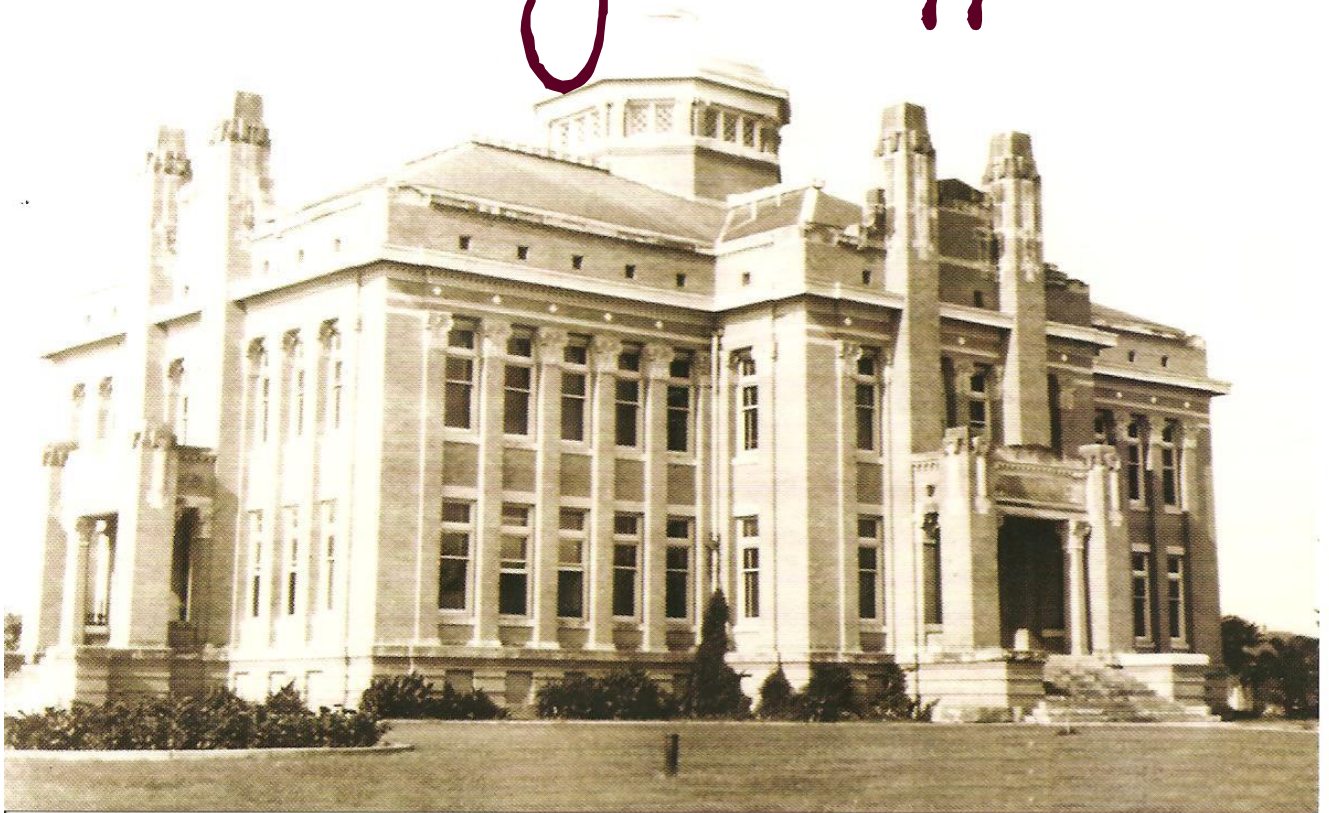




## Extension Education in Jim Wells County

# Making a Difference



## Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to educating Texans for nearly a century. In 1915, the agency was established under the federal Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, AgriLife Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse populations across the state.

