



## Extension Education in Starr 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:

## **STARR County – Summary of 2012 Educational Contacts**

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Program Area Committees – 5  
Organized 4-H Clubs – 6  
4-H Club Members 150  
Community Based Outreach – 1,152  
4-H Curriculum Enrichment – 1,743  
4-H Total Volunteers – 115  
Starr County Fair Board - 24

## Agriculture and Natural Resources



- Agriculture Distance Learning Program
  - Agriculture Profitability Plan
  - Cattle and Forage Management
  - Sustainable Agriculture Production
- Kids & Kows & More – Literacy Program

# Making a Difference

## Agriculture Distance Learning Program Starr County 2012

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

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

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

1. Agents conducted five (5) educational programs for Starr County ranchers that focused on Range and wildlife management. These programs were held as part of the Wildlife for Lunch and A&M Range Dept. Distance Learning workshops that were sponsored by the Texas A&M Department of Rangeland Ecology and the Texas Wildlife Association. All five educational workshops were offered online through the Texas Forestry Portal (something similar to Centra). These workshops were projected on to a screen with the sound amplified through a speaker system. The educational activities were interactive as participants could ask questions through a chat room that was available to the person making the presentation.
2. The five workshops were selected by the AGNR committee. The committee met earlier in 2012 to select the workshops from a list and then planned for the location and program evaluation strategy.
3. Agents compiled summary of the agriculture distance program based on the results of the evaluations that were collected from each of the participants that attended the educational programs.
4. Developed interpretation marketing piece will be shared with members of the county commissioner's court, task force members and general public .

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

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

- Starr County IT Department
- R.Y. Livestock Sales, Inc.
- Starr County Farm Bureau
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition

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

- 90% of participants gained knowledge of range & wildlife management.
- 96% of participants felt comfortable with the way this program was presented using long distance technology.
- 94% of the participants felt that their questions, or of any participants, could be satisfactorily answered using this type of program delivery.
- 95% of the participants indicated that they would attend another distance education program.

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

For More Information Contact:  
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V A L U E	
Wildlife Management	
	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs about fish and wildlife teach participants how to effectively manage these valuable resources. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching contribute approximately \$8 billion to the state's economy annually, supporting 139,000 jobs in Texas and enhancing the quality of life of all residents.

# Making a Difference

## 2012 Agriculture Profitability Plan Starr County

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

**Introduction.** Despite the wide spread economic growth in the last decade, Starr County continues to lead with agriculture production. It is estimated that over 50,000 acres are under production agriculture worth a little over 45 million dollars. The beef cattle industry in Starr County is worth 30 million dollars followed behind by wildlife with about 10 million dollars

Local producers need to keep up to date on new management practices that will increase production and total farm/ranch profits. Additionally these individuals need basic educational information on environmental stewardship and natural resource management.


**Program.** The following educational activities were organized, with the input and assistance of the Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee.

1. Educational programs and workshops that offered 5 continuing education units toward a private applicator license.
2. Bull Gain test and heifer development program that offered a feed back program on the performance of animals consigned to the feedlot.
3. Two private applicator license trainings.
4. An Estate Planning Program.
5. A Prickly Pear Control Demonstration.
6. A Ranchers Field Day.
7. Alternative Crops – Guar Production.

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

- Starr County Farm Bureau
- Texas Mexcio Border Coalition
- USDA-FSA
- USDA-NRCS

**Summary.** Starr County Agriculture producers gained a better perspective about some of the issues affecting their operations. In addition to offering some improved management strategies to making their operations more profitable, they also learned about planning for their estate and gained information about alternative cropping systems. This year was a very critical year with the drought conditions that were experienced. Over 80% of the ranchers liquidated at least half of their livestock herds and many producers experience 90% of crop failures.

V A L U E	
Livestock Production	
	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs targeted to large- and small-scale livestock producers help generate safer food and fiber products with maximum efficiency. The result is quality, consistent, affordable products and industries that support the state's rural economies.



# Making a Difference

## **Starr County Cattle & Forage Management 2012**

**Developed By; Rolando Zamora, Extension Agent-CEP AgNR  
Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR**

**Introduction-** Limited resource producers lack the necessary issues to compete with the current agriculture industries. Agriculture producers have suffered from low market prices, seasonable droughts, and depleting government assistance programs. This has left many local farmers/ranchers in poor financial situations. Limited resource producers need direction to make their operations more productive.

**Relevance-** The Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee introduced producer awareness in beef & forage practices by providing educational programs in areas of Breeding Cattle Genetics, Health Herd, Heifer Pen Show, Beef Cattle Nutritional Practices, Drought Management, Forage Quality, and providing support to the County Animals Issue Committee.

**Response-** Through some good planning and organizing efforts, I worked closely with volunteers of the **Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee** and other agriculture business groups to provide the best educational programs and research based information that would allow limited resource producers to have a solid beef development program within their livestock operation.

- The **RGV Commercial Heifer Pen Show** continues to provide cattle producers with an informative, highly visible cattle show which recognized the connection between the commercial cattle producer and the purebred producer. In 2012 the premium increased towards the top winning pens. We had an increase of about 70% off new exhibitors. We see this program growing for in 2013.
- The **Bull Gains Test & Heifer Development Program** provides cattle producers with an event to promote consumers satisfaction and quality assurance through the use of technology, genetics, and good production practices to sell to local ranchers that are in need of good genetics. Steers were fed out for the second year to evaluate carcass which will give producers a different marketing strategy to increase profitability. Consigners were pleased with results from previous year and will continue to support the program.
- The **Beef Cattle Special Sale** provides local beef cattle consigners an opportunity to sell their livestock with pedigree to local buyers in which information on health management practices are provided. This is the second year local sales barn owner and participating ranchers met and due to the drought conditions decided to postpone the event.



- **Estate Program Planning Workshop, Risk Management Program, Drought Management Program, and Youth Livestock Clinics** provided over one hundred producers with highly educational practices to adopt in their operations.

