



Extension Education in Zavala County

Making a Difference

2013

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 in Zavala county and its people.

Zavala County – Summary of 2013 Educational Contacts

*Office Contact From Office visits-----	810
*Radio Programs -----	25
*Printed News Media Releases-----	140
*Special News Series Releases(Drought)-----	10
*Pesticide Applicators Educational Programs-----	48
*Range and Livestock Educational Programs-----	35
*Worker Protection Standards Training(WPS)-----	42
*Agricultural Literacy(Agriculture Ag. Day)education programs for youth-----	360
*Printed News Media Outlets-----	4
*Adjunct Faculty Agreements(School Districts)-----	3
*4-H and Youth Development-----	1,640
*Telephone Calls Office and Cellular Communication-----	1,245
*Agriculture and Natural Resources Related Contacts -----	991
*Newsletters/mail/e-mail and cellular text-----	570
*Site Visits in county-----	460
*Site Visits out of county regional educational efforts-----	530
*Contacts with other agencies and collaborators-----	265
*Volunteers-----	140
*Contacts made by trained volunteers-----	920
*International Contacts Agriculture/Natural Resources-----	20
*School District teachers and other school district educators-----	97
*Elected officials and other stakeholders in the county-----	96
*Food Safety Training Educational Contacts-----	210

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The 2013 Zavala County Spinach and Vegetable Crops Improvement program provided clientele with relevant educational programs, research based data and introduced new and innovative practices and technologies to insure production of these commodities now and in the future, to meet the needs of consumers and processors alike. Increase consumer demand for both fresh market and processing spinach drove programming efforts during 2013, which is vital to producers if they are to continue using research based data and information on new spinach disease controlling products, new and improved production and management practices and enhanced spinach variety development areas.

Extension's response to these needs were addressed by many conducting several educational events, activities and programs were conducted during the program year. The following is only a small fraction of highlighted efforts that included:

- *January-Planning meeting for the 2013 spinach and vegetable crops improvement programs.
- *January 24, 2013- A field tour was conducted at the Del Monte Research Farm in Crystal City and sponsored by the Wintergarden Spinach Producers Board, Del Monte Corporation and the Zavala County Leadership Advisory Board to provide a spinach field and provided tour participants with information of spinach varieties being evaluated for disease resistance, and potential for further development for consideration as a commercial viable spinach varieties. Both fresh market and processing spinach cultivars will be evaluated.
- *February-Gather research data from current results demonstrations
- *Submit Call to seed companies for participation in the watermelon variety trials to evaluative watermelon cultivars
- *March-Publish data from 2012-13 spinach fungicide evaluation trials for white rust disease control efforts in spinach.
- *April-Establish watermelon variety trials
- *June-Submit Food Safety Program Proposal to the Winter Garden Spinach Producers Board. The agent received funding for these efforts.
- *July- Harvest Watermelon Variety Trials and gather data on yields, quality and taste testing
- *August-Planning Food Safety Educations Programs for field workers, packing shed workers and producers.
- *September-Meeting to establish research demonstrations and programs for winter crops.

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Crop and Forage Production Education



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs targeted to producers of crops and forages are increasing profitability and productivity of farmers, thereby helping to build and sustain rural economies and support jobs.

*October-Establish results demonstrations on spinach fields to evaluate listeria, e-coli-, and salmonella risk in field soils.

*October- Food Safety Training for Packing Shed Workers. The Extension agent conducted a Food safety training using a Spanish language Food Safety curricula to train packing shed and harvest crew workers about personal hygiene as it relates to food safety and the prevention of contamination of fresh spinach and other vegetables. This onsite training provided producers the necessary documentation to use as part of the Good Agricultural Practices(GAP's) program to comply with USDA and private audits certifying producers as GAP's certified.

*November-Established fungicide trials to evaluate the efficacy of various fungicides on spinach diseases.

*Assisted Spinach and vegetable producers in the development of Food Safety Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manuals for their operation in preparation of 3rd party audits.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

December 27, 2013 Vegetable Crop pesticide updates and CEU training event for private pesticide applicators training

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Food Safety Education



Both those who work in food-service establishments and those who simply cook in their own kitchens benefit from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's food-safety education programs. The resulting improvement in safe food handling benefits consumers by helping prevent food-borne illnesses and the public health care costs they cause.