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and some 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 significant returns 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:

## Jim Wells County – Summary of 2014 Educational Contacts

	# of Sessions	Goal #1	Goal #2	Goal #3	Total
Contacts by Faculty					
Faculty	208	13,411	6,599	25,868	<b>45,879</b>
Faculty & Volunteer	113	10,168	17,896	14,760	<b>42,826</b>
<b>Total Group Methods</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>23,579</b>	<b>24,496</b>	<b>40,628</b>	<b>88,705</b>
Individual Methods	---	20,927	8,268	7,262	<b>36,460</b>
Materials Distributed	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>44,506</b>	<b>32,764</b>	<b>47,890</b>	<b>125,165</b>
Contacts By Volunteers					
Group Methods	25	---	890	1,499	<b>2,389</b>
Individual Methods	---	120	144	573	<b>839</b>
Materials Distributed	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>2,072</b>	<b>3,228</b>
Newsletters/Announcements					
Marketing/Promotion	---	160	15	632	<b>787</b>
Educational Methods	---	---	750	---	<b>770</b>
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>1,557</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL CONTACTS</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>47,789</b>	<b>34,564</b>	<b>50,595</b>	<b>129,950</b>

## ***Jim Wells County Row Crop Production***

### **Relevance**

Jim Wells County has been impacted by drought conditions in five out of the last seven years. Drought has impacted local, state and national agricultural production as well as urban areas and other industries as well. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Jim Wells County is home to approximately 25,000 head of beef cows and approximately 80,000 acres of row crops. In order to sustain profitability in these agricultural operations, land owners and managers must stay abreast of weather patterns, best management practices for their respective operations and seek alternative practices to implement when traditional practices are not viable. In addition, the signing of the 2014 Farm Bill in February, has added various implications for producers as they must make informed decisions on program coverage, acreage re-allocation and yield updates on each of their farm operations.

### **Response**

Jim Wells County Extension Row Crop Committee participated in coordinating and implementing various educational programs which incorporated program topics addressing drought management strategies and provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill. The following is a summary of the events that were held and the topics addressing drought management in each program.

- ***Row Crops Tour:*** The Jim Wells County Extension Row Crops Committee hosted their annual Row Crops Tour on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at South Texas Implement Company in Alice. Thirty (30) agricultural producers and industry representatives participated in this program. Educational topics included updates on the new provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill, Commodity Markets, and control of the Sugar Cane Aphid in Grain Sorghum. Agent Rogelio Mercado also prepared and conducted an evaluation on the effectiveness of Farm Bill Education Efforts during this program.
- ***USDA-NRCS Local Working Group:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District in conducting their annual Local Working Group Meeting on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds. Approximately 50 agricultural producers, land owners and industry representatives participated in the meeting. Presenters provided information and updates on laws and regulations pertaining to farm equipment on the road, our local underground water district, and USDA farm programs. Mercado wrapped up the program by providing an overview of issues affecting agricultural producers in the area. Mercado also conducted an exercise with the participants by which he collected written comments with additional issues which the audience identified as important to them at the time.
- ***USDA Farm Program Display:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado coordinated a display of USDA Farm Programs available to agricultural producers, youth, businesses and communities during the annual Jim Wells County Fair held on October 21-25, 2014. Members of the Alice and Robstown service centers provided the man power for the display which was housed in the Merchants Building. Provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill were distributed to interested producers and individual questions were answered by the personnel managing the display. Approximately 12,000 people visit this event on an annual basis.

- **Jim Wells County Farm Expo:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the Orange Grove Co-op in coordinating and conducting their annual Jim Wells County Farm Expo on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. The program provided approximately 40 row crop producers with an opportunity to learn about new technologies and receive industry updates. Of particular interest, the Farm Bill Decision Making Tool was introduced and discussed at length as many row crop farmers are faced with end of the year decisions on new farm policies. Mercado provided 3 CEUs for participating pesticide applicators and this event supported Extension's Partial Cost Recovery Program.
- **Strip Tillage Field Day:** While mechanical tillage practices are important in increasing the absorption of rainfall in fallow row crop fields, residue management is key in reducing runoff and wind erosion of the soil. Recent drought conditions have challenged area row crop producers in attaining a balance of proper tillage without removing crop stubble. Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District in hosting a Strip Till Field Day on Friday, November 14, 2014. Approximately 40 producers participated in the program which was held at South Texas Implement Company in Alice. Producers learned from various industry representatives and area farmers about this cultural practice and the benefits it has on soil moisture, fertility and crop performance.
- **Result Demonstrations:** During the growing season, two grain sorghum and one corn variety trials were established and carried thru harvest. In addition, a grain sorghum plant population study was also conducted. These plots served as stops and presentation sites during the Jim Wells County Row Crops Tour held in June. The data on these plots was collected and distributed to interested producers.