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

- Starr County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition
- Starr County Farm Bureau
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Starr County Fair Association
- Local Ranches
- R.Y Livestock Sales
- Local Feed Stores

**Summary-** With the guidance of the Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee we have increased participation of clientele at our educational programs and have had producers participate in activities to help promote their agriculture business to meet the diverse needs of the limited resource producers. We will continue to provide the necessary educational programs that limited resource producers will need to sustain best management practices for their operation. The drought for the second year has made it very difficult for ranchers to continue to financially support and hold onto their livestock. With feed prices at a high, cattle need to be sold. We are in need for some good rain fall in the entire state of Texas.



How long will South Texas rangelands continuing to thrive through a hard drought? Many ranchers have had to sell all their livestock wondering if they will be able to get back into the business.

# Making a Difference

## **Starr County Sustainable Agriculture Production 2012**

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

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

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

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

1. We organized a task force to discuss educational programming efforts and individuals involved to address issues.
2. We identify potential USDA programs to add value to their farming and ranching operations and kept update information on government assistance programs to enhance conservation practices to their land.
3. Agents conducted over ten (10) educational programs for Starr County limited resource farmers and ranchers that focused on sustainable agriculture production. Programs ranged from programming planning area committee meetings, (4) CEU pesticide safety trainings, (2) private applicators license trainings, range and pasture management program " Mesquite Ecology", livestock production practices "Starr Co. Ranchers Field Day", Estate Planning Program, herbicide trial on Bermuda grass, and other.
4. The following educational activities were organized, with the input and assistance of the Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee and Leadership Advisory Board, to achieve the program objectives.

5. Agents evaluated data that was gathered from participants, task force members and other stake holders which will be used to evaluate program.

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

**Evaluation Method.** A retrospective test evaluation form was administered to fifteen (15) participants. The survey was used to determine the level of clientele knowledge change acquired by the educational programming and the attitude change.

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

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

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

- 94 % of participants gained an understanding of crop, pasture and rainfall insurance programs to assist them in financially.
- 95 % of participants identified ways to improve their pastures by learning brush control practices and using them more cost efficiently.
- 94 % of participants gained knowledge on livestock management practices to improve their beef cattle operations.
- 90 % of participants gained a better understanding of available USDA government assistance programs.
- 95 % of participants indicated that the pesticide trainings keep them informed of rules and regulations and increased their knowledge of following proper safety practices on the farm and ranch.

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

# Making a Difference

## **Starr County Kids & Kows & More Agriculture Literacy Program 2012**

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

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

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

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

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

4. Agent hosted the eighth annual two day field day event called “Kids & Kows & More Starr County”. Agents worked on gathering sponsors, volunteers, group leaders and speakers and other individuals that made this event possible.

5. Agents compiled summary of agriculture literacy program based on the results of the teacher evaluations that were collected from each of the participating teachers.

6. Agents shared results of the agriculture literacy program with residents of the county through the local newspaper where they featured a story about the event. Results were also shared with the Youth Agriculture Literacy Task Force and 4H Youth board.

**Evaluation Method.** A one page retrospective teacher evaluation was administered to the participating teachers. This evaluation was developed with input from several school counselors. The strategy was used to determine the level of knowledge youth acquired through this educational event. A total of 50 teacher evaluations were used to determine the effectiveness of this program.

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

**Results.** A total of 955 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from 14 Starr County Elementary schools and three school districts participated in this event. The scale of responses for these statements was defined as 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent. Based on this evaluation, 94 % of all respondents strongly agreed that the students acquired an increased knowledge and appreciation for agriculture. 90% increased their knowledge of where their food comes from. 94% of all respondents (teachers) agreed that they too gained knowledge about the different commodities that were represented at this educational program. Furthermore, 88% agreed to use the provided curriculum and incorporate it in their school educational activities.

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

## Family and Consumer Sciences



- Transforming Texas (TT)Healthy Communities
  - Friend to Friend – Pink Party
- Si Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes
  - Child Care Provider Conference
  - Better Living for Texans

# Making a Difference

## Transforming Texas (TT) Healthy People in Healthy Communities, Starr County, 2012 Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent – FCS

**Relevance:** Starr County is an underserved county with many health issues. These issues and barriers affect our residents which makes them a very vulnerable population.

Starr County with a population of some 61,000 plus residents has some 38% of their residents living below the poverty level. The per capita median income per household is \$24,441 compared to that of the state of Texas which is \$49,646. We often have 2 – 3 persons contributing or making up this household income.

The ethnic make up of Starr County is 95.6% of Hispanic origin and some 4.8% are white not Hispanic. Over 96% report that they speak another language other than English at home. Many residents still are monolingual speaking only Spanish. Only 47%, less than half of its residents are high school graduates and only 9.8% of these have obtained a bachelor's degree.

These factors coupled with a large flow of immigrants coming into the county and an aging population makes up a very vulnerable population.

**Response:** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service received a 5 year contract from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to implement the Transforming Texas (TT): Healthy People in Healthy Communities project. The project was designed to improve the health and quality of life for the people of Starr County by creating healthy and safe communities, improving access to and integration of community prevention services, and eliminating health disparities.

The project addressed four (4) targeted areas of community health:

1. Reduce the use of tobacco and protecting individuals from second-hand smoke;
2. Improve dietary behaviors of individuals and families by increasing accessibility, availability, and affordability of fruits and vegetables;
3. Increase participation in targeted programs to help individuals control diabetes and prevent heart disease and stroke;
4. Increase physical activity and improve opportunities for individuals and families to be physically active by increasing walking trails on school grounds

The project leveraged existing programs such as Better Living for Texas, Walk Across Texas, and Si Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes to accomplish the identified goals.

To further support the project Starr County formed a coalition of partners which worked together to address specific tasks associated with each of the target areas. Working on Wellness (WOW) in Starr County is the name members selected for their county wide coalition. WOW developed by-laws and is establishing themselves as a non-profit 501c3 for sustainability of current and future efforts to support health and wellness in Starr County.