As a result of these efforts consumer demands for abundant, fresh, wholesome, high quality, affordable and safe vegetables were produced in Zavala County. Without up-to-date, relevant and research based information many producers have a risk of ceasing to exist and if enough raw product cannot be produced in the county vegetable processing and packing facilities along with hundreds of jobs would be lost in the county would cause a severe economic setback for agricultural producers, field workers and plant employees. Many of these efforts will be continued in 2014.

Emerging issues in Zavala county related to agriculture and natural resources motivated the Zavala County crops and the Animal and Wildlife Industries program area committees to identify Extension educational needs for the 2013 program year. The committees prioritized educational program needs in the area of continuing education units(CEU's) for producers who currently hold private applicator pesticide licenses, private applicator license training and testing, results demonstrations on fenceline/brush management, crop variety trials, crop field days, publications on native range and pasture management and related issues. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County developed the following activities to address these relevant General Agriculture and Natural Resources Issues in the County.

*January 18, 2013 35 producers and spinach industry representatives attended a Field Day at the Del Monte Research Farm-Crystal City

*Weekly-The Agent utilized weekly and monthly publications provided by the Texas Beef Council, Extension Beef specialist and The Texas Animal Health Commission for inclusion in the agents weekly news and information column to area news media on subject matter as it related to beef and livestock producers in Zavala County. 44 articles/information columns published from 1-1-13-11-30-13 Circulation 2,240 and 40 newsletters

*March 17, 2013 Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Testing for agricultural producers in Zavala and surrounding counties was held. 18 in attendance

*July 8, 2013 watermelon variety field day. 17 in attendance

*August 5, 2013-Publish initial data from Spike 80DF fenceline applications and its effects on multiple brush species (On going through 2012)

*September 4, 2013 Drought Insurance Workshop. 12 in attendance

*October 15, 2013-Wildlife population status as a result of current drought. TP&WD presentation to committee members 21 in attendance.

*December 27 2013 Zavala County crops, livestock and wildlife industries committee members meet to review and complete annual crop increment report data and information for the past year and projections for the next production year.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Feedback from producers indicated that they were very satisfied by the programming efforts in the areas of need as they related to the Agricultural and Natural Resources industries of Zavala County. 98 percent of producers randomly interviewed indicated timely drought information; private pesticide applicator continuing education unit opportunities and published results of demonstrations held in the county were most useful in their day to day management practices as well as long range planning in their operation. Many of these activities, programs and events will be replicated during the 2014 program year.

Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service wished to acknowledge the Zavala County Crops Committee members, The Winter Garden Spinach Producers Board, Del Monte Corporation, Tiro Tres Farms, Crawford Farms and Espinica Texas for working collaboratively and jointly with spinach producers and other vegetable producers in the county in addressing difficult production issues facing vegetable crops producers in the County.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Zavala County does not have a Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension Agent. Despite the lack of personnel in this area the following activities were utilized in 2013 to promote and expand both adult and youth participation in Family and Consumer Science areas.

The Zavala County Extension agent assisted county volunteers in the implementation of a cooking, clothing and food contest at the Zavala County Junior Fair in January 2013. There were 15 food and clothing entries at the 2013 Zavala County Junior Fair. The agent provided 4-H food and clothing information to the participants in an effort to encourage them to participate at the district 4-H level.

August 2013-The Zavala County Extension Agent utilized Walk Across Texas(WAT) marketing materials and provided them to schools in the county to promote this program in schools. As a result the La Pryor Independent school district will utilize a modified version of this program during the spring of 2014. The La Pryor Independent School District Elementary Physical Education Department is acknowledged for implementing the Walk Across Texas(WAT) program on their campus.

September 2013-The Extension agent met with 4-H club managers, project leaders to discuss family and consumer sciences related contest in 4-H such as food show, food challenge, consumer decision making, fashion show and textiles and clothing. As a result the agent had two 4-H volunteers who served as judges at the district 12 4-H food show in December of 2013. However due to weather travel conditions these volunteers were unable to attend but plan to participate in the future. These efforts will continue in 2014 in an effort to increase the number of participants and programs in the family and consumer sciences areas in Zavala County.

The Zavala County Extension agent utilized the neighboring FCS agent in Dimmit County to assist with parenting, nutrition and health programs as requested in Zavala County from schools and social service agencies. There were over 140 contacts made by the neighboring FCS agent in Zavala County.

The agent also provides an updated link to the District and State FCS website on the Zavala County Extension Service Web page

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Financial Literacy



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service financial literacy programs provide adults and youth with basic financial education and resources to help them set and reach financial goals and plan for the future. When Texans make better financial decisions and implement recommended financial management practices, they increase their ability to achieve financial security.

