



2016

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 2016 Educational Contacts

TOTAL CONTACTS	14,651
Educational Events	6,146
Other Contacts	8,505

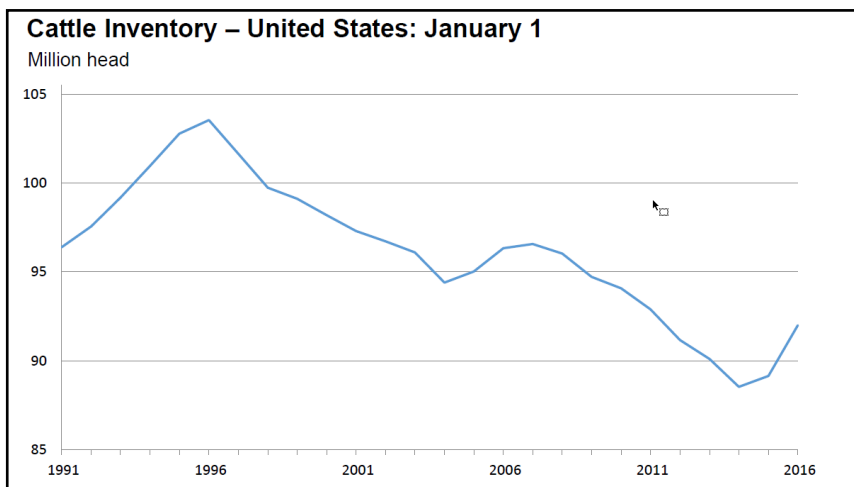
	CONTACTS	HOURS
All Sessions	6,146	15,295
Plan Level		
In Depth	2,672	5,786
Out Reach	3,133	8,679
Organizational Support	341	830
Task Type		
Planning Group	763	611
Educational Method	4,819	14,177
Interpretation	564	507
Delivery Method		
Face-to-Face	6,143	15,292
Technology Assisted	3	3
Demographics		
White	2,183	6,589
Black	9	26
Hispanic	3,953	8,679
Asian	1	1

Beef Cattle and Range Management

Rogelio Mercado, County Extension Agent-Agriculture

RELEVANCE

Beef cattle play a vital role in the livelihood of land owners and managers in Jim Wells County (JWC). However, county inventory has fluctuated from 25,000 head of mother cows in 2007, down to less than 10,000 head in early 2014. Drought conditions experienced from 2011-2013 were a major factor in local producers reducing, and in some cases liquidate all of their herds. During 2014, all-time highs in the cattle market were experienced as the national cattle herd also saw a dip in numbers that dated back to the early 1950's. During this time, most beef



cattle producers were faced with empty pastures and the inability to restock due to increased cow prices and low availability of replacement cattle. These conditions created the need for new program ideas and topics for producers to become more informed and efficient in their operations.

RESPONSE

Using data gathered from previous year's surveys and evaluations, and input from local industry groups, the JWC Extension Beef Committee participated in developing and planning two major educational programs which incorporated topics identified thru the survey process. Based on comments in customer satisfaction surveys, the group modified meeting locations, time and length of presentations to better suit the need of clientele. Agent Rogelio Mercado also collaborated with the JWC Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the South Texas Grazing Land Coalition (STGLC) in conducting their annual educational programs for beef cattle producers. Below is a summary of these four programs.

- **Beef 706:** Thirty-six beef cattle producers participated in a first ever, South Texas Beef 706 Program.
 - **Part I** – May 23, 2016: A feeder cattle selection and marketing clinic was held at Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Alice, Texas. Participants were teamed up into six groups and asked to evaluate seven head of feeder cattle. A mock auction was conducted and each group purchased a calf to follow thru the program. The feeder cattle were shipped to the King Ranch Feed Yard for the next 154 days.
 - **Part II** – October 25, 2016: The cattle were shipped to Kane's Meat Processors in Corpus Christi, Texas. Participants received information on live cattle grading and evaluated the cattle prior to slaughter. A tour of Kane's followed providing the participants with an inside look at beef processing, value-added carcass fabrication, bi-products, packaging, and food safety practices.



