal Endangered Species Act regulations. We assisted National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries gear specialists in training local US Coast Guard boarding officers and Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens, teaching and demonstrating TED compliance requirements on board a Brownsville shrimp vessel to give them hands on experience.

Fisheries specialist Gary Graham & I were awarded a \$90K NOAA grant to conduct proof of concept for five new fish bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) aboard a shrimp vessel.

The appearance of the invasive tiger shrimp from the Indo-Pacific in the Gulf encouraged our Shrimp Committee to sponsor a contest raising \$675 in rewards for vessel captains turning in the largest, smallest and most tiger shrimp to supply genetic information for the National Ocean Service to determine the shrimp's source. An educational program was presented to shrimpers to warn them of the venomous spines on lionfish that can cause severe pain and paralysis from punctures.

Results: Reported vessel fuel savings average 20%. To date, more than 80% of vessels in the Cameron County fleet, which has 155 vessels employing the fuel-efficient gear. This year a new supplier of super fiber webbing, which we introduced through demonstrations in 2003 to the fleet, was established in the Port of Brownsville. In 2013 our Cameron County fleet saved 2.8 million gallons of fuel valued at \$8.7 million by utilizing this gear. During the past six years, countywide fuel savings were estimated to be 15.6 million gallons valued at \$44.2 million. Additional savings are accrued through reductions in both the frequency of oil and filter changes and major engine overhauls.

Making a Difference

Specialist Graham and I made a 50 day fishing trip offshore on a Texas commercial shrimp vessel, assessing proof of concept for five bycatch reduction devices. During this trip we caught 8 lionfish, the first reported in the gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery.

Nine tiger shrimp have now been caught in deep and shallow water off Texas, two off Port Mansfield and two off South Padre Island. Shrimp fishermen are concerned these voracious predators, which grow over a foot in length, will at some time out-compete our native species. We addressed the issue by educating fishermen to bring them in for genetic testing to determine their origin and what they prey upon. The reward program in Cameron County resulted in 45 individual tigers turned in for testing, most caught by our fleet fishing off Louisiana. We transfer the specimens over to Texas Parks & Wildlife to hopefully determine the source and find if anything can be done to control this species. A University of Texas at Brownsville researcher was also provided stomachs of the specimens to determine prey species.

Recap: 2013 fuel savings for 155 vessels = 2.8 mil gal, value: \$8.7million. Five BRDs were assessed for proof of concept aboard a commercial shrimp trawler. A survey of ten large fleet owners indicates no major TED violations were reported for the Cameron County shrimp fleet in 2013, due to our educational efforts. Rewards of \$675 were awarded to winners of the tiger shrimp contest and 45 tiger shrimp were turned in for genetic studies and prey analyses. We documented lionfish can be caught by shrimp trawlers and may present a hazard to fishermen working through catches on deck.



Tony Reisinger Cameron County Extension Agent for Coastal & Marine Resources holds one of 8 venomous lionfish caught during a 50 day bycatch reduction device (BRD) proof of concept demonstration in the Gulf of Mexico aboard a Texas commercial shrimp vessel



Testing bycatch reduction devices in the Gulf of Mexico present a challenge of heavy seas for a Texas shrimp vessel.



Shrimp Committee President Carlton Reyes and County Agent Tony Reisinger award cash prizes and certificates to shrimpers who caught the largest, smallest and most invasive tiger shrimp ,to test for determining their origin and food habits

Making a Difference

2013 4H / EFNEP Road to Success Dual County Nutrition Camp – Cameron & Willacy County

Developed by Beatriz Loya, Cameron & Willacy County Extension Agent

Relevance: The idea was developed by the EFNEP Agent and EFNEP Advisory Committee, to expose limited resource youth to have an opportunity to learn about basic nutrition and other 4-H programs available. Regardless if a young person is in a rural area or an urban center of Texas, leadership and foods & nutrition is something they can be involved in. Additionally, with the Food Challenge Project allowing Youth to learn about leadership with so many additional social, organizational, culinary, and teamwork skills, the project is becoming more appealing for all ages of youth. The Food & Nutrition projects helps develop the life skills of communication, working with others, as well as increasing ones communicative and expressive culinary abilities.

