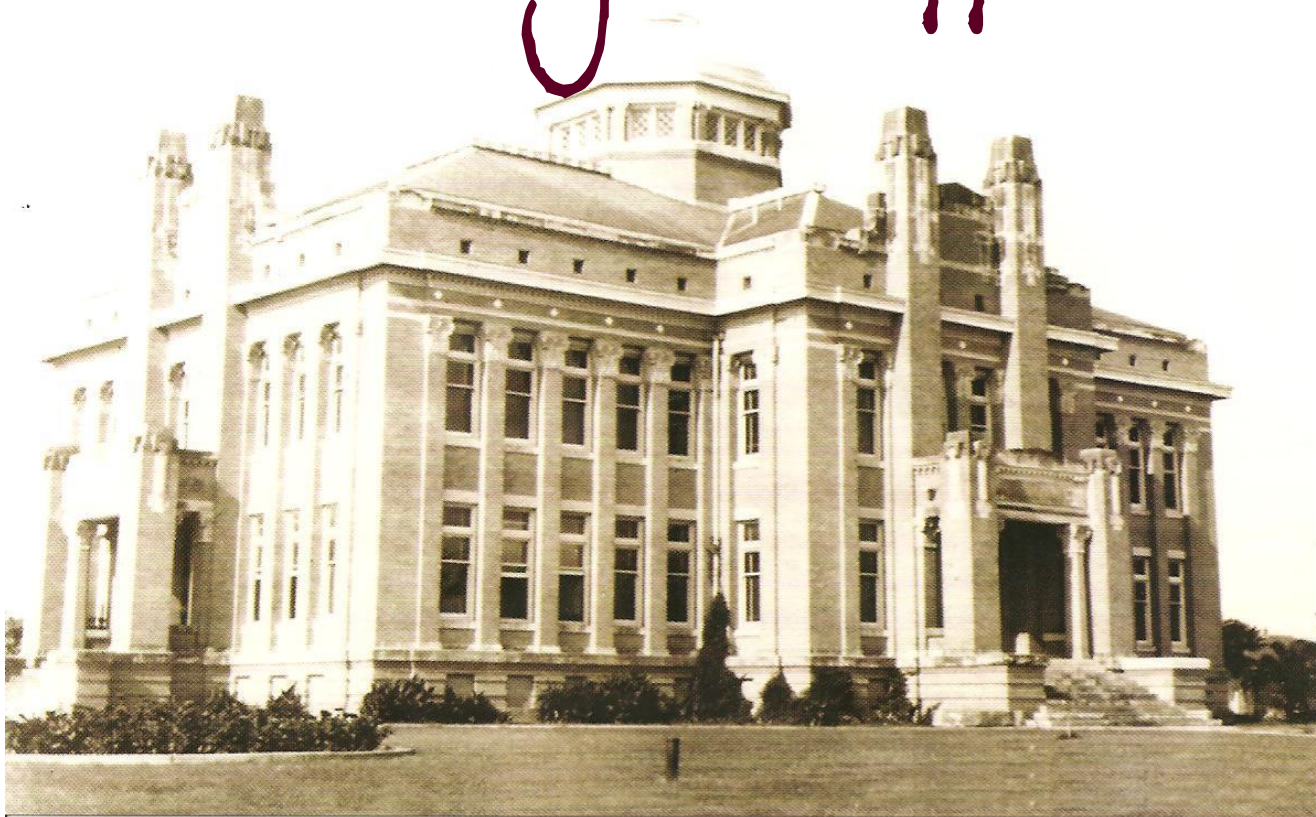




Extension Education in Jim Wells County

Making a Difference



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has 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.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

Among those served are hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts on this county and its people.