Agriculture and Natural Resources

- **Part III** – November 1, 2016: One half of each carcass was shipped to the Meat Science Lab at Texas A&M University in Kingsville. Each group received additional information on carcass quality and yield grading and then had the opportunity to grade the carcass of the calf they had purchased in Part I of the program. A hands-on workshop was then conducted to cut and fabricate each carcass. Weight data was collected on the cuts, lean trim, fat trim and bone to collectively assess a cut-out value of each calf.
- **Part IV** – November 2, 2016: Program participants attended a final seminar at the Kleberg Wildlife Center in Kingsville to summarize the economic data on the cattle they had purchased. Mercado prepared and presented the final statistics for each calf and announced the winning team.
- **Ranch and Range Field Day:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the JWC Extension Beef Committee in conducting their Annual Ranch and Range Clinic on Saturday, September 3, 2016. The event was hosted by Mr. Richard Shimer at his family's new 1000 acre ranch located five miles north of Alice. Over 80 people participated in the program. Topics included beef cattle market, fever tick, land owner issues, long term weather patterns, hay quality and selection, feral swine control and chute side best management practices.
- **Beef Cattle Marketing Seminar:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the JWC SWCD in hosting their annual educational program for area beef producers on Thursday, August 18, 2016. This year's program was held at Gulf Coast Livestock Auction and focused on the valuation of the cull cow. Auction barn owner, Mr. Eddie Garcia, provided a live demonstration and discussion on how cull cows are valued across the ring and how to increase the value of their cull cows. Fifty beef producers attended the event.
- **Non-Traditional Rancher Field Day:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the STGLC in hosting a "Non-Traditional" Rancher Field Day on Wednesday, October 26, 2016. The event was held at 3E Brand Meats in Ben Bolt, Texas. Presentations on Natural vs Organic Products, Creating Niche Markets, and Marketing Strategies were among the topics in the program. Well over 60 people participated in the program.



Beef cattle producers learned about carcass quality and yield grade criteria during the Special South Texas Beef 706 Program.



Beef cattle producers learned about cattle evaluation and valuation at various programs throughout the year.

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RESULTS

These programs provided beef cattle producers with timely information on topics relative to a dynamic, yet challenging year in the beef cattle industry. Program evaluation and input was solicited on two of the above named programs. Below is a summary of the evaluation results.

- **Beef 706:** A retrospective post survey was given to the participants at the end of the event. Twenty-two out of thirty-six participants completed survey. The survey respondents either own or manage 34,289 cattle and 840,278 acres.
 - On average, the respondents indicated they had a 2.6 fold increase in knowledge regarding 5 beef management areas, including feed yard performance, BQA, and beef cattle evaluation and value.
 - 100% responded that what they learned would help them in their businesses, with 90% expecting to make changes in their production practices based on the information and skills they learned.
 - 100% of the respondents indicated that what they learned would either save them or make them more money with an average of \$31.82/head, ranging from \$10 - \$50. When applied to the total number of head managed or owned by these participants, the program had an overall economic impact of \$1,091,013.64.
 - Overall the survey respondents scored the program 9.35 (excellent) on a ten-point scale.
- **Ranch and Range Clinic:** A customer satisfaction survey was given to the participants after the event. Forty-five usable surveys were submitted.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being what they expected.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being easy to understand.
 - 98% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information given on each topic.
 - 98% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information in decisions about your own situation.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the relevance of the examples used.
 - 80% of respondents plan to take actions or make changes based on the information gained from this activity.
 - 95% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this Extension activity.



Best management practices for the health of beef calves was a popular discussion and demonstration at this year's Ranch and Range Clinic held at Shimer Land and Cattle Ranch located north of Alice.

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PARTNERSHIPS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The JWC Extension Beef Committee appreciates the support of the following organizations/individuals for their support of area Extension educational efforts: Texas Beef Council, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, South Texas Grazing Land Coalition, Gulf Coast Livestock Auction, Kane's Meat Processors, 3E Brand Meats, Wishbone Cattle, and the JWC Soil and Water Conservation District. The leadership of Dr. Joe Paschal, Dr. Dan Hale and Dr. Tanner Machado in coordinating and teaching the Beef 706 program is greatly appreciated.



Brush management continues to be a topic of concern to land owners and managers. Mechanical and chemical methods of control continue to be most effective in south Texas.



Local land owners share with program participants issues of concern which affect land owners. Property rights and cattle fever tick outbreaks were discussed.

Calf Id	Purchase \$\$\$	Total Exp	Carcass Value	Profit/Loss
41	\$937.00	\$1,388.03	\$1,406.48	\$18.45
42	\$1,045.00	\$1,459.40	\$1,167.99	-\$291.41
43	\$1,012.00	\$1,547.01	\$1,348.01	-\$199.00
44	\$819.00	\$1,237.06	\$1,323.56	\$86.50
45	\$934.00	\$1,292.32	\$1,248.95	-\$43.38
46	\$1,086.00	\$1,501.03	\$1,413.51	-\$87.52
47	\$905.00	\$1,258.78	\$1,092.92	-\$165.86

Beef 706 participants learned that the economics in beef cattle production are not always profitable across all segments of the industry.

