



Extension Education in Starr 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.

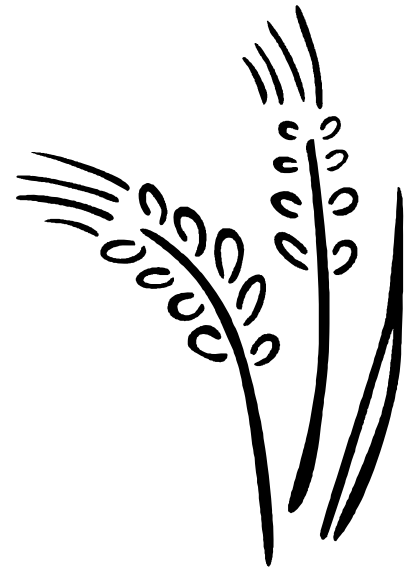
EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

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.

Starr County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts

Program Area Committees – 6
Organized 4-H Clubs – 6
4-H Club Members - 198
4-H Community Based Outreach –2,378
4-H Curriculum Enrichment – 2,805
4-H Total Volunteers – 39
Starr County Fair Board – 30



- Beef Cattle Production & Management Program
 - Water Quality Protection Program
 - Agriculture Profitability Plan

Making a Difference

Beef Cattle Production & Management Program Starr County 2016

Developed by Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR

Relevance

Beef cattle production in Starr County accounts for \$20 million annually in cash receipts and is the highest ranked agricultural commodity. The beef cattle industry in the region includes cow/calf, stocker cattle and a few feeder operations. Beef cattle enterprises vary from small acreage landowners to large commercial and purebred operations. Beef cattle production has a significant impact on the economic viability of Starr County.

Response

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. Agent conducted two (2) educational ranch field days for Starr County ranchers that focused on sustainable and profitable beef cattle management systems. These programs were all scheduled in the Spring and Fall by the Starr County Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee early in the year. These activities were co-sponsored by the local soil and water conservation district, Starr County Farm Bureau and Texas Mexico Border Coalition. These educational activities featured hands-on demonstrations that were interactive
2. Program topics were selected by the AGNR committee. The committee met earlier in 2016 to select the program topics from a list and then planned for the location and program evaluation strategy. Agent asked planning committee members to consider evaluations from previous year to plan this year's educational programs. As a result, committee members contacted Matt Robinson from the East Foundation to discuss some of the work they have been doing with drones in their ranching operations.
3. A special program at the local livestock sales barn was organized with the support and assistance of Extension Economists, Dr. Samuel Zapata, and Dr. Levi Russell to collect marketing data. This marketing data collection has been on-going for three year's. This year, was the first time that we featured a program topic, at one of the field days, that discussed the results of the study. Two

Extension publications have been written by Dr. Levi Russell based on the data that is collected monthly.

4. Agriculture and natural resource planning committee members secured \$2,250 from local ag businesses to sponsor the two educational programs. The financial resources were used to sponsor meals, refreshments and door prizes.

5. Agent compiled summary of the Beef Cattle Production and Management Program based on the results of the evaluations that were collected from each of the participants that attended the educational programs.

6. 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 increase of knowledge in practices related to beef cattle selection, restocking or destocking, grazing management, nutrition, reproduction efficiency, and marketing strategies.

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

- R.Y. Livestock Sales, Inc.
- Starr County Farm Bureau
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition
- Starr Soil & Water Conservation District

Results

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

- 90% of participants gained knowledge on the importance of selecting quality sires.
- 89% of participants felt that they learned the importance of what cattle market buyers are paying premiums for, based on the market data that is collected monthly.
- 98% of the participants felt that they learned something new with regards to new ranching technology based on the drone demonstration that was featured in the Fall Ranch Field Day.
- 83% of the participants indicated that they would follow prescribed grazing strategy based on the forage carrying capacity of their pastures.
- The Spring ranch field day had a record attendance for Starr County with one- hundred thirty two (132) producers in attendance.

Summary. This program did appear to build knowledge and change perceptions concerning sustainable and profitable beef cattle management systems . Producer responses indicate that they have a better appreciation new technology in ranching and selecting commercial breeding cattle with desired market qualities while maintaining sustainable grazing practices. This program will continue next year. Agent will use producer evaluations and committee input to organize future ranch oriented educational programs.

Making a Difference

Water Quality Protection Program Starr County 2016

Developed by Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR

Relevance

San Isidro is a rural community of about 1,500 residents in northern Starr County. All the residents in this community rely on private wells for drinking water and daily household use. Unlike residents that use community water systems, homeowners with private wells are not protected by statewide regulations that monitor drinking water. The management of private water wells and the quality of the drinking water is left up to the home owners. The voluntary management of private water wells is a problem because most health-related pollutants in water are symptomless. As a result, homeowners with private water supplies may be exposed unknowingly to health related pollutants unless they voluntarily have their water tested for the correct water quality parameters.