## Results

The seminars, workshops and demonstrations provided agricultural producers with timely information to help them make management decisions on their operations. In order to evaluate specific gain in knowledge pertaining to the Provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill, a retro-spective post-test was administered to the participants of the Jim Wells County Row Crops Tour (6/18/14) and Farm Expo (11/4/14).

Forty (n=40) tests were received and analyzed. Below are the results of the individual questions and changes in the number and percentages of correct answers.

**Table 1. Pre Means, Post Means and Percent Change – Jim Wells County Row Crops Tour (n=24).**

Your understanding of ...	Mean Before	Mean After	Percent Change
General understanding of 2014 Farm Bill	1.63	2.71	36.0%
Decisions you will need to make	1.63	2.71	36.0%
Timeline for when decisions will need to be made	1.92	3.21	43.0%



Resources that Extension has put together to help with these decisions	2.04	3.0	32.0%
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**Table 2. Pre Means, Post Means and Percent Change – Jim Wells County Farm Expo (n=16).**

Your understanding of ...	Mean Before	Mean After	Percent Change
General understanding of 2014 Farm Bill	1.69	2.38	23.0%
Decisions you will need to make	2.00	2.44	14.7%
Timeline for when decisions will need to be made	2.00	2.56	18.7%
Resources that Extension has put together to help with these decisions	1.81	2.50	23.0%

Overall, producers completing the survey indicated that they gained general knowledge of the 2014 Farm Bill, it timelines and resources available. A large majority (77.5%) of the producers surveyed were mostly or completely satisfied with the quality of the trainings and materials provided.

Educational efforts will continue to aid producers in making informed decisions in production practices and alternatives for their operations. Current changes in weather patterns have provided relief to most areas of the state and nation. However, continued education will better prepare producers for future drought and or natural disasters in agriculture production.



## ***Jim Wells County Beef Cattle and Range Management***

### **Relevance**

Jim Wells County has been impacted by drought conditions in five out of the last seven years. Drought has impacted local, state and national agricultural production as well as urban areas and other industries as well. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Jim Wells County is home to approximately 25,000 head of beef cows and approximately 80,000 acres of row crops. In order to sustain profitability in these agricultural operations, land owners and managers must stay abreast of weather patterns, best management practices for their respective operations and seek alternative practices to implement when traditional practices are not viable. In addition, volatile cattle and commodity markets have placed higher risk on the U.S. Beef Industry

### **Response**

Jim Wells County Extension Beef Cattle Committee participated in coordinating and implementing various educational programs which incorporated program topics addressing drought management strategies, marketing options and other pertinent topics for land owners and managers. The following is a summary of two major educational programs that were conducted.

- ***Ranch and Range Field Day:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the Jim Wells County Extension Beef Committee in conducting their annual Ranch and Range Field Day on Saturday, September 6, 2014. The field day was hosted by Agua Poquita Ranch West in Benavides. Over 50 land owners and beef cattle producers participated in the program which focused primarily on the economics of production. Presentations were focused on profitable best management practices for range managers, beef cattle producers and land owners. Mercado prepared and delivered a presentation on theft prevention and property protection. A post test was conducted to measure the knowledge of the participants on the information presented.
- ***Quail Appreciation Field Day:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado coordinated and conducted a Quail Appreciation Field Day on Thursday, October 2, 2014. The field day was held at Los Abuelos Ranch in Bendavides. Fifteen people participated in the program led by Dr. Dale Rollins, Wildlife Specialist from San Angelo. The program covered habitat management, quail biology, predation and strategies for improving the quail population in South Texas. Mercado assisted in establishing a nesting demonstration prior to the program and discussed the establishment of these demonstrations to determine predation with the participants. This program is part of the Texas Quail Initiative and a series of educational programs across the state of Texas.

### **Results**

These two programs provided agricultural producers with timely information to help them make management decisions on their operations. In order to evaluate specific gain in producer knowledge, an evaluation tool was implemented at each event. A post test was used during the Ranch and Range Field Day and a retro-spective post test was used during the Quail Appreciation Field Day.

Thirty (n=30) tests were received and analyzed during the Ranch and Range Field Day. Twelve questions were posed to each participant. Below are the results of the overall scores and percentages of correct answers.

**Table 1. Summary of Correct Answers and Percentages - Ranch and Range Field Day.**

Correct Answers	N	Percent Correct
5	2	6.6%
6	6	20.0%
7	8	26.6%
8	7	23.3%
9	6	20.0%
10	1	3.3%

The participants of the Ranch and Range Field Day did well on their post exam. The average score was 61.6%. Overall, 93.4% of the producers completing the exam received a score of 50% or better with 23.3% of them receiving a score of 75% or better. Scores ranged from 41.6% to 83.3%.