Row Crop Production

Rogelio Mercado, County Extension Agent-Agriculture

RELEVANCE

Jim Wells County (JWC) agricultural producers farm approximately 80,000 acres of row crops each year. Over the last 10 years, issues including drought, insect pests, disease, increased production costs and declining commodity markets have created challenges in achieving farm profitability. A rapid increase in field technologies such as the use of drones and field mapping sensors are additional challenges which producers are faced with in order to keep up with today's rapidly changing industry. Also, most recently, changes in long term weather patterns have brought increased rainfall to the area, creating surplus soil moisture conditions making planting, pest management and ultimately harvesting very difficult. These conditions created the need for new program ideas and topics for producers to become more informed and efficient in their operations.



Good soil moisture conditions led to an increase in JWC corn acreage this year.

RESPONSE

Based on data gathered from previous year's surveys and evaluations, and input from local industry groups, the JWC Extension Row Crops Committee participated in developing and implementing two major educational programs which addressed topics identified thru the survey process. The committee also provided input on three result demonstration trials which provided producers with production data on corn and grain sorghum varieties and also grain sorghum plant populations. Below is a summary of these educational efforts for row crop producers.

- **JWC Row Crops Tour and Seminar:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the JWC Row Crops Committee in hosting their annual Row Crops Tour and Seminar on Thursday, June 2, 2016. The program was held at the new AgPro/John Deere dealership in Alice. Over 40 agricultural producers and industry representatives participated in the program. Participants received information on pest management, harvest strategies, commodity markets and industry updates. Pesticide applicators also received 3 CEUs for their participation in the program.
- **JWC Farm Expo and Nutrient Management Seminar:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted the JWC Row Crops Committee in hosting their annual Farm Expo on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. The program was held at the Rifle Club in Orange Grove. Ten industry representatives participated by setting up displays of the products and services they provide. The seminar focused on soil nutrient management and commodity marketing. Well over 60 producers and industry representatives participated in the event. Pesticide applicators also received 3 CEUs for their participation in the program.

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- **Result Demonstrations:** Agent Rogelio Mercado assisted cooperator and committee members, Zach Adams and Allen Hensley in establishing three result demonstrations: Corn Variety Trial, Grain Sorghum Variety Trial, and Grain Sorghum Plant Population Trial. The trials were located east of Alice, Texas and provided valuable production data on varieties and plant populations for area producers.

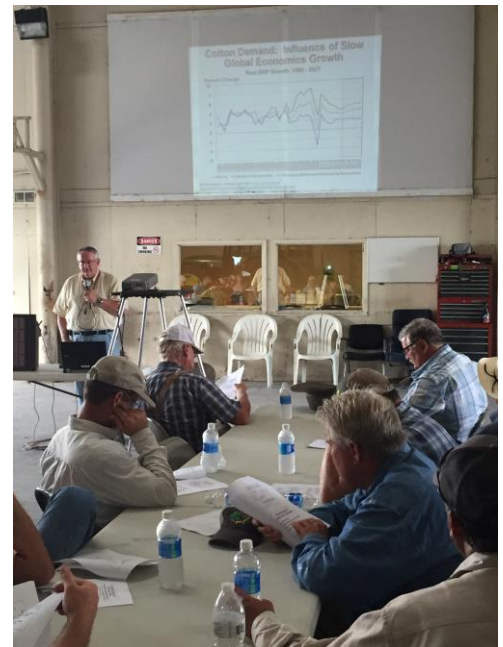
Result demonstrations allow producers to evaluate crop varieties, technologies and practices on their own farm.



RESULTS

These programs provided field crop producers with timely information on topics relevant to a challenging and dynamic year in row crop production. Program evaluations and input was solicited on the educational programs listed above. Below is a summary of the evaluation results and data collected thru the field demonstration trials.

- **JWC Row Crops Tour and Seminar:** A customer satisfaction survey was administered at the conclusion of the program. Forty-five (45) usable surveys were collected. Below is a summary of the analysis results.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being what they expected.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being accurate.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being easy to understand.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information given on each topic.
 - 100% of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information in decisions about your own situation.
 - 89% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned from this Extension activity.



Extension programs help farmers understand commodity markets and the factors affecting their prices.

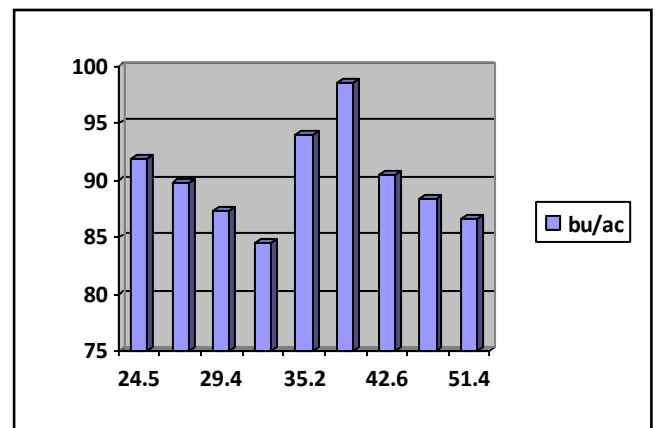
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- **JWC Farm Expo and Nutrient Management Seminar:** A customer satisfaction survey was administered at the conclusion of this program. Below are some of the comments and recommendations gathered from the surveys.
 - Very informative and the food was great!
 - Have a good light above speaker.
 - Have TXDOT come again.
 - Needed more lighting. Future: More plant identification.
 - Great program.
 - Keep programs coming with weed chemical resistance.
 - Great presentation of information.