A sampling of major activities conducted in year one include:

- ✓ Establishing gardens in 7 schools and 2 community
- ✓ Supporting the development of 2 walking trails; 1 school and 1 community

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- ✓ Conducting environment scans to help establish mobile farmer's market routes in the county, and where additional gardens and walking trails can be established.
- ✓ Identify community partners to provide health screenings at educational awareness events.

## Results

Environmental Change: Efforts in year one focused on establishing the foundation of gardens and trails within the county.

9 gardens          2 trails

Along with the development of gardens in an effort to help families make healthy food choices the WOW coalition has identified a partner for the mobile farmers market which is now in operation. Plans are underway to support various sites with mileage markers to serve as another place for community walking.

### Policy:


- ✓ The initiation of smoke free ordinances are in process in the city of Roma and South Texas College. Signage at both sites will be purchased and a Smoke Free billboard on Hwy 83 will be posted for an entire year.
- ✓ Schools and community facilities are updating the operational how to increase the use of parks and trails. Restrooms, water fountains, seating shaded areas and play ground equipment is being developed and installed.

### System Change:

Starr County is an underserved border county with many health issues. Approaches being utilized by the WOW coalition involves enhancing the overall food system and physical activity environment. Educational efforts will begin at an early age (daycare) to support the prevention of conditions like obesity thru the life cycle. Currently, the local county Extension agent is educating childcare providers with support from a Texas Department of Agriculture CACFP grant to educate providers on service healthy meal choices and engaging parents and teachers to model active play and physical activity on a regular basis. As children leave daycare, they will enter a school system that continues the support of healthy food choices. Schools, from elementary to high school, will engage youth in learning about nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables and provide them opportunities to grow produce in the school gardens and greenhouses. Establishing the demand for fresh produce will support the mobile farmers market and continued growth of community gardens in the underserved areas of the county.

The support from another Texas A&M AgriLife Extension grant, funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), efforts are underway to impact the access of uninsured/underinsured women to obtain breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic follow-up as needed. Incorporating a health systems change that supports services for the very high rate of uninsured in Starr County, coupled with the very low rate of physicians to residents will be one of the largest challenges for the coalition.

Another Extension grant thru the Texas Diabetes Council will be supporting the implementation of 6 week Diabetes management program entitled "Si Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes" to underserved/uninsured in Starr Co.

V A L U E	
Obesity Prevention and Reduction	
	<p>The Texas A&amp;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>



Gardens are increasing accessibility and affordability of fruits and vegetables.



Reaching out to food deserts in the county utilizing mobile farmer's market



Schools and communities support the establishment of gardens providing opportunities to grow produce and establish greenhouses.



Health Fair Screenings educating the community and raising awareness of chronic diseases



Playscape



Fitness

Increase physical activity and improve opportunities for residents to be physically active by increasing walking trails with restrooms, water fountains, seating shaded areas and playground equipment.



Campaigns working at reducing the use of tobacco and protecting individuals from second hand smoke includes billboards, ordinances, exhibits and distribution of educational pamphlets.



Children paving the way for the continued growth of gardens in the underserved areas of the county



Teaching families to make healthy food choices an important and essential part of the project



# Making a Difference

## Friend to Friend in Starr County, 2012 Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent - FCS

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 46 Texas counties in 2012.
- 71 women attended the *Friend to Friend* events on 5/3/12 at the Multi-Purpose Center in the city of Rio Grande City.
- Demographics of women who attended the events:
  - Average age:
    - Under 40: 38%
    - 40-49 years: 26%
    - 50-64 years: 32%
    - 65 years or older: 4%
  - Ethnic breakdown:
    - White, Non-Hispanic: 2%
    - White, Hispanic: 98%
    - African American: 0%
    - Asian: 0%
    - Native American: 0%
    - Other: 0%
- 8 people were on the planning committees

- or task forces and 13 total volunteers
- at party/events.
- A Doctor and Cancer Survivor urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the events.
- 50 women signed a commitment card to obtain a mammogram/Pap test within the next year.

## Success Stories

A total of 20 women who signed the pledge went and got screened on their own 24 were

assisted

screened by the project and 6 are currently pending. Through support from the Cancer Prevention Institute of Texas (CPRIT) a contract has been established with local hospital to provide breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic follow-up as needed. This action will support the very high rate of uninsured in Starr County who at this time need to travel out of the County for screenings.



# Making a Difference

## **¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes!, Starr County, 2012** **Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent - FCS**

**¡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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.<sup>1</sup> Hispanic/Latinos (40 per 100,000) than Whites, non-Hispanics (19 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup>
- 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).<sup>2</sup>

### **Reponse**

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



### **Impact of Yo Puedo**

In 2012, 28 individuals registered to for the *Si, Yo Puedo* class offered in Starr County, TX. Among those enrolled in the program, 46.4% (N=13) of the participants completed the classes. An overwhelming majority of the participants (81%) reported never having received any diabetes classes.

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

The findings below summarize the impact of the *Si, Yo Puedo* program delivered in Starr County. Outcome indicators include diabetes knowledge, self-efficacy, acculturation, and diabetes self-care behaviors.

- Demographic characteristics: 92% were female, average age was 51 years, 96% were Hispanic, 64% yearly income was \$20,000 or less, 48% had less than a high school education, and 48% did not have private insurance.
- Program participants were minimally acculturated: 38% had a score of 10 out of 20, where a total score of 20 indicated highly acculturated.
- Diabetes knowledge increased two-fold from 6.3 (out of 10) at pre-test to 8.3 at post-test (out of 10).
- Diabetes self-care scores reveal that participants improved in performing routine health behaviors to better manage their diabetes: Pre-test mean score: 22 out of total score of 44; Post-test: 31.7 out of 44.
- Self-efficacy scores improved with participants reporting increases in their confidence to engage in diabetes self-care behaviors): Pre-test 2.8 M (out of 4); Post-test 3.6 M (out of 4). (Scale: 1 = I don't feel sure; 4 = I feel very sure.)