A total of 11 usable surveys were collected and analyzed during the Quail Appreciation Field Day. The survey revealed that these 11 land owners and managers, impacted nearly a total of 250,000 acres. Below is a table summarizing the results in change in the level of understanding of 10 topic areas for quail production.

**Table 2. Pre Means, Post Means and Percent Change – Quail Appreciation Field Day**

Program Content	Mean Before	Mean After	Percent Change
How quail abundance has changed across the state and ecoregions	2.27	3.45	39.3%
How quail abundance is impacted by usable space	2.36	3.64	42.7%
Quail anatomy and how it dictates usable space	1.6	3.50	63.3%
Quail biology as it relates to management	1.91	3.55	54.7%
How to evaluate quail habitat	1.91	3.55	54.7%
How to integrate livestock grazing and quail habitat	2.45	3.55	36.7%
Key plants for quail	1.82	3.18	45.3%

Brush management for quail using mechanical, chemical and fire techniques	2.00	3.18	39.3%
Impacts of predation on quail at various parts of a life cycle	1.82	3.64	60.7%
Plant succession and how it can be manipulated to improve quail habitat	1.91	3.36	48.3%

Management for wildlife resources, including quail, can help a land owner and or manager diversify and increase ranch income. The survey indicates an increase in knowledge from the participants but further data on the economic benefits of this program is also important. Based on the survey, producers indicate a \$7.72 per acre benefit from this program. With an estimated 250,000 acres represented, this translates to a total benefit of \$1,750,000.00.

Educational efforts will continue to aid producers in making informed decisions in production practices and alternatives for their operations. Current changes in weather patterns have provided relief to most areas of the state and nation. However, continued education will better prepare producers for future drought and changes in market conditions.





### *Jim Wells County Farmers Market*

#### **Relevance**

Jim Wells County is a growing county of 41,680 (2013) with an estimated 9,365 individuals receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Jim Wells County also has an increase of chronic disease, as well as a large population of adults and children battling obesity. Obesity, a strong issue identified from the Family and Consumer Sciences Program Area Committee, increases the risk for diabetes, hypertension and poor overall quality of life. In an effort to serve the county of Jim Wells and promote health and wellness as well as providing information to start new garden's to get youth involved in becoming and staying healthy. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association was formed from members of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program Area Committee in agreement to provide fresh homegrown and homemade items. Starting a garden at home can promote healthy habits as well as more family time, but also a happy grocery budget.

#### **Response**

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market was established in March of 2014. The mission of the market is to provide locally- grown foods and farm products to children and adults in the Jim Wells County area. This will be accomplished by improving access to local, healthy, affordable food through a direct farm to consumer marketing venue that will serve a diverse population. Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association believes that small, local farms are essential to the local economy, and is committed to making economic and educational connections between Jim Wells County area residents and local farmers. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market is a Texas Department of Agriculture Certified Farmers Market and a GoTexan Member. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market is open on the second Saturday of every month. Vendors are required to complete a registration agreement after agreeing to all market rules and regulations. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association allows 1 craft vendor per every 3 produce vendors. During the Farmers Market a live food demonstration is conducted twice throughout the market time by the Jim Wells County Family and Consumer Sciences County Extension Agent. A partnership with the Nutrition Services Department at Christus Spohn Hospital-Alice also helps with food demonstrations. The recipe demonstrated at the market is based on produce items vendors will have available for purchase that day. Educational materials, recipes and benefits for ingredients used at the live food demonstration are provided for all market vendors and customers. Educational handouts from the Better Living for Texans resource are also provided.

#### **Results**

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market started with 9 vendors in March of 2014, the market currently has 30 registered vendors. There is an average of 90-120 market customers that sign in at the AgriLife educational table at every market. Items sold at the market are seasonal produce from local farmers, honey, olive oil, avocado oil, grass fed beef, free range poultry, farm eggs, jelly, jams, salsas, goats milk soaps and lotions, and handmade wood crafts.

## Community Economic Development

A customer satisfaction survey was provided for customers during the November market. There were 62 respondents to the survey completed after viewing a live food demonstration at the market. Participants were 65% female, 35% male; 74% Hispanic with 40% of the participants between the ages of 30-49 years old.

- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the activity.
- 98% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information.
- 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the relevance of the examples used.
- 100% of the respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's knowledge level.
- 69% plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from the activity.
- 81% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from the Extension activity.

### Comments from participants included:

- "Love the produce and honey, finally our area is moving in the right direction."
- "Ease of cooking fresh food."
- "Great idea to have food demos, love the market and education."
- "Come for food demos-excellent information."
- "Learn to cook healthy."
- "Local growers, very informative."
- "Nice for the community."
- "How easy it is to prepare healthy foods."
- "Having my kids watch how we can eat healthy."
- "My family enjoys the fresh homemade goods and learning and tasting new ways to cook with everyday veggies."

### Economic Impact

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market began to record an estimate of income provided from each vendor at the end of the market. Recording began in June 2014; a total of **\$13,117.50** within the months of June-December 2014 markets was gained by vendors.

### Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following for providing volunteer time and partnership; Anita Rosas, Green's Nursery, Christus Spohn Hospital- Alice, City of Alice City Council, Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Esparza, Texas Department of Agriculture, GoTexan Program

### Future Program Efforts

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market will continue to provide a monthly market on the second Saturday of the month. The market will continue to provide nutrition education as well as increase gardening education provided from AgriLife Extension Specialists and Horticulture Agents. An increase in environmental awareness will also be implemented within the market and city of Alice recycling program.

***Jim Wells County- Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes*****Relevance**

The number of Americans diagnosed with diabetes is 21 million. An estimated 86 million Americans have pre-diabetes. Health-care costs now average \$13,700 per person with diabetes, for an annual total cost of \$254 billion in the U.S. – \$176 billion (72%) for health care and \$69 billion (28%) in lost productivity. Almost \$1 of every \$5 spent on health care is for people with diabetes. Poor diabetes management leads to increased health-care costs. People with diabetes who maintain their blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers within recommended ranges can keep their costs, health risks, quality of life, and productivity very close to those without the disease. Currently, however, only 7% of people with diabetes are at the recommended levels. Diabetes is not curable, but it is manageable. While the skills needed to effectively manage diabetes are well documented, diabetes education is not readily available. The burdens of diabetes mismanagement are disproportionately borne by those with little or no insurance coverage, lower literacy, poor or no English skills, lower educational and income levels, and poor access to transportation. The annual cost of diabetes in Texas is estimated at \$18.5 billion. An estimated 1.8 million, or 9.7%, of Texans 18 years old or older are diagnosed with diabetes; another 425,000 have diabetes but do not know it. Almost one in four adult Texans aged 65 and older have been diagnosed with diabetes. Texas is projected to have a greater incidence rate and increased costs in the future due to the growing population of people over 65 years of age and Hispanics/ Latinos, who are at a greater risk for the disease.

**Response**

Extension health professionals developed Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes, a low-cost class series covering self-care and nutrition topics delivered in five sessions. The program was pilot tested in 2002 in 12 counties. Class materials include a curriculum consistent with the American Diabetes Association Standards of Care along with PowerPoint® presentations, videos, marketing materials, and an evaluation program. County agents are trained to organize local health professionals to help plan, market, and provide the class series. The program's primary goal is to improve blood glucose management.

**Results**

- 2 coalition members supported implementation of Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes. Coalition members taught classes and assisted the Extension agent with marketing, registration, data collection, food preparation demonstrations, procurement of medical supplies such as glucometers for participants, and finding convenient community locations for classes.
- 24 people with diabetes participated in 2014.
- The average age of participants with diabetes was 58.

## Community Economic Development


- 20 were Hispanic/Latino, and 4 Caucasian.
- 21 (87%) participants rated their feeling able to control their diabetes as excellent to good, reflecting an increase from 10 (42%).
- 16 (67%) participants reported having no previous diabetes classes, indicating a critical need for diabetes education.
- Participants reported their hemoglobin A1C test (an average of blood sugar control over the past 2 to 3 months) before or during classes was an average of 9.1%, and decreased to 7.7% during or after the 5 weeks.
- An important quality indicator being used by national accrediting agencies, such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), is whether participants report having an annual dilated eye exam. At the beginning of Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes, 46% of participants reported having had a dilated exam during the previous 12 months; 19 reported they would have this exam because of these classes; this increased to 79%.
- 24 (100%) rated classes as excellent or very good.