Response: The EFNEP Agent Cameron, Prairie View 4-H Agent, and Ag Agent from Willacy County coordinated a meeting to plan the nutrition camp. The goal of the meeting was to plan out the output plan to expose EFNEP youth to leadership and quality learning experience and opportunities in the project area of Foods & Nutrition by starting off the exposure to practice training sessions in which they will have an explanation and guidance to prepare of food demonstration and to be leaders to other EFNEP children. This may expose them to also participate in the food projects. These experiences will be generated from the leadership of the EFNEP, 4-H, and Ag Extension Agents and staff who identify volunteers.

Results: On July 17, 2013, at the San Benito Housing Room, 10 children and one adult EFNEP volunteer helped conduct a small nutrition camp to help the children learn about: the importance of understanding what the ingredients of Nutrition -Sports drink sugar contain and how they affect the body. They were given data that also helped them to comprehend and understand the importance of how sugar can affect the body. Method demonstration was given to the children for them to form groups and learn how to make a healthy sports drink they could make at home and a demonstration on the importance of safe grilling and safe cooking outdoors was also shown to the youth.

Coordination and presentations were conducted by the EFNEP Agent from Cameron County, Ag Agent from Willacy County, and Prairie View 4-H Agent from Cameron County. Follow up with these children for the next year to attend and prepare for additional information on 4-H programs and projects will occur during the year.



Making a Difference

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Cameron County Outcome Summary Report

Developed by Beatriz Loya

Supporting Texas Families with Greatest Need Since 1969

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps young families and youth with limited resources – those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety in settings convenient for the participants. EFNEP also includes a walking program for adult participants. Program graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits. Texas has a need for EFNEP – 2011 data show that 20% of Texas families with children under the age of 18 were living below poverty level, compared to 16% of U.S. families.

EFNEP REACHES DIVERSE AUDIENCES IN CAMERON COUNTY

In Cameron County, ethnically diverse EFNEP nutrition assistants reach youth and adult groups whose principal language may be English or Spanish.

In 2013,

- 1,690 families enrolled in EFNEP.
- 7,076 youth contacts were made through the EFNEP youth program.
- 149 EFNEP participants were pregnant and/or nursing.
- 84% of families were at or below 100% of federal poverty level.
- 74% of families enrolled in one or more food assistance programs at entry.
- 92% of EFNEP adult participants were Hispanic/Latino.

VOLUNTEER STRENGTHEN EFNEP

In 2013, 210 adult volunteers donated 2,828 hours of work to EFNEP in Cameron County. At the Texas rate of \$22.57/hour, this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of \$63,846. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP's continued success.

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Adult Program:

Using “hands-on” experiences, EFNEP adult participants complete at least a six-lesson series on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. As a result of participation in EFNEP the following food and nutrition behaviors were achieved:

- 100% with positive change in any food group at exit. Specifically, EFNEP participants consumed 1.6 more cups of fruits and vegetables and 0.9 additional cups of milk at completion, compared to entry.
- 84% improved in one or more food resource management practices such as using a list for grocery shopping.
- 78% improved in one or more nutrition practices such as using the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices.
- 78% improved in one or more food safety practices such as thawing foods safely.
- 53% of program participants reported a positive change in physical activity.


Youth Program:

The EFNEP – Youth program is directed toward low-income school-age youth. These students participate in a series of fun and educational lessons on good nutrition and food safety as part of summer programs, classroom and after-school activities. The following results show how youth participants’ food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes.

- 97% improved ability to choose foods according to the Dietary Guidelines.
- 46% improved their safe food handling practices more often.
- 53% improved physical activity practices.

COST – BENEFITS OF EFNEP

Studies have shown that for every \$1 spent of EFNEP, \$10 were estimated to be saved in health care costs and \$2 saved in food costs by participants. For Cameron County, this is \$3.9 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost \$784,262 in food costs.

VALUE	
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program	
	<p>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 lowers public health-care costs.</p>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Cameron County

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