## Success Stores

- *Found the classes to be very informative. Was able to ask some questions I had in diabetes issues I wasn't sure of. Overall it was a very good class. Everyone participated with their questions or experiences.*
- *The use of the glucose meter to know the level and when the glucose goes up due to what we have eaten.*
- *Como controlar la diabetes, como controlar el estrés (How to control diabetes, how to control stress).*

## Reflections

Overall, 2012 evidence demonstrates that the *!Sí, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes!* significantly enhances participants' engagement in diabetes self-care behaviors, improvements in self-confidence about diabetes self-care, and increases diabetes knowledge. This program lends support to the benefits of a culturally competent diabetes self-management education targeting lower literate, Spanish-speaking Hispanic/Latinos with diabetes. Given the high rates of diabetes among Hispanic/Latinos, *Si, Yo Puedo* is a program to address this concern in Starr County, Texas. Over the past year Starr County Extension partnered with community stakeholder to extend our reach to disadvantaged populations. We envision this effort to continue that will help ensure the sustainability of *Si, Yo Puedo*.

## 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.





# Making a Difference

## ***Child Care Provider Conference Outcome Report, 2012*** ***Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent - FCS***

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

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

### **Child Care Provider Conference**

On August 18, 2012, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Rio Grande City, Texas for **209** child care providers and directors who provide care for **4,024** children enrolled in **38** child care centers or family day homes. Two hundred and nine participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of **1,672** clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

**Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 209)\***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Percentage*</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>		35.4
<b>Number of Years in Child Care Profession</b>		7.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	94.3	
Male	1.9	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African American	0.0	
Caucasian	0.5	
Hispanic/Latino	96.7	
Other	2.4	
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School Diploma	0.5	
High School Diploma	43.5	
Associates Degree	38.8	
College Graduate	13.9	
<b>Program Type</b>		
Home Day Care	3.8	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	25.4	
Head Start	66.5	
Other (e.g., Montessori)	1.4	
<b>Program Licensed and/or Registered</b>		

Yes	86.1	
No	0.5	
<b>Attended Extension-Sponsored Training in Past</b>		
Yes	67.0	
No	17.7	
Not Sure	8.6	
*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.		

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

**Table 2. Child Care Provider Conference Outcomes (N = 209)\***

Item	Percent in Agreement*	Percent not in Agreement*
<b>Acquisition of New Information</b>		
Learned new information	98.6%	0.5%
Will utilize new information to strengthen program	96.2%	1.9%
<b>Intent to Use Information</b>		
Will use now	98.6%	0.0%
Will use in future	99.0%	0.0%
<b>Training's Influence on Provider/Program Quality</b>		
Will be more effective provider	98.1%	0.0%
Will lead to improvements in quality of care offered	97.6%	1.0%
<b>Relevancy of Training</b>		
Helped provider obtain required clock hours	92.3%	3.8%
Topics relevant to daily work	95.2%	1.4%
<b>Other</b>		
Training cost-effective	90.9%	4.8%
Plan to attend another Extension conference	95.7%	1.0%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

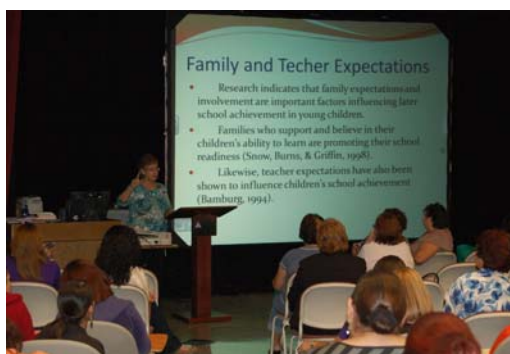
In addition to the above items, participants were asked to rate the quality of the conference compared to other child care trainings they have attended in the past by non-Extension organizations/agencies. Table 3 below contains the results.

**Table 3. Perceptions of Quality Compared to Other Non-Extension Trainings (N = 209)\***

Item*	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended (not provided by Extension), how would you rate the quality of today's training?	0.5%	0.5%	9.6%	37.3%	43.5%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases					

As can be seen in the tables above, child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. Over 90 percent of participants acquired new information from the conference, considered the training to be very relevant to the work they do, plan to utilize the information gained at the conference to improve their programs, and consider themselves better equipped to work with the children in their care. Moreover, **80.8%** of providers rated the training “Better” or “Much Better” compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

Report prepared by Dr. Stephen Green and Deanne Whipple on November 27, 2012. For more information, please call (979) 845-6468.



*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.  
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**AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu**



# Making a Difference

## ***Starr County Better Living for Texans, 2012***

***By Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent-FCS***

### **Relevance**

In Starr County, an estimated 22,366 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.

Basic food buying skills enable Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-ED) 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.

Two thirds of the adult population is either overweight or obese. Certain breakfast, snacking and dinner behaviors are associated with achieving and maintaining a healthful weight. Research supports eating breakfast, planning snacks and dinner, as well as having enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of a dinner plate are associated with healthy weight.

Health disparities among low income populations are well documented. Obesity, heart disease and hypertension are conditions which are more prevalent in low income populations. The amelioration of these conditions thru improved nutrition choices is 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 – Better Living for Texans (BLT)**

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

During 2012, 99 Starr County adults completed the BLT *Back to Basics* series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This report reflects results of the pre, post, and 30-day follow-up surveys.

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, 75 *Get the Facts* pre/post survey sets, of which 68 included the 30 day follow-up survey, were received from Starr County, Texas.