4-H and Youth Development

This is the 8th year of existence of the Zavala County education fund account establishment by 4-H youth who sale animal projects in the Zavala County Junior Fair. Each year Zavala County 4-H youth involved with animal projects gain financial resources from the participation and sale of animal projects in the annual Zavala County Junior Livestock Show in January. The Zavala County Livestock Show board, 4-H Adult Leaders and 4-H and Youth Development Committee members are concerned that many participants in this program are not investing some of these earnings for future educational purposes through the establishment of checking or savings accounts by 4-H youth in local financial institutions. In January of 2013, on average each 4-H member received \$1,450.00 for animals sold. If an exhibitor participates with animal projects for the entire 4-H career this total could potentially generate on average over \$15,000.00 per 4-H youth. This is a substantial amount that

could be managed by the 4-H youngster, learn financial responsibility and invest for future educational needs. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County developed the following activities to address fund account establishment by 4-H youth.

- *January 10, 11 and 12th 2013 4-H members participated with 4-H Animal Projects which sold at the Zavala County livestock show.
- *February 1, 2012-Survey All 4-H animal project sale participants to determine if they do or do not have a savings or checking account in their name.
- *March 5, 2013 Zavala County Bank workshop to 4-H parents and members about requirements and procedures to establish a savings or checking accounts for 4-H Youth
- *April 19, 2013 National Teach The Children to Save Day Training event for all county 4-H parents and youth.
- *April 26, 2013 Distribution of Checks to 4-H members who sold animal projects in the 2013 Zavala County Junior Livestock Show in January.
- *May 5, 2013 Zavala County Bank Survey to obtain number of 4-H Youth Who have established a savings or checking account at this financial Institution.
- *May 23, 2013 Compile data from surveys and present to 4-H and Youth Development Committee.
- *June 10, 2013 Presentation to Zavala County Commissioners Court about the Education Fund Account Establishment by 4-H Youth program results and summary.
- *September 2, 2013 County Newsletter and Mass Media efforts promoting the education Fund Establishment program to new 4-H members and families for the coming program year.
- *October 3, 2013 Workshop and planning meeting for family financial planning
- *November 5, 2013 College Night-Information to parents and 4-H members of current tuition and fees and average semester cost at public and private institutions of higher learning.

As a result of this program 91 percent of all 4-H animal project participants have established a checking or savings account in a financial institution in their name. Over the past 5 years of this program over \$290,000.00(see table dollars are currently in a savings or checking account representing 96 4-H Youth.

The 4-H and Youth Development Committee will continue to recruit new members coming into the 4-H program that will participate with an animal project and who has indicated that they do not have a checking or savings Account. The goal of this plan is to have at least 90% of new 4-H members who select, show and sale a 4-H animal project in the Zavala County Junior Fair to establish a Higher Education Fund Account, utilizing the funds received from this annual event. Donors and supporters of the Zavala County Junior Livestock Show are more reluctant to

4-H and Youth Development

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Character and Leadership Development



Texas A&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.

contribute funds, buy animal projects and support this program if they are aware that strong efforts are being made to insure that their contributions are utilized wisely by the participating 4-H members.

The Zavala County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service wishes to knowledge Zavala County Bank, Capital Bank of Texas, The Zavala Agricultural Exposition, Inc., 4-H animal project buyers, parents and volunteers who provided assistance and support for these educational efforts. These groups have indicated continued support of these efforts in the 2014 program year.

4-H Agriculture/Natural Resources(ANR) Projects are critically important to the youth of Zavala County as they are across Texas. Livestock projects, Science of Ag Programs, soil, grass, and entomology judging and ID are all important programs. Moreover, Shooting Sports is one of the top 10 4-H Projects offered in the

Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program.

In 2000 there were over 75,000 county livestock show entries for cattle, swine, meat goats and sheep. One half of those entries were 4-H. There have been six major benefits identified as a result of exhibiting livestock: 1. social relations; 2)character; 3) family; 4)competition; 5)learning new cultures and environments; and 6)helping finance the youth's higher education. Parents of youth suggest that life skills are enhanced by raising a 4-H livestock project. The longer youth are engaged in the project they are more likely to develop life skills. While some Zavala County 4-H members participate and enter livestock projects in Major shows the majority of Zavala County 4-H youth participate at the county level. Zavala county is identified as one of the poorest in the state the financial gains from showing and selling a 4-H livestock project in Zavala County is tremendous financial boost for the exhibitor and his or her family.