Jim Wells County – Summary of 2015 Educational Contacts

TOTAL CONTACTS	20,571
Educational Events	11,790
Other Contacts	8,781

	CONTACTS	HOURS
All Sessions	11,790	34,881
Plan Level		
In Depth	7,343	16,238
Out Reach	3,874	12,784
Organizational Support	573	5,858
Task Type		
Planning Group	795	1,593
Educational Method	10,380	32,748
Interpretation	615	538
Delivery Method		
Face-to-Face	11,766	34,855
Technology Assisted	24	25
Demographics		
White	4,508	16,535
Black	27	253
Hispanic	7,250	18,090
Asian	2	1

2015 Jim Wells County Beef Cattle and Range Management

Rogelio Mercado
County Extension Agent- Agriculture

RELEVANCE

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Jim Wells County was home to approximately 25,000 head of beef cows. Because of drought, declining market conditions and increased feed costs, the 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed a decline of 30% in the cow herd, bringing the inventory down to approximately 17,000 head. Local estimates report that by the end of 2013, prior to drought conditions improving, our beef cattle inventory was well below 10,000 head, indicating a 60% decrease. As weather patterns improved in late 2013, many beef cattle producers faced empty pastures as they had been forced to reduce and in many cases liquidate their herds. As range and pasture conditions improved with additional rainfall,



many producers faced a greater challenge of replenishing their herds as beef cattle markets fluctuated upward and continued on a steady trend through 2014 and early 2015. As the national beef cattle inventory dropped to an all time low since the early 1950's, beef cattle producers struggled to buy back into the business. These conditions created the need for a different approach to educating local beef cattle producers. Below is a list of topics and critical issues identified as important by the Jim Wells County Extension Beef Committee, the Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors and data gathered from surveys, individuals and other local agriculture working groups.

- Beef cattle replacement costs and expected market returns
- Rangeland recovery after drought
- Grazing costs and land leasing
- Best management practices in herd health
- Increasing reproductive efficiency
- Replacement cattle selection and development

RESPONSE

The Jim Wells County Extension Beef Cattle Committee participated in the coordination and implementation of various educational programs which incorporated the topics identified above. Also, agent Rogelio Mercado collaborated with the Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District in conducting their annual educational program for agricultural producers which also focused on the issues important to local beef cattle producers. Below is a summary of three significant programs which address critical issues facing our producers in 2015.

- ***Ranch and Land Owner Workshop:*** The Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a Ranch and Land Owner Workshop on Thursday, August 20, 2015. Approximately 50 land owners, agricultural producers and industry representatives participated in the program. The program addressed topics and issues surrounding property tax valuation and exemptions, property rights and security, rotational grazing, cattle fever tick quarantines, and governmental programs available to assist producers.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agent Rogelio Mercado prepared and delivered a talk on recommended health practices for beef cattle producers. The highlight for this event was a presentation by Mrs. Judith Canales, State Director of USDA-Farm Service Agency, focused on the services available to local producers and the impact the new Farm Bill has had on local agriculture. Additional speakers from the Jim Wells County Appraisal District, Jim Wells County District Attorney's Office, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Texas-Mexico Border Coalition provided a wide array of expertise in various topics.

- ***Ranch and Range Clinic:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the Jim Wells County Extension Beef Committee in conducting their annual Ranch and Range Field Day on Saturday, September 12, 2015. The field day was hosted by Dr. Joe and Vickie Paschal at Tecolote Creek Ranch in Alfred. Approximately 40 beef cattle producers and industry representatives participated in the program focused on best management practices to improve profitability. Hands on activities on range plant identification, heifer selection and pregnancy determination enhanced the value of the overall program. Speakers from TAMUK assisted various Extension Specialists in delivering the program and enhancing the program topics.
- ***Beef Quality Assurance Training:*** Agent Rogelio Mercado and Extension Livestock Specialist, Dr. Joe Paschal collaborated with the Texas Beef Council and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in hosting a Beef Quality Assurance Training on Thursday, September 17, 2015. The training was held at the Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Alice. The purpose of the training was to provide beef cattle producers with information on best management practices in herd health. The training provided information on beef cattle disease prevention and treatment, product selection and administration, record keeping, and various other topics concerning the production of safe and wholesome beef products. Approximately 40 producers and industry representatives from eight south Texas counties participated in the training. Producers received certification for their participation and are now eligible to receive continuing education towards their recertification in future BQA certified programs.

RESULTS

These programs provided beef cattle producers with timely information on topics relative to a dynamic and unique year in the beef cattle industry. A combination of evaluation strategies were used to evaluate the impact each event had on the program participants. Below is a summary of each program.