Industry representatives provide valuable support to Extension educational programs by assisting as sponsors and presenters during the events.

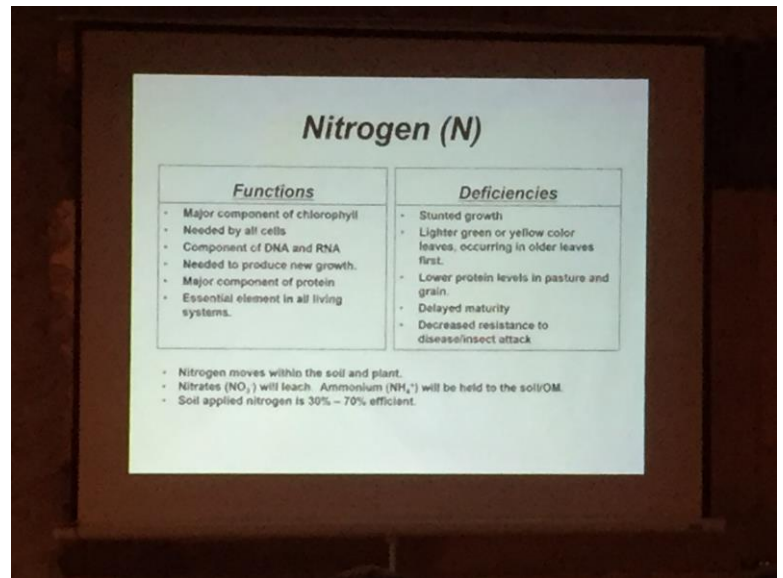
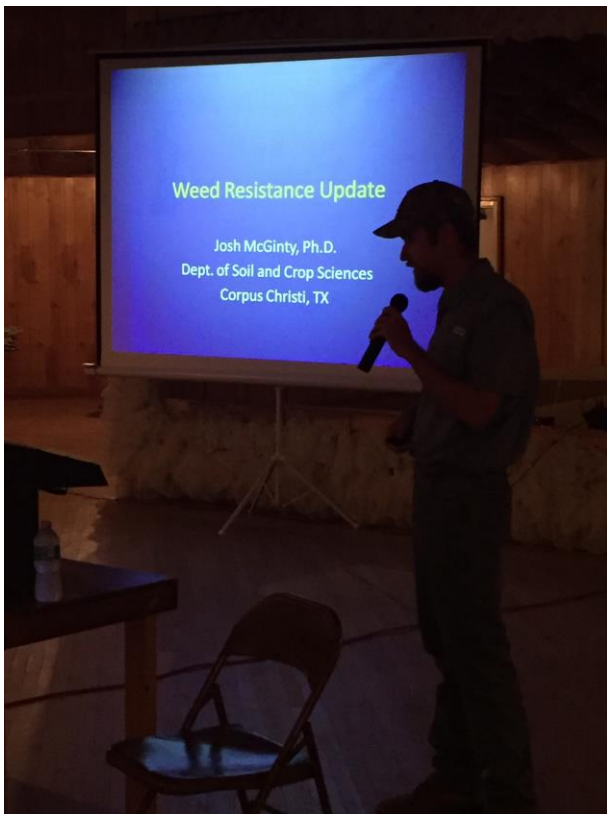
- **Result Demonstrations:** Production data was collected on each of the trials at the time of harvest. This information was shared with area row crop farmers at the JWC Farm Expo and Nutrient Management Seminar and also distributed in the November JWC Agriculture Newsletter. Below is a summary of the findings of each trial.
 - **Corn Variety Trial:** Twenty-four (24) corn varieties representing 8 seed companies were established on February 19, 2016 and harvested on August 5, 2016. The average yield was 102.6 bu/ac with a crop value of \$358.96/ac. The top yielding variety was Dekalb 67-14 with a yield of 114.4 bu/ac and a value of \$400.54/ac.
 - **Grain Sorghum Variety Trial:** Twenty-nine (29) grain sorghum varieties representing 9 seed companies were established on February 19, 2016 and harvested on July 5, 2016. The average yield was 82 bu/ac with a crop value of \$453.62/ac. The top yielding variety was Pioneer 83G19 with a yield of 94 bu/ac and a value of \$516.97/ac.
 - **Grain Sorghum Plant Population Trial:** A trial with 9 plant populations ranging from 24,503 to 51,455 plants/acre was established on February 19, 2016 and harvested on July 5, 2016. Dekalb 37-07 was the variety used in the trial. The plot average was 90.2 bu/ac with a range from 84.5 to 98.6 bu/ac. The highest yielding population was 38k plants/acre with crop value of \$517.17/acre.