During the 2013 program year the Zavala County ANR and youth Livestock program provided opportunities for youth to be involved in 4-H ANR and Livestock related projects. As a result of this involvement the participants developed character, responsibility, social interaction and development, basic animal health, nutrition, record keeping skills, management and provide the member and the family unit an opportunity to gain financial resources which can be used to finance a youngsters higher education needs.

January 2013-Over 110 4-H youth participated with livestock projects in the Zavala County Junior Livestock Show
February 2012-9 4-H youth participated in the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo with beef, swine and meat goat projects.

February 2013-12 Zavala County 4-H youth participated in the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo as exhibitors and or participants in the annual calf scramble event. This event provided youth with the experience of participating in a Statewide event with other youth from across the state.

June-2013-11 4-H youth participated in the State 4-H and FFA Steer Validation Program

August 2013-The Zavala County 4-H Program Sponsored a lamb and goat selection clinic and sale. The event provided youth in Zavala and surrounding counties the opportunity to learn about lamb and goat selection, feeding, health and management of lamb and goat projects. Following the event participants had the opportunity to buy goat and lamb projects from breeders in the area.

4-H and Youth Development

October-2013 90 4-H youth and families participate in the State 4-H and FFA Lamb and Goat validation program and participate in lamb and goat clinics and learn about basic lamb and goat feeding and management, showmanship skills and other lamb and goat project skills.

November 2013- 21 4-H youth participate in the Zavala county and state swine validation program. Swine management clinic opportunities were also available to all swine exhibitors.

December 2013 – The annual Zavala County 4-H animal project weigh day and showmanship clinic was held. All exhibitors had the opportunity to bring their animal projects and have them weighted and evaluated for the upcoming show. Additionally a showmanship clinic was held to provide exhibitors the opportunity to practice showmanship skills in preparation for the stockshow in January.



Zavala County 4-H Youth Involvement

Chartered Community Clubs 3
Members Enrolled in 4-H Clubs 95
Youth Reached through Community-based Programs 360
Youth Reached through School-Based Enrichment Curriculum 320

4-H Officer Training Held October 2013

Most Popular Projects in the county

4-H Clover kids rabbit program-42
4-H Goat Projects-40
4-H Swine Project-24
4-H Steer projects-11
4-H Lamb Projects 18
4-H Foods and clothing-14

County 4-H Volunteer Support

Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs -15
Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders -32
Hours Contributed by Volunteers in Support of Clubs-665

Livestock Show Sales Proceeds (includes both 4-H and FFA) \$98,700.00

4-H Recognition and Achievement Events-124 participants

Community Economic Development

During the beginning of the 2013 program year the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Zavala in cooperation with Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program (CEP) provided educational programs in community resources and economic development to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Zavala County. Community Development programming targets the development of individual abilities and community support for creating and growing businesses, jobs, wealth and income, youth financial development and maximizing agricultural income to individual families.

During the beginning of 2013 the focus was made on small disadvantaged producers in the Zavala County that could benefit from small business development efforts. Some of these efforts included:

January 2013-Zavala County Junior Livestock Show-This event generated over \$98,000.00 to the local economy from the purchase of livestock projects offered for sale by members of the Zavala County 4-H Clubs. These funds were awarded to individual exhibitors thus providing financial assistance to the families of 4-H youth.

March 2012 The CED agent in collaboration with the ANR Extension agent began a recruitment effort for individuals to serve on the Community and Economic Development community committee. This committee provided input for the selection of educational programs to developed and delivered to the residents of Zavala County.

July 2013-The Zavala County Extension Agent working closely with the Rio Grande Basin Initiative obtained a \$24,000 grant to install a permanent drip irrigation system in Zavala County as a demonstration and educational site to provide producers with educational programs on the latest water conservation technologies and irrigation water conservation methods which can be used for crop production in the county

August-The Extension agent working with Zavala County Volunteers held a lamb and goat project selection clinic and sale for local and area lamb and goat exhibitors. This event brought individuals and families from Zavala and neighboring counties the to purchase lamb and goat project to raise, feed and manage to show and sale in during the 2014 show season.

NOTE: In May the Zavala County Extension agent-CED left his post, however the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service continued CRED efforts in Zavala County. The CEA-ANR agent provided Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's CRED Catalog to area chambers of commerce directors and other community groups that may partner or co-sponsor CRED programs in Zavala County and the region. The CED agents position is still open and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University plans to fill this vacancy in Zavala County and continue CRED efforts to Zavala County Residents.

Extension Education in 2013 County

Personnel



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