- ***Ranch and Range Field Day:*** A Customer Satisfaction Survey was administered during the 2015 Jim Wells County Ranch and Range Field Day held on September 12, 2015. Twenty-nine (n=29) usable surveys were submitted for analysis and a synopsis of the results is listed below.
 - 100% of the respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the field day.
 - 89% of the respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information gained from this event.
 - 100% of the respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned during this field day.
 - 96% of the respondents said that the information and programs provided by Extension were quite or extremely valuable to them.
 - Comments suggested a strong liking to the session on reproductive efficiency and pregnancy determination.
- ***Beef Quality Assurance Training:*** A survey was administered during the Beef Quality Assurance Training held on September 17, 2015. Twenty-four (n=24) usable surveys were submitted for analysis and a synopsis of the results is below.
 - 100% of the respondents rated the event Good or Excellent.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- 92% of the respondents believed they would benefit economically from the training.
- 83% of the respondents probably or definitely will give all injections according to BQA principles.
- 96% of the respondents understand the impacts of genetics on beef quality.
- Extension ranked highest as a first source of information on beef cattle.
- Comments suggest the program was very helpful but live cattle demonstrations would be beneficial as well.

Land owners and ranch managers are challenged with maximizing range resources to ensure ranch profitability. It is critical to provide these individuals with educational opportunities which will stimulate progress in their respective operations. With “El Niño” weather patterns in the forecast, a struggle to rebuild the nation’s cowherd, and uncertainties in both livestock and feed stuff markets, most producers will continue to experience growing and working conditions which have not been experienced in the last two-three decades. Extension programs must continue to be relevant to these changes in the producer environment and provide cutting edge technology to help agricultural producers be successful.



Field Day participants received information on various topics. Plant identification is critical in determining brush management strategies. Dr. Wayne Hanselka, Retired Extension Range Specialist, helped producers identify brush and weed species and discussed control strategies. Dr. Randy Stanko, Professor at TAMUK, demonstrated various pregnancy determination techniques as a tool to increase ranch productivity. Dr. Tanner Machado, Assistant Professor at TAMUK, discussed heifer selection, development and the use of body condition scores in cattle to increase pregnancy rates in the herd.



2015 Jim Wells County Row Crop Production

Rogelio Mercado
County Extension Agent- Agriculture

RELEVANCE

According to the 2015 USDA Farm Service Agency acreage report, Jim Wells County agricultural producers farm approximately 80,000 acres of row crops each year. In the recent ten years, row crop producers have been faced with many challenges pertaining to drought, pest infestations, disease and declining commodity markets. Most recently, implementation of the 2014 Farm Bill has impacted the way producers insure their crops, finance their operations and will ultimately affect farm profitability. “El Niño” weather patterns have increased rainfall in the area and in 2015, producers were faced with surplus soil moisture making planting, managing pests and ultimately harvesting very difficult. A rapid increase in technologies such as the use of drones for crop management and genetic seed improvements are additional challenges which producers are faced with in order to keep up with today’s industry. And finally, weed resistance to certain chemicals, especially glyphosate, has surfaced as a strong issue this year for many producers, not only in south Texas but across the nation.



RESPONSE

The Jim Wells County Extension Row Crops Committee participated in the coordination and implementation of various educational programs which incorporated the topics identified above. Agent Rogelio Mercado collaborated with Frank Escobedo, CEA-ANR in Kleberg/Kenedy Counties and with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in both Jim Wells and Kleberg/Kenedy Counties in order to coordinate multi-county efforts to address the growing concern in weed resistance. Below is a summary of three significant programs which address critical issues facing our producers in 2015.