The typical *Get the Facts* participant was Hispanic (98%) and female (95%) with a mean age of 35 years. Participants described themselves as white (96%). Most participants (77%) had a high school diploma, GED or less. Many participants (32%) had been told by a health professional they needed to lose weight. The typical household had 4.4 members, of which 1.9 were children. Of those participants (n=54) who reported receiving food stamp benefits the typical monthly amount was \$236.60. Participants reported other program use: WIC (49%) and Head Start (40%). Most participants (65%) reported Better Living for Texans (BLT) was the first AgriLife Extension program they had attended. Most participants (79%) rated the *Get the Facts* lesson series as excellent.

*Meal Planning and Food Resource Management – adoption of behaviors*

Behavior	Current behavior (pre) Number (%*)	Intent to change Number (%*)	Behavior 30 days later Number (%*)
<b>Plan meals in advance</b>			
Always	24 (24)	61 (62)	73 (74)
Sometimes	64 (65)	38 (38)	24 (24)
Never	10 (10)	0	0
Not Sure	1 (1)	0	0
No response	0	0	2 (2)
<b>Shop for food with a list</b>			
Always	30 (30)	59 (60)	85 (86)
Sometimes	49 (50)	34 (34)	12 (12)
Never	20 (20)	4 (4)	0
Not Sure	0	1 (1)	0
No response	0	1 (1)	2 (2)
<b>Compare prices when shopping</b>			
Always	38 (38)	71 (72)	88 (89)
Sometimes	45 (46)	23 (23)	8 (8)
Never	12 (12)	4 (4)	0
Not Sure	3 (3)	1 (1)	0
No response	1 (1)	0	3 (3)
<b>Use unit pricing when shopping</b>			
Always	18 (18)	60 (61)	48 (49)
Sometimes	50 (51)	29 (29)	44 (44)
Never	22 (22)	5 (5)	5 (5)
Not sure	9 (9)	2 (2)	0
No response	0	3 (3)	2 (2)
<b>Run out of food before the end of the month?</b>			
Always	33 (33)		10 (10)
Sometimes	45 (46)		41 (41)
Never	16 (16)		46 (47)
Not Sure	3 (3)		0
No response	2 (2)		2 (2)

\* percentage is rounded up to the nearest whole number

Most participants were using the targeted food resource management practices either “always” or “sometimes” when they entered the BLT program. Immediately after the program ended there was a noted increase in the percentage of participants who intended to practice the behaviors “always.” Thirty days later, the percentage of participants practicing all four behaviors either “always” was considerably higher than when the program began. The most notable change in behavior was that of using a list when shopping for food.

Immediately after the program ended, 67 (68%) of the participants reported that they felt they could stretch their food resources to last the entire month “always.” The number of participants who ran out of food before the end of the month “always” or “sometimes” also experienced a downward trend (from 78% pre to 51% at follow-up).

#### *Food Safety- adoption of behaviors*

Behavior	Frequency (pre) Number (%*)	Frequency (post) Number (%*) (intent to change)	Adoption of Behavior (30-days later) Number (%*)
<b>How often do you sanitize cutting boards after cutting up raw meat or poultry?</b>			
Always	77 (78)	86 (87)	97 (98)
Sometimes	20 (20)	11 (11)	0
Never	1 (1)	2 (2)	0
Not sure	1 (1)	0	0
No response	0	0	2 (2)
<b>How often do you thaw frozen food at room temperature?</b>			
Always	42 (42)	51 (52)	10 (10)
Sometimes	42 (42)	21 (21)	9 (9)
Never	11 (11)	24 (24)	78 (79)
Not sure	0	2 (2)	0
No response	4 (4)	1 (1)	2 (2)
<b>How long did you leave your last meal out after it was prepared?</b>			
Eaten/stored immediately	33 (33)	26 (26)	7 (7)
< 1 hour	32 (32)	47 (48)	81 (82)
1 – 2 hours	14 (14)	17 (17)	9 (9)
> 2 hours	8 (8)	3 (3)	0
Not Sure	11 (11)	5 (5)	0
No response	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (2)

\* percentage is rounded up to the nearest whole number

Nearly 80% (n=77) of participants reported sanitizing cutting boards after cutting up raw meat or poultry when the program first began. That number rose to 86 and continued to rise to 97 (98%) 30-days later. Also, at the 30-day follow-up survey we found that the percentage of clients who “always” let food thaw at room temperature was much lower (10%; n=10) compared to when the program began (42%; n=42). In addition, nearly all (98%; n=97) of the participants were eating or storing their prepared foods within the two-hour recommendation compared to when the program began (80%; n=79).

#### **Other findings:**

84% (n=83) of the 99 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.

#### **Average monthly out-of-pocket food expenses reported by participants\*\*:**

Before BLT: \$ 202.71

After BLT: \$ 263.32

\*\* Based on 92 participants who reported monthly out-of-pocket food expenses at the beginning of BLT and 30-days after the program ended. Changes in out-of-pocket food expenses **were not** significantly different.



For these 99 participants, the percentage who rated their perceived ability to prepare nutritious meals as either “good” or “very good” was 49% (n=49) before BLT (pre-survey) and 89% (n=88) after BLT (post survey).

88 of the 99 (89%) participants rated the BLT program as “excellent.”

#### Change in Behavior

Self-reported behavior improved ( $p > .001$ ) regarding serving size, fat and sodium label usage during the time this lesson series was taught. Further behavior improvement ( $p > .001$ ) was noted during the follow up period.