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PARTNERSHIPS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The JWC Extension Row Crops Committee appreciates the support of the following organizations/individuals for their support of area Extension educational efforts: Ag Pro, John Deere, Orange Grove Co-op, Monsanto, Sorghum Partners, Golden Acres, South Texas Cotton and Grain Association, JWC Farm Bureau and the JWC Soil and Water Conservation District. Extension specialist support provided by Dr. Josh McGinty, Dr. Robert Bowling, Dr. Levi Russel and Mr. Mac Young is appreciated in their participation of committee meetings and speakers for various programs.



Chemical weed resistance and soil nutrient management are important topics for area row crop farmers. Optimizing yields and crop quality while reducing input costs are also important goals for every operation.



Better Living for Texans – A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!

Sylvia Gonzales, Program Assistant – Better Living for Texans

RELEVANCE

More than 3.7 million 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.



RESPONSE

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

During 2016, 224 Jim Wells County adults completed the BLT Series- *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* This program focuses on improving vegetable and fruit intake, meal planning, increasing physical activity, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. The series of educational programs were delivered to senior citizens attending or residing at various adult day care centers or senior citizen centers in Alice, Premont, Orange Grove and Sandia. Mi Familia, Vida Buena, Casa Real and High Rise are among the centers being targeted. Also through a partnership with Driscoll Children's Hospital, the series was also presented to expecting mothers participating in the Cadena de Madres Program.

RESULTS

The average household size for the participants was 3.71 people per household and the average age of the participants was 31.83 years. Participation in the selected assistance programs was as follows: SNAP 47.5%, food pantries or other emergency food assistance 33.9%, free/reduced school meals 33.0%, Head Start 20.8%, TANF 1.4%, and WIC 71.5%.

Changes in targeted behaviors were examined by evaluating the pre, post and follow-up surveys of those individuals who completed the program series.

Vegetable and Fruit Consumption

Behavior	Pre		Post		Follow-Up	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fruit Consumption						
None or rarely	18	8.1	0	0.0	3	1.4
1-2 times a week	71	31.8	21	9.5	13	5.9
3-4 times a week	58	26.0	60	27.0	17	7.7
1 time a day	18	8.1	52	23.4	15	6.8
2 times a day	36	16.1	61	27.5	106	47.7
3 or more times a day	22	9.9	28	12.6	68	30.6
Vegetable Consumption						
None or rarely	22	9.9	2	0.9	3	1.4
1-2 times a week	70	31.5	23	10.3	10	4.5
3-4 times a week	67	30.2	59	26.5	19	8.6
1 time a day	19	8.6	64	28.7	29	13.2
2 times a day	31	14.0	57	25.6	116	52.7
3 or more times a day	13	5.9	18	8.1	43	19.5
% of Plate Filled with Fruits and Vegetables						
0	2	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
1/4	88	39.8	11	4.9	10	4.5
1/3	70	31.7	105	47.1	29	13.1
1/2	48	21.7	94	42.2	173	78.3
3/4	13	5.9	13	5.8	9	4.1

Meal Planning and Food Management Practices

	Pre		Post		Follow-Up	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Plan meals in advance						
All of the time	17	7.7	31	14.0	95	42.8
Most of the time	35	15.9	93	42.1	110	49.5
Some of the time	56	25.5	82	37.1	4	1.8
Hardly ever	68	30.9	8	3.6	7	3.2
Never	43	19.5	7	3.2	6	2.7
Not sure	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Shop for food with a list						
All of the time	32	14.3	52	23.4	153	68.6
Most of the time	50	22.3	85	38.3	53	23.8
Some of the time	52	23.2	78	35.1	14	6.3
Hardly ever	60	26.8	4	1.8	1	0.4
Never	30	13.4	3	1.4	2	0.9

Family and Consumer Sciences

Not sure	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0
Compare prices when shopping								
All of the time	71	32.0		86	38.9		171	77.0
Most of the time	33	14.9		70	31.7		42	18.9
Some of the time	48	21.6		56	25.3		5	2.3
Hardly ever	47	21.2		6	2.7		3	1.4
Never	21	9.5		1	0.5		1	0.5
Not sure	2	0.9		2	0.9		0	0.0