- ***Jim Wells County Row Crops Tour and Seminar:*** The Jim Wells County Row Crops Committee hosted their annual Row Crops Tour and Seminar on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at South Texas Implement in Alice. Approximately 40 row crop producers and industry representatives participated in the program. Extension specialists provided the participants with updates on production technologies and the economics of production. Dr. Juan Landivar, Resident Director for the Corpus Christi Extension and Research Center, provided a history of sensor technologies and their use in crop monitoring and as decision making tools. Dr. Landivar then provided an update on how drones are being incorporated with sensor technologies to assist producers in gathering real time data.
- ***Jim Wells County Farm Expo:*** The Jim Wells County Farm Expo was held on Tuesday, November 3, 2015 at the Rifle Club in Orange Grove. Approximately 50 row crop producers and industry representatives participated in the program. Extension specialists presented their research findings for the year. Of particular interest was data collected on insecticide use to control the Sugar Cane Aphid in grain sorghum. Eight industry representatives participated in the program, providing producers with company updates on seed technologies. These technologies include drought tolerance and resistance to the Sugar Cane Aphid.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- **Multi-County Weed Resistance Workshop:** Agents Rogelio Mercado and Frank Escobedo teamed up with the USDA-NRCS and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Jim Wells and Kleberg/Kenedy Counties to host a Multi-County Weed Resistance Workshop. The event was held on Friday, November 13, 2015 at Prukop Farms, located north of Premont. The workshop was attended by 85 row crop producers and industry representatives. Extension Specialists and industry representatives provided the producers with various approaches and alternatives to controlling weed chemical resistance. Equipment representatives also demonstrated sprayer technologies available to ensure proper chemical applications.

RESULTS

These programs provided row crop producers with timely information on topics relative to a dynamic and unique year in row crop production. Producers continue to implement new technologies as they are forced to improve efficiency in their operations.

- **Multi-County Weed Resistance Workshop:** A Customer Satisfaction Survey was administered during the Multi-County Weed Resistance Workshop. Forty-six (n=46) usable surveys were submitted for analysis and a synopsis of the results is listed below.
 - 98% of the respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the field day.
 - 98% of the respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the quality of course materials.
 - 100% of the respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructor's knowledge level, speaking/presentation abilities, and organization and preparedness.
 - 93% of the respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this activity.
 - 91% of the respondents said that the information and programs provided by Extension were quite or extremely valuable to them.
 - Comments from the participants were positive on the program content but did recognize some difficulties in hearing due to the facilities and speaker system.

Row crop producers are faced with different challenges from year to year. Extension must continue to provide timely and relevant information to producers in order for them to improve their efficiency of production and maintain a profitable operation.



Row Crop Farmers are currently faced with chemical resistance in certain weeds. This issue has been addressed thru genetic developments in seed companies, new chemical formulations and application methods. In November, field day participants received updates on all these strategies and participated on a demonstration of new spray tip nozzles to help improve on-target applications and reduce the potential for drift.

2015 Jim Wells County Farmers Market

Elaine Montemayor-Gonzalez
Program Specialist-Healthy South Texas

Relevance

Jim Wells County is a growing county of 41,353 (2014) with an estimated average of 7,940 individuals receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Jim Wells County also has an increase of chronic disease, as well as a large population of adults and children battling obesity. Obesity, a strong issue identified from the Family and Consumer Sciences Program Area Committee, increases the risk for diabetes, hypertension and poor overall quality of life. In an effort to serve the county of Jim Wells and promote health and wellness as well as providing information to start new garden's to get youth involved in becoming and staying healthy. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association was formed from members of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program Area Committee in agreement to provide fresh homegrown and homemade items. Starting a garden at home can promote healthy habits as well as more family time, but also a happy grocery budget.



Response

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market was established in March of 2014. The mission of the market is to provide locally- grown foods and farm products to children and adults in the Jim Wells County area. This will be accomplished by improving access to local, healthy, affordable food through a direct farm to consumer marketing venue that will serve a diverse population. Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association believes that small, local farms are essential to the local economy, and is committed to making economic and educational connections between Jim Wells County area residents and local farmers. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market is a Texas Department of Agriculture Certified Farmers Market and a GoTexan Member.

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market is open on the second Saturday of every month. Vendors are required to complete a registration agreement after agreeing to all market rules and regulations. The Jim Wells County Farmers Market Association allows 1 craft vendor per every 3 produce vendors. During the Farmers Market a live food demonstration is conducted throughout the market time by the Healthy South Texas Specialist. The recipe demonstrated at the market is based on produce items vendors will have available for purchase that day. Educational materials, recipes and benefits for ingredients used at the live food demonstration are provided for all market vendors and customers. Educational handouts from the Better Living for Texans resource are also provided.