Figure 1: Percentage of *Get the Facts* participants who reported always or almost always checking serving size, fat or sodium on food labels while shopping for food. (n=68)

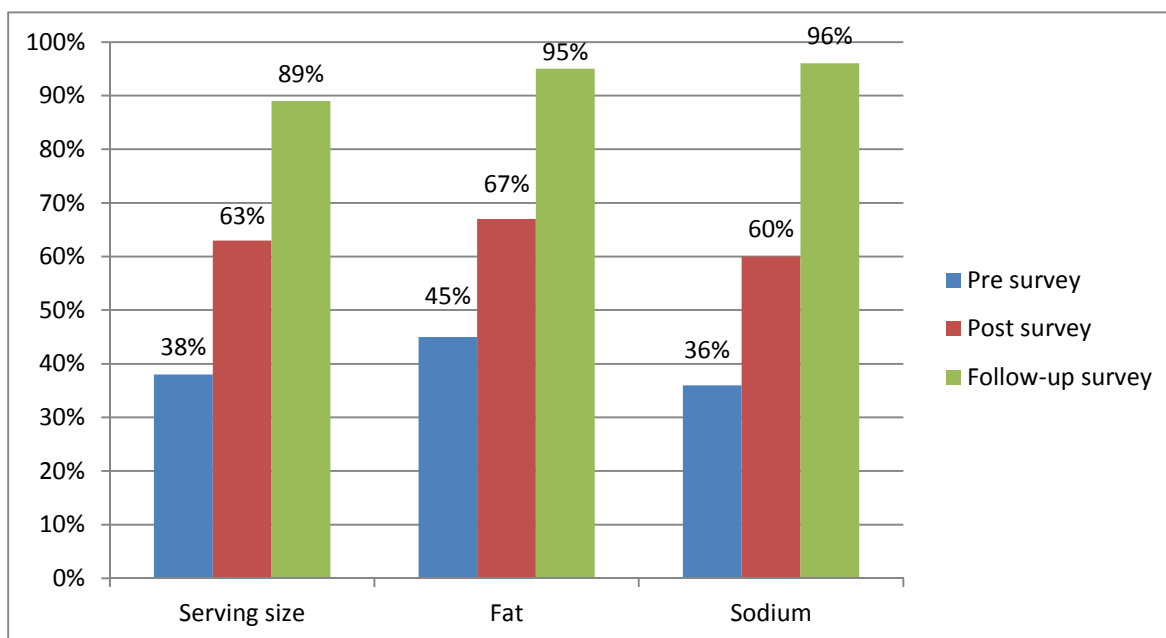


Table 2. Mean serving size, fat and sodium food label usage behavior scores (5=strongly disagree thru 1=strongly agree) pre-survey, post survey and 30 day follow-up survey (n=68)

Serving Size			Fat			Sodium		
Pre	Post	Follow-up	Pre	Post	Follow-up	Pre	Post	Follow-up
2.8 <sup>a</sup>	2.1 <sup>b</sup>	1.6 <sup>c</sup>	2.6 <sup>a</sup>	1.9 <sup>b</sup>	1.4 <sup>c</sup>	3.0 <sup>a</sup>	2.2 <sup>b</sup>	1.4 <sup>c</sup>

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

Table 3. Participants' comments

Participant responses to: “What changes have you made?”
<i>Buy things with less fat, sodium and sugar, eat correct portions and eat more fruits and vegetables</i>
<i>Control weight by eating more fruits and vegetables, using low sodium food and walking everyday</i>
<i>Eating more fruits and vegetables, staying away from trans fats, stopped drinking soda, making healthy choices</i>

*Get the Facts* is one of several Texas SNAP-ED approved curricula available to help meet the needs of local county Extension agents. Starr County evaluation results suggest *Get the Facts* was effective at increasing participant

knowledge ( $p > .001$ ) and improving behavior ( $p > .001$ ) related to nutrition label reading. These results were consistent with statewide evaluation results ( $n = 1320$ ) which also suggest this curriculum was effective ( $p > .001$ ) at improving both participant knowledge and behavior. Label reading skills are necessary for SNAP-ED clients to make healthful food choices and thereby reduce their risk of chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease and hypertension.

A three lesson series, *Three Easy Bites*, was developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service nutrition specialists. The curriculum promoted positive lifestyle behaviors related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. *Three Easy Bites* session goals were -- families would:

- Plan to eat breakfast, include foods from at least two MyPlate food groups, and include breakfast items on their weekly grocery list;
- Plan which snack foods they will eat, eat their snacks away from the television, and compare their snack portion relative to the Nutrition Facts serving size; and
- Plan their dinner meal, include fruits and/or vegetables with every dinner, and include fruit and/or vegetables on their weekly grocery list.

Participants could opt out of the survey evaluation process if desired. Nonetheless, 21 pre/post/follow-up survey sets were received from Starr County, Texas. Most participants (76%) reported that Better Living for Texans (BLT) was the first AgriLife program they had attended. The typical *Three Easy Bites* participant was female (100%), described herself as Hispanic or Latino (95%) and was 40 years of age. Participants identified themselves as white (100%). The highest level of educational attainment for most participants (73%) was 12 years or less. Many participants (28%) had been advised by a health professional they weigh too much.

## Results

Participants were primarily female (89%) and Hispanic (94%). More than half (65%;  $n = 68$ ) had a high school education or less but almost one-third (30%;  $n = 29$ ) had completed some college or technical school. Average household size of the participants was 4.8. Fifty-eight percent ( $n = 57$ ) of the 99 participants received SNAP (food stamps). Almost 40% ( $n = 38$ ) had children that received free or reduced-price school meals and 47% ( $n = 46$ ) of the participants received WIC benefits. Six of the 99 participants reported they had received food from a food bank or food pantry within the previous 30 days.

### Change in Knowledge

Label knowledge improved ( $p < .001$ ) during the time *Get the Facts* was taught. Interestingly, further knowledge improvement ( $p > .001$ ) occurred during the 30 day follow up period.

Table 1. Mean correct knowledge scores (out of 6) pre/post/follow-up survey sets ( $n = 68$ ).

Pre-survey	Post-survey	Follow-up survey
2.8 <sup>a</sup>	4.2 <sup>b</sup>	5.1 <sup>c</sup>

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

There was a trend toward improvement for seven behavior domains during the time that *Three Easy Bites* was taught. Therefore these data suggest that clients improved or maintained behaviors consistent with healthier weight practices. Of note were the upward trends in using a shopping list containing breakfast items as well as fruits and vegetables. Statistical significance could not be determined due to sample size.