Food Safety

	Pre			Post			Follow-Up	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Wash hands before preparing meals								
All of the time	165	74.3		189	84.8		202	91.4
Most of the time	41	18.5		31	13.9		17	7.7
Some of the time	12	5.4		3	1.3		2	0.9
Hardly ever	4	1.8		0	0.0		0	0.0
Never	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0
Wash fruits or vegetables before eating or preparing								
All of the time	149	66.5		172	78.2		195	88.2
Most of the time	41	18.3		39	17.7		20	9.0
Some of the time	24	10.7		9	4.1		5	2.3
Hardly ever	7	3.1		0	0.0		0	0.0
Never	3	1.3		0	0.0		1	0.5

Change in Physical Activity Behaviors

	Pre			Post			Follow-Up	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
How often are you physically active for at least 30 minutes, five days a week?								
All of the time	34	15.2		39	17.6		72	32.4
Most of the time	55	24.6		128	57.9		133	59.9
Some of the time	82	36.6		52	23.5		13	5.9
Hardly ever	46	20.5		1	0.5		4	1.8
Never	7	3.1		0	0.0		0	0.0

Significant Findings – After the Program

- 82.8% of the 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.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- 76.9% of the participants rated the BLT program as “excellent” while 21.3% rated the program as “very good.”
- 92.4% of the participants reported they were “very likely” to recommend BLT to another person and 98.7% of participants reported they were “very likely” or “likely” to attend another BLT program.
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- 98.7% of participants reported they were “very likely” or “likely” to attend another BLT program.
- 78.3% of the participants reported eating fruit 2-3 times a day.
- 72.2% of the participants reported eating vegetables 2-3 times a day.
- 92.3% of the participants reported planning their meals all or most of the time.
- 92.4% of the participants reported using a shopping list all or most of the time.
- 95.9% of the participants reported using comparative shopping all or most of the time.
- 99.1% of the participants reported washing their hand before preparing a meal all or most of the time.
- 97.2% of the participants reported washing fruits and vegetables before eating or preparing all or most of the time.
- 92.3% of the participants reported being physically active for 30 minutes a day, five days a week for all or most of the time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The partnerships with the various Senior Citizen Centers and Driscoll Children’s Hospital are critical to the success of the BLT Program Series – *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* Special thanks go out to their center and program coordinators for helping facilitate and coordinate our program efforts.



In Jim Wells County, the Better Living for Texans program delivers educational programs on foods and nutrition to the elderly who reside or participate in senior citizen centers and to expecting mothers through Driscoll Children’s Hospital – “Cadena de Madres” program.

Healthy South Texas – Walk Across Texas

Barbie Wymore, County Extension Agent- 4-H and Youth Development

RELEVANCE

The Healthy South Texas Initiative is committed to helping south Texas residents improve their quality of life by intervening in health risks and promoting healthy choices in people's every day routine. Diabetes, like several other diseases, is preventable if a person chooses to eat, exercise and make wise lifestyle choices which enhance their wellbeing. Health benefits are greatly enhanced by the people's productivity, mentality, attitude and cost savings from simply being healthy.

RESPONSE

With the help of the newly formed Healthy South Texas Coalition, agents Barbie Wymore and Rogelio Mercado implemented an exercise program called *Walk Across Texas*. The program recruited teams of 8 individuals who logged their miles for at least a cumulative amount of 830 miles. That is the distance between El Paso and Beaumont.



RESULTS

Over the course of the 8 week program, 369 participants walked a total of 29,938 MILES !!!



Besides the main health benefits of the program participants, it is estimated that the economic impact of Walk Across Texas in Jim Wells County is approximately \$1,483,286 !!!

It is estimated that 28 of the adults who completed the Walk Across Texas Program in Jim Wells County could avoid or delay the onset of diabetes through their increase in physical activity.



Healthy South Texas

Jim Wells County



EMPOWERING YOUTH

Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors are local, high-school age youth recruited by agents and trained to serve as a community health and wellness advocate. These ambassadors also assist county Extension agents in providing leadership to the youth components of Healthy South Texas.

Two Jim Wells County youth have been selected through the application process and trained. Youth Ambassadors have recently:

- Provided healthy snack ideas at the Orange Grove ISD Health Fair to 200 students and parents.
- Taught 153 elementary students nutrition and healthy snack choices at Ben Bolt - Palito Blanco Elementary School.
- Taught middle school students at Ben Bolt Middle School ACE After-School program (50 students) and summer school (46 students) programs healthy cooking meal options.
- Provided leadership for their teams during Jim Wells County Walk Across Texas program.
- Spoke to 4th grade students (approximately 900) about beef and dairy in their diet during Jim Wells County Ag Fair.



Youth Ambassadors leading recipe demonstrations with students in Ben Bolt-Palito Blanco School District.