Results

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market started with 30 registered vendors in February 2015. There is an average of 14 vendors that are present at the markets. There is an average of 30-50 market customers that sign in at the AgriLife educational table at every market, with estimated 80-120 customers throughout the market. Items sold at the market are seasonal produce from local farmers, honey, olive oil, avocado oil, grass fed beef, free range poultry, farm eggs, jelly, jams, salsas, fresh bread, and handmade wood crafts.

Family and Consumer Sciences

This year's Farmers Market resulted in some additional events within the market. The food demonstrations were assisted by Community Leaders. Community Leaders at each market included the County Judge, County Commissioner, City Mayor, Pediatrician, and District Attorney. Another popular event that took place during the summer months of June, July and August was the 'Kids Corner-Little Sprouts' activity area. This event was a great way to support physical activity for families and children. Local pediatric office and the Jim Wells County Veterans Officer sponsored the event with a kid's obstacle course, bungee jump activities, kid's yoga and sack races. Another great event during the summer took place before the start of the market. The "Walk-n-Roll" was a 1 mile route through downtown Alice encouraged families to get moving.

In September, The Jim Wells County Farmers Market partnered with the Alice Fire Department to provide a car seat inspection station during the market day. A total of 15 child safety seat inspections were conducted. There were 2 children that arrived correctly restrained, 4 new seats issued and 3 unsafe seats collected. The proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, leading to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings, and improved quality of life. These economic benefits are an estimated \$2,238 per child age 0 to 4 and \$2,663 per child age 4 to 7 for new seats distributed, and \$634 per child for seat misuse corrected with an assumed 75% continued use. Based on this formula, the total economic impact for the 15 inspections at the event on September 19th is \$11,504.

Economic Impact

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market records an estimate of income provided from each vendor at the end of each market. Recordings began at the February market, the first 2015 market of the year; a total of **\$16,346.75** within the months of February-December 2015 was gained by vendors. The 2015 economic impact: was calculated to report **\$29,751.09**.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following for providing volunteer time and partnership; Anita Rosas, Martin Ornelas, City of Alice, Jim Wells County Veterans Office, Alice City Councilman Michael Esparza, Alice Chamber of Commerce, Texas Department of Agriculture, GoTexan Program, Alice Pediatric Clinic, Alice Rotary Club, Alice Fire Department, Alice Downtown Revitalization Association. The Alice Chamber of Commerce provided great sponsorships by purchasing a large overhead banner to be placed over Main Street 1 week before every market day.

Future Program Efforts

The Jim Wells County Farmers Market will continue to provide a monthly market on the second Saturday of the month. The market will continue to provide nutrition education as well as increase gardening education provided from AgriLife Extension Specialists and the development of a community garden. An increase in Health awareness will also be implemented within the market and city of Alice Health and Wellness program along with support from Healthy South Texas.



4-H and Youth Development

2015 Jim Wells County One Day 4-H

Barbie Wymore

County Extension Agent - 4-H Youth

RELEVANCE

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



RESPONSE

The specific objectives of One Day 4-H were:

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

Jim Wells County 4-H Council took leadership of the Jim Wells County 4-H One Day 4-H projects and 5 events were held throughout the day: Honorary Tree Planting in Honor of 4-H Volunteer Benny Clegg, "No-Bake" Cookies for First Responders, Bealls Fall Fashion Show, Cupcake Wars, and Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign. The full days activities was done in Honor of Benny Clegg, 4-H'ers thought that would be appropriate. A full program was delivered that morning where community members and 4-H'ers shared their thoughts about Benny. Approximately 100 members of the community attended. The Council Officers presented each of the members of the Clegg family with a seedling that was similar to the tree planted. This was a powerful and moving tribute to one of our own. Benny's son Buddy is a current 4-H'er in Jim Wells County.

Following the tree planting, 4-H'ers adjourned to make "No Bake" Cookies for First Responders in Jim Wells County. The 4-H'ers worked together to make the cookies. The event was organized by the Hesseltine family. Following the preparing of the cookies, the 4-H'ers boxed the cookies up and delivered in teams to Premont Police Department, Alice Police Department, Orange Grove Police Department, Jim Wells County Sheriff's Department, and Alice Fire Department.