### Success Stories

- “I had not been able to lose 5 lbs. in years!”
- “I am amazed at how many calories and carbohydrates I have been eating all these years.”
- “My hemoglobin A1C was 8% before the classes; recently my new number is 7.1.”
- “I have a better understanding of how to take care of myself. I am proud of my lifestyle changes.”
- “I take longer to grocery shop, but I feel better reading labels and understanding carbohydrates.”

### Economic Impact to Jim Wells County

The potential lifetime health-care cost savings for their remaining years of life, resulting from improved management of diabetes by these participants, is an estimated to be \$1.6 million.

VALUE	
Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes	
	<p>This diabetes education program teaches participants about lifestyle changes and disease self-management, enabling them to improve their quality of life and lower their health care costs close to the non-diabetes level. These reduced health care costs are key to the program's public value.</p>

## Community Economic Development

### Jim Wells County *Better Living for Texans*

#### Relevance

In Jim Wells County, an estimated **9,365 individuals** receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically known as food stamps. Studies have shown individuals who live in poverty (including SNAP recipients) have dietary intakes that are not in agreement with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPlate). This audience, like many, may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Having enough food to eat is also a challenge; an estimated 1 in 6 households in Texas experience food insecurity. However, In Texas, two-thirds of the adult population is either overweight or obese and 15 percent of children are obese. Obesity increases the risk for diabetes, hypertension and poor overall quality of life. Risk factors for obesity include poor diet quality, sedentary behavior and a lack of energy balance among other factors. For example, in Texas only 13 percent of adults meet the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Research supports eating breakfast, planning snacks and consuming the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables to cover half of a dinner plate are associated with improved diet quality and healthier weight.

#### Response

The BLT Program is a cooperative endeavor among Texas A&M 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.

During 2014, Jim Wells County provided 3 educational series to the public.

- *BLT Back to Basics* - This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. All Thirty-three of the 33 participants completed the 30-day follow-up survey which allows us to assess the extent that targeted behaviors were adopted. Participants were primarily female (70%) and Hispanic (88%).
- *Choose MyPlate* – This 5 lesson series addressed positive food choice consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. There were 28 pre/post survey sets received from Jim Wells County. The typical participant was female (75%), described herself as Hispanic or Latino (93%) and was 59 years of age.
- *Three Easy Bites* - The curriculum promoted diet related best practice behaviors related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. There was 100 pre/post/follow-up survey sets received from Jim Wells County. The typical Three Easy Bites participant was female (85%), described herself as Hispanic or Latino (95%) and was 40 years of age.

#### Results

*BLT Back to Basics*, post results:

- 30 (91%) of the 33 participants reported that they felt they would be able to spend less money at the grocery store.
- 13 (39%) of the participants felt they could stretch their food resources to last the entire month “always.”
- The percentage of participants who reported “never” running out of food before the end of the month rose slightly 30% to 39%.
- Average monthly out-of-pocket food expenses reported by participants before BLT \$113.33, after BLT \$104.52.
- 67% of the 33 participants identified BLT as their first exposure to AgriLife Extension. This suggests that the program is reaching new audiences who otherwise might not have the opportunity to benefit from Extension programs. 24 Of the 33 participants rated the BLT program as “excellent.”

*Choose MyPlate* curriculum was effective at improving both participant knowledge and behaviors related to food choice.



## Community Economic Development

Percentage of *Choose MyPlate* participants who reported they agree or strongly agree:  
pre/post data sets (n=28).

Behavior Statements	Pre-survey	Post-survey
	%	%
<b>I switched to lower fat milk</b>	61	100
<b>I eat more than two vegetables every day</b>	89	100
<b>I drink fruit drinks that are 100% juice</b>	71	100
<b>I eat 100% whole wheat or 100% whole grain bread</b>	75	100
<b>I limit my protein foods to ¼ of my dinner plate</b>	56	100

*Three Easy Bites*, county results (n=100) indicate the curriculum was effective at improving participant behavior related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. Curriculum goals were met by participants with the exception of not eating while watching television. Interestingly, self-reported behavior improvement extended thru the follow-up period suggesting participants continued to adopt best practice behaviors. Best practice behaviors with the greatest participant improvement were:

1. Using a shopping list containing fruits and vegetables
2. Eating enough fruits/vegetables to cover half of the dinner plate
3. Including two different food items at breakfast
4. Using a shopping list containing breakfast items

### Future Program Efforts

The Jim Wells County Better Living for Texans program will continue to provide education on Dietary Guidelines, meal planning, stretching food dollars, food safety and mealtime behaviors. Gardening will be a new educational series lesson to implement in the county.