Table 1. Percentage of *Three Easy Bites* participants who answered always or almost always: pre/post/follow-up (n=21).

Behavior Questions	Pre-survey %	Post-survey %	Follow up survey %
How often do you plan breakfast ahead of time?	33	38	35
How often do you include at least two breakfast items from different food groups?	66	85	90
How often do you use a shopping list which includes breakfast items when you go to the grocery store?	33	42	81
How often do you plan snacks ahead of time?	25	33	28
How often do you snack in front of the television?	9	14	5
How often do you use the Nutrition Facts serving size information to determine how much of your snack to eat?	0	5	9
How often do you plan dinner ahead of time?	30	52	66
How often do you have enough fruits and/or vegetables to cover half of your dinner plate?	33	66	66
How often do you use a shopping list with fruits and vegetables when you go to the grocery store?	66	76	90

The leader-facilitated learner-centered *Three Easy Bites* lesson approach may have helped clients internalize information and enhanced skills necessary to improve behaviors related to healthy weight. This curriculum was especially relevant given 28 percent of these participants had been told by a health professional they weigh too much.

Statewide results (n=1113) suggest the *Three Easy Bites* curriculum was effective ( $p>.001$ ) at improving participant behavior related to breakfast, snacking and dinner. Consistent improvements in eating patterns can help clients to achieve and maintain healthy weight.

## 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.

## 4-H and Youth Development



- Quality Counts Program
- Family Consumer Science Projects
  - Annual 4-H Program Summary

# Making a Difference

## Quality Counts Program Starr County 2012

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

### **Introduction:**

Texas has the highest participation totals in 4-H and FFA livestock projects in the country. In 2006, there were over 89,000 market and breeding entries for cattle, sheep, swine, and goats across the state and (Coufal, 2007). These figures have continually climbed over the last decade and into the new millennium. Thus, Quality Counts in Texas has been developed for 4-H and FFA members who participate in these livestock project areas.

Quality Counts in Texas is a program for 4-H and FFA youth across Texas that exhibit livestock projects. This includes such market and breeding projects as beef cattle, sheep, swine, and goats. The purpose of Quality Counts in Texas is to provide an opportunity for youth across Texas to learn personal character attributes and acceptable livestock management practices associated with these projects. This unique combination of subject matter should result in the exhibition of the highest quality livestock projects by youth with unsurpassed character and ethics. Ultimately, this program will be an integral part of the junior livestock program. This will eventually lead to a safer, more wholesome nutritious product that is fed by responsible youth of Texas who are dedicated to providing the best meat products for consumers.

In Starr County, over 175 livestock animal enter the food chain through livestock projects that are exhibited at the Starr County Youth Fair. It is important that all exhibitors learn about food safety and ethical sportsmanship.

### **Program:**

The Starr County Youth Board with the assistance of local agriculture science teachers, scheduled a series of Quality Counts Programs. The programs targeted the Starr County 4-H Program and all three FFA chapters in the County. These educational workshops provided the following educational components: A power point presentation for students, handouts with activities to reinforce educational topics, an online test, and a student evaluation.

The following educational activities were organized to achieve the Quality Counts Program objectives.

1. Agents worked with high school agriculture science teachers and club managers, representing each of the 4-H clubs and FFA chapters, to select trainings topics for workshops, set up schedule of events, and assist with the development of the student evaluation instruments.
2. Contacted Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist to acquire power point presentation, and design written activities to reinforce training topics. Educational material and handouts was distributed to all students and teachers attending the workshop.

3. Students participated in a two hour workshop that provided information about the Quality Counts Program. The workshops also featured an opportunity for students to take a required on-line course and obtain a personal identification number that they can use to prove that they have completed the course.
4. Agents compiled a summary of the youth program based on the results of the Quality Counts Program students evaluations that were collected from each of the participating students.
5. Agents shared the results of the Quality Counts Program with residents of the county through the local newspaper where they featured a story about the events. Results were also shared with the agriculture science teachers and 4-H Youth Board.

#### **Evaluation Method:**

A one page retrospective post design evaluation was administered to the participating students. This type of design is a popular way to assess learners' self-reported changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, confidence, attitudes or behaviors (Howard, 1980). This evaluation was developed with input from all 4-H club managers, and agriculture science teachers. The strategy was used to determine the level of knowledge youth acquired through this educational event. A total of 56 student and 4-H club member evaluations were used to determine the effectiveness of this program.

#### **Collaborators:**

Starr County Youth Fair, local Agriculture Science Teachers, and 4-H Youth Board.

#### **Results:**

A total fifty six (56) FFA students and 4-H Club members participated in this program. The scale of responses for these statements was defined as 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent. Based on the evaluations, 91% of all the respondents better understand the importance of food safety as these show animals enter the human food chain. Ninety four percent (94%) understand the importance of keeping accurate records of livestock medications. It is also evident that participants learned, (92%) about withdraw periods of medications. Almost all the respondents (95%), have indicated that they found this program beneficial and will work to become more ethical show people.


#### **Summary:**

This program did appear to build knowledge and change perceptions about the ethical showing of livestock projects. Participant responses indicate that they have a better appreciation about character education, food safety, and livestock medication withdraw periods. This program design will continue next year, possibly addressing another emerging issue, with the support of agriculture science teachers.

#### **References:**

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

For More information Contact:  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
500 N. Britton Avenue  
Rio Grande City, Tx 78582  
Tel. (956) 487-2306

V A L U E	
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>



# Making a Difference

## **4H Family Consumer Science Projects Starr County, 2012** **By Elva Yolanda Morado, County Extension Agent-FCS**

Starr County 4Hers had an opportunity to discover new things about themselves. The FCS projects taught them to be creative and to become a good decision maker. They explored business and finances and how to become a smart shopper.

Building strong families and developing valuable family communication skills was a part of the 2012 4H program objectives. 4Hers participated in projects and learned how to do things that they will use the rest of their lives.