4-H and Youth Development

Also, at the same time the “No Bake” Cookies were being prepared, 4-H’ers and adults entered cupcakes into “Cupcake Wars.” This is a fun annual event in which youth and adults make and decorate cupcakes with a theme. This year’s theme was “My Favorite 4-H Project.” This is a fun time plus everyone that comes to the One Day 4-H events gets to try cupcakes and vote on the People’s Choice Award.

In coordination with the Bealls Department Store, a Fall Style Show was held during National 4-H Week “Style By Invitation” 4-H’ers were given the opportunity to search the store high and low to put the perfect outfit together for Fall with the assistance of store associates. 10 4-H’ers participated and had a great time showing off their style.

The last event for the day was the Paper Clover Campaign at the Alice Tractor Supply Company. 4-H clubs take turns manning a 4-H information booth and giving information about 4-H in Jim Wells County, as well as selling the \$1 paper clovers. Proceeds from the event benefit the Jim Wells County 4-H program.

RESULTS

A retrospective post-test was used to measure the participant’s level of understanding and behavior changes, as well as some 4-H’ers, parents, alumni wrote essays about the impact 4-H has had on their life.

- 40% of responders feel that they have a better understanding on how to organize and plan a community service project.
- 90% of responders have a more positive feeling about the community service project that they conducted.
- 100% of responders are more comfortable working in a team.
- 90% of responders will be more comfortable with serving in a leadership role because they have participated in 4-H.
- 100% of responders will be more of an influence on their community/county because of this project.
- 100% of responders have a better appreciation of the community they live in as a result of participating in this project.

Comments about One Day 4-H

- “The tree planting and One Day 4-H being in Honor of Benny Clegg was a way to honor a great 4-H leader and show support to our great friend Buddy. It was an emotional day that really showed the counties love for each other. To end it in a great way, we took cookies to law enforcement to show Jim Wells County’s appreciation for all their hard work.” – Kyleigh Carr
- “My favorite part of the One Day 4-H was getting to deliver the cookies. Ashlyn, Erin, and I went to the Alice Fire Station. This was a project that I’ll never forget.” – Elise Hesseltine
- “Jim Wells County 4-H planted our One Day 4-H tree in honor of a leader Benny Clegg. Baking No Bake cookies and delivering them to the police and fire departments in our county was a great way to give back to our county.” – Rebecca Carr

Comments about 4-H Means to Me

- “Sometimes it takes leaving something behind to actually truly understand how much it meant to you. 4-H hasn’t necessarily allowed me to continue educating for agriculture, but it has allowed me to find myself and for that I could not be more grateful. It opened my eyes to the world: diving into cultures, exploring new opportunities and connecting with new souls from across the country. I am blessed to be apart of a family I will forever cherish.” – Donny Guerra