DINNER TONIGHT/NUTRITION EDUCATION

Healthy eating begins at home and with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services Dinner Tonight! program, we make it easier for people to plan and cook healthy meals. Recognizing the challenges of busy families, this program uses face-to-face cooking schools and an all-access website to teach cooking tips and techniques, provide reliable nutrition information, address food safety concerns, and give guidance on food preparation.

Jim Wells, Kleberg, Kenedy, Brooks, Duval, and Nueces Counties partnered with the King Ranch to host a Wild Game Dinner Tonight Cooking School with more than 120 participants on August 10, 2016.

- Agents and specialists modified King Ranch recipes to meet the American Dietary Guidelines, filmed recipe demonstration videos for the Dinner Tonight website, published a wild game recipe publication, and established a partnership with the King Ranch for future worksite wellness programs.
- Cooking school participants indicated high levels of satisfaction with the event (98% mostly or completely satisfied), accuracy of information and instructor's knowledge (100% mostly or completely satisfied), and many indicated they learned about nutrients, meal preparation, and using healthy substitutions.



Dinner Tonight features wild game during healthy cooking school in partnership with the King Ranch.



HEALTH EDUCATION

- Provided health education program including eating healthy and increasing activity level during Red Ribbon Week at Premont Elementary School for approximately 300 youth.
- Provided healthy snack options at the Ben Bolt - Palito Blanco Health Fair for approximately 100 students and parents.

Agriculture Literacy

Barbie Wymore, County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development

RELEVANCE

Today's youth are further removed from farming and ranching, and rural life as a whole. Consequently, their knowledge of food and fiber production, wildlife management, and environmental stewardship is minimal. Their perception and knowledge is that the grocery store, like HEB, is their food source and chocolate milk comes from chocolate cows. They believe that zoos are a wildlife habitat and their backyard as a natural environment. This is how many young people relate to the world around them. It is important to educate young people about food and fiber production, wildlife management, and environmental stewardship to ensure a better understanding of these industries and how they impact their everyday lives. These young people need to be exposed to these industries in order to develop interest in careers and help them make informed decisions that may impact each area in the future.



Jim Wells County Ag Fair reaches an average of over 800 4th grade students each year. This Agriculture Awareness program teaches the students and their teachers about food and fiber production, environmental stewardship and wildlife management.

RESPONSE

Jim Wells County Extension Faculty formed an Ag Literacy Task Force with Jim Wells County Farm Bureau Directors and staff from Natural Resource Conservation Service to host an agriculture awareness field day for 4th grade students and their teachers, Jim Wells County "Ag Fair." This was the 11th Annual and was the most attended "Ag Fair" to date.

Nearly One-Thousand (981) 4th grade students from Premont, Ben Bolt, Alice, Orange Grove, San Diego, Falfurrias, Freer, La Gloria, St. Elizabeth, and St. Joseph, all participated. 200-275 students attended either a morning or afternoon session on Wednesday or Thursday, May 16-17, 2016. The 30 minute general session covered Texas Agriculture commodities. The students then attended 5 breakout sessions for approximately 25 minutes each. The sessions included: small animal production, large animal production, environment and natural resources, wildlife, and cotton and feed grains. Teachers also received the curriculum "Food and Fiber for the 21st Century" before "Ag Fair."

Fifteen (15) Jim Wells County 4-H members were recruited and trained to serve as group leaders. As group leaders, 4-H'ers met their classes as they got to the fairgrounds, directed the classes to their sessions, gave them a brief explanation of the 4-H program, and answered any questions the classes had about "Ag Fair" and presented teachers with follow up goodies and packets

Community Economic Development

RESULTS

In 2016, the standard Science of Agriculture pre and post-test plus additional multiple choice questions customized to the Jim Wells County Ag Fair sessions was used. Customer satisfaction surveys were used with the teachers. 52 teachers were surveyed with 27 teachers returning the surveys. 250 students were targeted with completing pre and post-test evaluations with 198 returning the pre-tests and 142 returning the post tests. 5 random students from each classroom were selected by the teacher to take the pre and post-tests.

Knowledge Change Question	Pre-Test % Correct	Post-Test % Correct	Increase in Knowledge
Agriculture changes my life every day.	52.0%	83.1%	59.81%
Agriculture is more than food.	53.5%	74.6%	39.44%
Many of our clothes like blue jeans are made of cotton.	81.8%	96.5%	17.97%
Male white tailed deer grown new antlers every year.	89.9%	95.8%	6.57%
An animal that gets food from killing and eating other animals is a carnivore.	75.3%	81.7%	8.5%
Grains (like wheat, corn, and rice) provide my body with carbohydrates which gives me energy.	72.7%	89.4%	22.98%
I am going home to tell my parents about the importance of agriculture.	64.6%	78.2%	21.06%

TEACHER COMMENTS

- This year, the CD with power points and lessons was a big plus! My students really loved it!
- Animal Stations were among the favorites for our students.
- Great information on predator facts and how to spot venomous snakes. Students loved the animal show.
- The students loved discussing where hamburgers came from.
- Students really enjoyed the mini cotton gin and the hand-on approach of touching the cotton.
- Learned about cotton and facts I never knew.
- Great information covered. Made my students aware of water needs and what they could do to help.
- Students really enjoyed seeing the sheep get sheared.
- The majority liked small animal's production the best, they were really excited about the sheep being sheared.
- I really enjoyed this year's stations. The kids really had a good time.