#### VALUE

##### Obesity Prevention and Reduction



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.



## **Jim Wells County Science of Agriculture**

### **Relevance**

As today's youth are further removed from farming and ranching operations, many do not understand the importance of agriculture and how it impacts their lives on a daily basis. Many young people believe that their source for food is the grocery store without thinking further as to where the food is actually produced. This lack of knowledge can create misconceptions about agriculture production but most importantly lessen its importance in our overall economy.

### **Response**

To address the agriculture awareness issue, an agricultural literacy task force was formed of county Extension agents, Farm Bureau Board of Directors, members of the Soil and Water Conservation Board and a representative from the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The task force began working on "Ag Fair" in February and hosted the two-day event in May.

The event targeted 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Jim Wells and Duval counties. 840 students participated in 5 educational stations. The first session was the mobile dairy classroom which was approximately 30-45 minutes in length. Students then rotated to four 20 minutes concurrent sessions. Youth were exposed to various aspects of the agriculture industry including: field crops production; environmental and natural resources; wildlife management and safety; and livestock and poultry production. Resource materials and the Food and Fiber curriculum were provided to teachers two weeks prior to "Ag Fair" for additional learning experiences in agriculture. Other material that was provided to the teachers prior to the program included: program information and objectives, schedule of events, donors and sponsors, speakers, pre and post tests for the students, and teacher evaluations.

Jim Wells County 4-H members were recruited and trained to serve as group leaders. As group leaders, 4-H'ers met their classes as they got off the bus, directed them to their sessions, gave the classes a brief explanation of the 4-H program, and answered any questions the classes may have had. Sixteen 4-H members volunteered a total of 112 hours during this event.

Local agricultural producers and industry representatives were also recruited to assist with the event and conduct the educational presentations. Approximately 20 adult volunteers contributed 280 hours of their time toward the success of this program.



## Community Economic Development

### Results

In 2014, the standard Science of Agriculture pre and post test plus additional multiple choice questions customized to the Jim Wells County Ag Fair sessions were utilized. Customer satisfaction surveys were used with the teachers. 35 teachers were surveyed with 209 students completing pre and post test evaluations. 1 random school from Alice, as well as a random classroom from San Diego, Premont, Ben Bolt, and private schools were selected to take the pre and post test.

#### Teacher Customer Satisfaction Surveys revealed:

- 100% of the teachers were mostly to completely satisfied with the activity.
- 100% of the teachers would recommend "Ag Fair" to others.
- 89% of the teachers were satisfied with the relevance of the examples used at "Ag Fair."
- 48% of the teachers anticipated benefitting economically as a direct result of what they learned from Ag Fair.
- 54% of the teachers plan to take actions or make changes based on the information from Ag Fair.

#### Student evaluations revealed:

- 11% of students increased their knowledge of agriculture as a whole.
- 97% of students surveyed now know that Texas farmers and ranchers work hard to provide a safe, affordable food supply.
- 96% of students surveyed now know that eating meat is an important part of a healthy and balanced diet.
- 82% of students surveyed were going home to tell their parents about the importance of agriculture.
- 93% of students surveyed now know that cotton comes from a plant.
- 92% of students surveyed now know that wool comes from sheep and can be made into clothing like sweaters.
- 91% of students surveyed now know that carrots, high in Vitamin A, helps keep their eyes healthy.

#### Teacher Comments about the event revealed:

- "A valuable experience for any student. Some might live in rural areas but don't experience the information and hands on because a lot of it is not explained in the home first."
- "Excellent program, very useful in connecting classroom learning and everyday life."
- "Everything was fantastic. I am using the resources in my tote for an ELA lesson about milk and students will make ice cream."
- "An activity that a majority of students will only see at an "Ag Fair." (Mobile Dairy Classroom/Digestive System of Cattle)
- "Students were intrigued by the cotton gin and the by-products of the crops, very well presented."
- "The environment and natural resources session was an excellent presentation because the students can relate it to their science lesson."
- "Students enjoyed learning about the shapes of the wildlife skulls. This presentation was one of my favorites."
- "The livestock was a great presentation because I learned how they shear the lambs. It was great help because I could extend my lesson in class."
- "The students were excited to put what they learned in class to practical use. And to be able to answer the questions correctly."