4-H and Youth Development

- “As 4-H alumni I can say that 4-H is extremely meaningful to me as it provided me with an abundance of joyful, unique, and educational experiences I otherwise would not have encountered without the program. I began my 4-H journey as a shy eight-year-old girl from the Premont Cactus 4-H club and became involved with animal, community, and family/consumer projects. By the time I graduated from high school I was involved in most projects and opportunities that were presented to me. By this time I believed I had completed my 4-H journey as an accomplished and outgoing leader in my community. During my undergraduate career I was lucky enough to be employed by the Texas 4-H Conference Center for three summers and was privileged enough to work with amazing Texas 4-H 4-Hers and county extension agents. As I am graduating with my masters in social work soon, I have realized that my 4-H journey never ended; instead I continue to use the skills I learned through the program in my personal and professional life. Whether it is from being able to distinguish the better buy from consumer education, having the ability to properly and confidently speak in front of social work colleagues from public speaking, competently serving my clients from building on clearer thinking and strong personal skills, or navigating new unknown cities around the US from my exposure with the 4-H Traveling Clovers, these experiences have assisted me in discovering my strengths and personal values in life. In addition, the relationships you build with other 4-Hers, adults, and extension agents will continue to flourish and will not end because you have graduated. These people become family members and will support you as you move on to the next stage in your life. Whether they are near or far or you’re only able to see them once a year, you will carry memorable and unforgettable memories with these individuals forever. You will yearn for 4-H reunions that will be full of laughter, happy tears, and appreciation for the incredible times you had together. Our 4-H family is strong, passionate, and continues to uphold the 4-H mission, pledge, motto, and values everyday. In retrospect I owe so much to the 4-H program and extension agents like Barbie Wymore that provide an inclusive, nourishing, and comfortable environment, which allows youth to enhance their life skills, and develop socially, emotionally, and educationally. I will forever advocate for youth and adults to become involved in 4-H.” – JoAnna Chapa
- “4-H has taught me so much that it has helped me become the person I am today. Through 4-H, I have learned about animals, photography, sewing, cooking, public speaking and so much more. The most important things I have learned about is leadership and how to give to others through community service. 4-H is not just a club... It is part of my life. 4-H has helped me become a goal setter as well as an achiever. The 4H activities and camps are my best memories. I am proud to be a 4-Her...it is who I am.” – Erin Gallagher
- “That shy little girl that would rather do anything else before speaking in front of people was me. The one that had never shown a rabbit, didn’t know how to sew, and didn’t have a clue in the world what vitamin D is, that used to be me. Through 4-H, I have reached new heights and broken my own boundaries when it comes to setting goals and reaching them. Speaking in front of a crowd doesn’t scare me anymore, and with 4-H I have become the leader that I’ve always wanted to be. I’ve gained endless knowledge because of 4-H, and I wouldn’t change my experiences in this program for the world.” – Elise Hesseltine
- “In my leadership roles I’ve learned direction, responsibility, respect, and many more traits a leader possesses, all of which will allow me to continue to help others as well as myself. From my competitions I’ve learned to work with others, speak to others, and accept the fact that sometimes not winning even has a lesson in it that I can learn from. All of this came from my 4-H activities. Friends, friendships that will last a lifetime from the club level all the way to the state level. This year I gained 31 new friends from across the state by being a part of state council. These friendships will grow me as a person. In the end, 4-H is not one thing to me, 4-H is a way for me. Without 4-H, I would be stuck in the back of the room, still thinking what could I be doing instead of what am I doing next. 4-H is a passion of mine and will remain one.” – David Gebert

4-H and Youth Development

INTERPRETATION

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



One Day 4-H was dedicated in memory of our friend, leader and supporter, Benny Clegg. A tree was planted at the County Fairgrounds in his honor and the day's events touched on his contributions throughout the years. From the cupcake wars to a fashion show, all these events honored his support of the 4-H program.



Community Economic Development

2015 Texas Community Futures Forum

Rogelio Mercado
County Extension Agent-Agriculture



RELEVANCE

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education. To achieve this mission, Extension faculty must seek input on a timely basis from community members and leaders on the current issues facing their respective communities. Only then, are Extension faculty able to consult with their respective program area committees and build educational programs, collaborations and some cases, community efforts to address these issues.

RESPONSE

Extension Faculty in Jim Wells County participated in a state wide issue identification process called the Texas Community Futures Forum. With the guidance of the Jim Wells County Leadership Advisory Board, key leaders and community stakeholders were identified and recruited to participate in this event held on April 14, 2015. Approximately 45 participants attended the event and helped identify issues affecting the four program areas which Extension faculty address: Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), Families and Health (F&H), Youth (Y), and Community and Resource Development (CRED).

RESULTS

Below is a list of the issues which were identified and the program areas in which these were discussed.

- Water (ANR, F&H, CRED)
- New Land Owner and Producer Education (ANR)
- Agriculture Technologies (ANR)
- Feral Hogs (ANR)
- Drug and Substance Abuse (Y, F&H, CRED)
- Sex and Teen Pregnancy (Y, F&H)
- Parental Involvement (Y, F&H)
- Literacy (ANR, Y, F&H, CRED)
- Internet Safety (Y, F&H)
- Safety and Protection (ANR, Y, F&H, CRED)
- Infrastructure of Roads and Utilities (ANR, CRED)



These issues will serve as a foundation for Extension Faculty to initiate program plans for the next five years. The Jim Wells County Leadership Advisory Board and Extension Program Area Committees will review these issues on a yearly basis and determine the progress made in each area. Future program efforts will involve activities addressing these issues.

During the forum, participants vote on the importance of each issue identified by the group. This process allows the facilitator an opportunity to rank the issues and further discuss those surfacing to the top.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Jim Wells County

Staff



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