Community Economic Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Fifteen community volunteers assisted in teaching the learning sessions, as well as assisted with set-up, lunch, and marketing of this program. Sponsors thru donations of monetary value, equipment, animals, and time include: Jim Wells County Farm Bureau, USDA-NRCS, Nueces River Authority, Tomas Ranch from Freer, Boggan Family, Edelen Family, Nesloney Farms, Tymrak Farms, Cadena Farms, WB Cattle Company, and the Texas Department of Agriculture.



Jim Wells County Ag Fair uses local agriculture producers and industry representatives to teach students about food and fiber production, wildlife management and environmental stewardship.

Foods and Nutrition

Barbie Wymore, County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development

RELEVANCE

With Texas being the 19th most obese state in the nation and the percentage of the food budget spent on away-from-home food increasing steadily, healthy lifestyles programming is critical. The 4-H Food Challenge is a grass-roots effort developed by County Extension Agents to address the need for a highly-charged foods experience that teaches youth about making healthy food choices and how to prepare healthy foods. In the Food Challenge, youth work together to create a dish using a predetermined set of ingredients. From these ingredients, 4-H members must identify, prepare and then present information related to the preparation process, nutritional value, serving size and cost of the dish. Throughout this process, 4-H members are applying the knowledge and skills gained through participation in the 4-H foods and nutrition project, demonstrating their culinary and food safety skills, and continuing to learn about making healthier food choices.

RESPONSE

The goal of implementing the 4-H Food Challenge was to give youth and volunteers an opportunity for increasing their knowledge related to foods and nutrition and being able to apply the knowledge and skills gained through project experiences. Specific goals included:

- Provide opportunities for participants to exhibit their knowledge and skills when preparing and presenting a dish.
- Equip youth with knowledge and resources to make healthy food choices.
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members.
- Promote teamwork.
- Give participants opportunities for public speaking.
- Provide leadership opportunities for youth.

In Jim Wells County, 21 4-H youth participated in Food Challenge. Other learning opportunities given to youth to learn about foods and nutrition included: 4-H 101, Foods and Nutrition Workshop, Healthy Lifestyles Field Trip, and Foods Summer Camp.



The 4-H Food Challenge teaches youth about nutrition, food preparation, food safety and engages them in team work and public speaking competitions.

Community Economic Development

4-H MEMBER COMMENTS

- I have learned to be safe when we are cutting so that we do not cut ourselves and not to cross contaminate.
- I learned how to work with others.
- I learned how to flip a tortilla.
- I learned how to communicate and how to be a leader.
- Today I learned that if you make healthy decisions you will have a healthy lifestyle.
- Lead delicately but don't dictate. How to cook shrimp.
- I learned to communicate with ease and be patient and flexible.
- I learned how to open and crush up garlic.



4-H members practice preparing and presenting their food items for the 4-H Food Challenge.

RESULTS

As a result of participating in the 4-H Food Challenge, 21 participants competed in the 2016 Jim Wells County Food Show and also completed the retrospective post survey for Food Challenge: The data collected showed:

Level of Understanding	Mean Before	Mean After	Percentage Change
My understanding of MyPyramid	1.90	3.29	46.3%
My knowledge of foods nutrients and their functions	2.14	3.29	38.3%
My understanding of the importance of food safety	2.90	3.76	28.7%
My knowledge of how to alter a recipe according to dietary need	2.24	3.29	35.0%
My understanding of how to read nutrition facts labels	2.38	3.19	35.0%
My understanding of kitchen safety	2.71	3.62	30.3%
My knowledge of the purpose of different cooking methods	2.48	3.48	33.3%

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Jim Wells County Youth Board assisted with incorporating foods and nutrition project in their training to help increase nutrition knowledge, leadership, and teamwork. Rogelio Mercado, County Extension Agent – Ag, assisted with Outdoor Cooking during 4-H Summer Foods Camp. 4-H Adult Leaders assisted with Healthy Lifestyles Trip to learn about herbs and peaches. 4-H Adult Leaders also assisted at the 4-H Foods Workshop where youth learned how to devein shrimp, how to work together as a team for food challenge and preparing for Food Show.

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