### Interpretation:

Ag Fair has provided a great opportunity to showcase Extension work at its best. Collaborating and involving various individuals, organizations, and entities in planning and implementing the program. "Ag Fair" highlights have been shared by Texas Farm Bureau Directors and Field Representatives. Alice 24-7 and Alice Echo News Journal (local media outlets) have produced cover stories of the event. I produced a slide show

## Community Economic Development

and presentation to highlight “Ag Fair” for the Annual Jim Wells County Farm Bureau membership (approximately 250).

### Future Plans

Jim Wells County “Ag Fair” is scheduled for May 7-8, 2014.





## Community Economic Development

### *Jim Wells County*

#### *One Day 4-H*

#### **Relevance**

One Day 4-H is a grass roots community service effort for 4-H youth to identify, plan, and implement a community service project that serves the needs of their particular community and/or county. Modeled after the Texas A&M University's Big Event, One Day 4-H teaches 4-H members the importance of giving back to their communities based on issues they see are affecting the lifestyles of the citizens. Throughout this process, youth have the opportunity to develop a partnership with adult volunteers as they plan and implement their service project. One Day 4-H helps develop the core life skills of communication, responsible citizenship, contribution to group effort, teamwork, self-motivation, problem solving, service learning, planning/organizing, and social skills.

#### **Response:**

The specific objectives of One Day 4-H were:

- Provide opportunities for youth to perform community service projects in their individual communities and counties based on their identified needs.
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn about social and community issues and develop ways of resolving those issues.
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members.
- Promote teamwork.
- Give participants opportunities to work in a strong youth-adult partnership.
- Provide leadership opportunities.
- Give 4-H members the opportunity to participate in a new, exciting event that promotes 4-H.

Jim Wells County 4-H Council took leadership of the Jim Wells County 4-H One Day 4-H project. The Council voted on and approved after discussion to complete Sew and "No-Sew" pillows for the dialysis patients in Jim Wells County called "Pillows for Patients," along with a canned food drive for the Alice Food Pantry. In discussion, the Council wanted a hands-on community service that the youth and adults could both learn and work together on.

#### **Results:**

A total of 36 youth and 35 volunteers participated in the Jim Wells County 4-H One Day event. A total of 10 hours were invested in planning the event. A total of 72 sew and "no-sew" pillows were constructed and stuffed at the event. 7 sewing machines were setup for 4-H'ers to use and learn to sew. Those that did not want to sew were given instructions and a pattern on cutting and tying knots in the fabric. The pillows were donated to the DaVita Dialysis Center in Alice where there are 69 clients. This event really showed how adults and youth can work together but not only working together but they had an amazing time bonding and building friendships with other youth.



## Community Economic Development

A total of 150 pounds of canned goods was also collected. The 150 pounds of canned goods was donated to the Alice Food Pantry.

A retrospective post-test was used to measure the participant's level of understanding and behavior changes.

- 35% of youth have a better knowledge of issues affecting their community/county.
- 95% of youth had a positive feeling about the community service project they helped with.
- 95% of youth feel more comfortable working in a team.
- 81% of youth have learned something about themselves as a result of participating in One Day 4-H
- 85% of youth feel they will be more comfortable with serving in leadership roles because they participated in One Day 4-H.
- 100% of youth feel what they learned provides them the ability to make better leadership decisions.
- 100% of youth feel they will be more of an influence on their community/county because of the One Day 4-H project.

### Comments from participants included:


- "Giving back to the community make me feel good."
- "I love to help and do as much as I can."
- "It does because it helps you be independent and still be able to help and communicate with others."
- "Sets examples for others."
- "I had fun."
- "I learning to help people in need."
- "I can hold an event for other organizations."
- "I used these skills to help others in need."
- "I was taught how to use a sewing machine."
- "I like helping younger kids."

### Interpretation:

One Day 4-H Projects is a great opportunity to showcase what youth and adult working together can accomplish. The event was showcased in the local newspaper, Alice 24/7, as well as online on the county Facebook page. The event was also discussed during the Jim Wells County Annual Program Council Dinner and Commissioner's Court Breakfast.

### Future Plans:

Jim Wells County 4-H will continue to plan One Day 4-H events during National 4-H Week.

VALUE	
Character and Leadership Development	
	<p>Texas A&amp;M 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.</p>

# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

## Jim Wells County

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