4Hers throughout the county competed in various events during the year-food show and baking entries at the fair were at an all time high.

4Hers enjoyed project trainings and practicing for Food Challenge project. For this contest 4Hers modeled the Food Network's Iron Chef. They had to create a dish using only a predetermined amount of ingredients. Four teams competed at district and earned blue awards.

The heart of a young person's 4H experience is being able to participate in the countless opportunities & projects that 4H offers. The 4H Clothing & Textile project focused on clothing construction and the consumer aspects of purchasing clothing. 4Hers completed projects for the home for family members and for themselves and participated in the Fashion Show – County and District.

Some things they learned included:

- ✓ Cooking variety of foods
- ✓ Mending and making clothes and items for their home
- ✓ Budgeting money
- ✓ Decision making
- ✓ Preparing healthy foods
- ✓ Healthy weight and eating nutritious meals & snacks
- ✓ Goal setting Consumer buying –food, clothes, accessories

# Starr County

## 4-H and YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

500 N. Britton ~ Rio Grande City, Texas 78582 ~ Phone (956) 487-2306 ~ Fax (956) 716-8197 ~ [starr.agrilife.org](http://starr.agrilife.org)

TEXAS A&M  
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EXTENSION



Cooperative Extension Program  
Prairie View A&M University

# Making a Difference 2012



## Annual 4-H Program Summary

### County 4-H Youth Involvement

6 Chartered Clubs  
150 Club Members Enrolled  
1,152 Community-based Outreach  
1,743 In-school Enrichment Curriculum

### Total Youth Participation

# 3,045

### County 4-H Leadership, Advisory, and Support Organizations

Youth Board	9 Members	2 Meetings Held
County 4-H Council	14 Members	4 Meetings Held
Adult Leaders & Parents Organization	7 Members	2 Meetings Held

### Top County Events

Starr County Youth Fair	150
4-H Kids Fish	316
Kids & Kows & More	952

### Top District Events

D12 4-H Shooting Sports Postal League	180
D12 4-H Round-Up (All Events)	172
D12 4-H Recordbooks	165
D12 Shooting Sports Match	149
D12 4-H Leadership lab	119

### Top State/National Events

Texas 4-H Round-Up	76
Texas 4-H Photo Contest	38
Texas 4-H Recordbook Judging	33
Texas 4-H Congress	23
Texas 4-H Horse Show	9

### Top Club Projects

Foods & Nutrition	68
Goats	44
Rabbits	47
Swine	11
Clothing & Textile	16

### Top Overall Projects/Curriculum Areas

Foods & Nutrition	1,710
Mobile Dairy Classroom	930
Wildlife & Fisheries	215
Soil & Crop Science	175



### County 4-H Volunteer Support

87 Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs  
12 Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders  
24,043 Volunteer Hours Contributed in Support of Clubs

### Value of Volunteer Time Contributed to 4-H

# \$513,558

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

### County 4-H Leadership & Personal Development Programs

- 0 Attended State-level educational or competitive events
- 48 Attended District-level educational or competitive events
- 0 Attended District Leadership Lab
- 5 Received 4-H Scholarships valued at a total of **\$12,500**

### Local Training Opportunities

- 2 4-H Club Manager Training
- 6 4-H Club Officer Training
- 1 4-H Project Leader Training
- 1 4-H Recordbook Training
- 1 4-H Adult Leader Shooting Sports Training

### Events & Activities

- 1 One-Day 4-H (Community Development Project)

### Significant accomplishments

Managing, training, motivating and educating volunteers is one of the most challenging and critical elements to the success of an effective county 4-H and youth Development Program. Our county is blessed with many volunteers that drive this 4-H Program and challenge each of its members "To Make the Best Better".

### County 4-H Agriculture & Natural Resource Programs

- 135 Livestock Projects
- 135 Participated in County Livestock Shows
- 6 Attended State-level Livestock Shows
- 2 Attended District-level Agriculture & Natural Resources educational or competitive events
- 45 Youth Trained through "Quality Counts" Program

### **Livestock Show Premium Sale Proceeds\***

# **\$136,345**

\*Includes all projects (4-H and FFA)

### Local Training Opportunities

- 1 Small Animal Project Training
- 2 Livestock Project Weigh-In Clinics
- 2 Livestock Ethics & Character Education

### Events & Activities

- 2 County Camps that focus on wildlife and water safety

### Significant accomplishments

Starr County 4-H Club members and volunteers participated in a variety of training opportunities that focused on project selection, project feeding and exercise recommendations, livestock ethics, food safety, injection



site recommendations and medication withdraw periods. These are all important topics that every 4-H club members feeding a livestock show animal should be aware of.

### **County 4-H Family & Consumer Science Programs**

- 0 Attended State-level educational or competitive events
- 38 Attended District-level educational or competitive events

### **Local Training Opportunities**

- 1 Clothing & Textile Training
- 1 Foods & Nutrition Training
- 1 Project Leader Training

### **Events & Activities**

- 2 County Camps that focus on Foods & Nutrition

### **Significant accomplishments**

Eating healthy is one of the most important things young people can learn as they develop eating habits. The Starr County 4-H and Youth Development Program has offered day camps in the summer for young people to learn about eating nutritious foods that can control obesity.

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Managing the 4-H program includes many facets. Not only do members and volunteer leaders participate in educational events through projects and activities, they are also involved with Extension agents and a variety of groups to plan and facilitate programs.

Starr County agents oversaw the 4-H and Youth Development Program including management of 4-H clubs/groups, club managers, volunteer leaders, coordination of Youth Board and worked with partners to ensure effective functioning of the 4-H and Youth Development Program. Also ensured the effective use of projects and activities while developing participating youth into contributing members of society.

The Starr County 4-H youth gained leadership skills through 4-H project work. 4-H volunteers and parents learned more about community involvement through activities and fundraising events. The Starr County is represented through 150 members and 87 registered volunteers.



# **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service STARR County**

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