Response

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. Worked with volunteer members of the Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee to develop a task force that would address water quality issues and address concerning issues to the public.
2. Ordered reagent kits to be able to use the water screening equipment that was secured through a local grant from Medina Electric. The total amount of the grant was for \$2, 295.
3. Coordinated with Amy Valdez (Health South Texas Specialist), Todd Swift and John Smith to secure internal grant from Healthy South Texas Initiative to conduct the program at no cost to the homeowners. The grant was secured to cover the cost of the standard screening and arsenic testing.
4. Provided educational pamphlets and publications to residence of Starr County to address issues on important underground water well screening for contaminations of bacteria and nitrates.
5. Collected thirty four (34) water well samples for screening. Arsenic testing was conducted based on evaluations conducted in previous years.

6. A follow-up letter was sent to all the people who submitted water well samples for screening. Test results were shared with them as well as possible ways to reduce contamination to their water wells.

7. A program was scheduled where thirty (30) people attended to learn more about water contamination in water wells and possible ways to prevent and correct contamination of these wells. The target audience was the participants that submitted water samples for screening. The program was held in San Isidro and all residents were invited.

7. Evaluated data that was gathered from participants, task force members and other stakeholders.

Evaluation Method. A one page evaluation form was administered to each participant during the educational events. This evaluation was organized by the Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee members who served in this special task force. The strategy was used to determine the level of clientele knowledge change acquired by the educational programming.

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

- Starr Soil & Water Conservation District
- Texas Mexico Border Coalition
- Medina Electric Co-op

Results

Water samples were analyzed for the following four contaminants that are likely to occur in rural areas.

- Total coliform bacteria are indicators used to determine if a pathway exists that might allow disease-causing bacteria to contaminate the water supply. E.coli bacteria are subset of coliform bacteria that only occur in animal or human wastes and indicate more serious contamination.
- Nitrate-nitrogen is a health related pollutant that usually originates from fertilizers, manure or septic systems.
- Arsenic is a relatively new concern in drinking water with serious health effects at very low concentrations.
- Salinity is a problem that most homeowners can detect but it is important to identify the concentrations to determine if the water is safe for plants and animals. This particularly important since some of this water is used to irrigate home lawns and used to water livestock and pets.

The results came back with (8) eight samples coming back with very high rates of arsenic. That equates to 23% of the samples collected. In addition to arsenic, 20% of the samples came back testing positive for E. Coli and 41% came back with very high rates nitrates. Because some of the residents continue to drink this water, this has become a public health concern.

Summary. This program built awareness amongst the participants and triggered a response by the community. Based on the evaluations, agent will continue to work with the community leaders to try to bring a community water system that is state regulated.

Making a Difference

2016 Agriculture Profitability Plan Starr County

Developed by Omar Montemayor, County Extension Agent AGNR

Relevance

Despite the wide spread urbanization of the Rio Grande Valley in the last decade, Starr County remains semi-rural with the majority of its income derived from agriculture. It is estimated that over 40,000 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.

Response

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

1. Two (2) Educational programs and workshops that offered 6 continuing education units toward a private applicator license.
2. Bull Gain Test and Heifer Development Program that offered a feedback program on the performance of animals consigned to the feedlot.
3. Texas Department of Agriculture private applicator license trainings. One conducted in Jim Hogg County and one in Starr County.
4. Re-activated the local FAC committee. This committee is made up of USDA representatives and Extension agent. It is organized to evaluate producer losses.
5. Brush Control Demonstration to control problematic Old Man's Beard plant in the northern part of the county on CRP fields.
6. Two Rancher Field Days.

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

7. Horticulture management training to local staff maintain who maintain youth gardens through the Working on Wellness Program.

8. Beef Cattle Marketing Program at local Sales Barn.

9. Water Well Screening program in the San Isidro area. This year included arsenic testing to the screening.

10. Agent secured a drone through local committee to demonstrate how this new technology can be applied in the farm and ranch business. Drone Applications in Agriculture was a program topic in the Fall rancher's program and the Kids & Kows & More program to introduce it to adult and youth audiences.

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

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

Results

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 chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer populations through the collaboration of Texas Parks & Wildlife. This along with the fever tick eradication program could have a huge impact on the ranching industry in the area..



- Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities Gardens
 - Child Care Provider Conference
 - Better Living for Texans
 - Friend to Friend
 - Healthy South Texas

Making a Difference

Starr County *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* **2016**

Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-Family Consumer Science

Relevance

In Starr County, an estimated **23,756 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 especially when it comes to consuming vegetables and fruits. In addition, low-income families often live in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy foods (i.e. food deserts), compounding the challenge of eating a healthy diet.

Response – Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

The Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC) 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), GNHC works with local partners to establish community gardens in communities identified as a food desert. Targeted towards SNAP recipients (and those eligible for benefits), the program's goal is to improve availability and accessibility of vegetables and fruit in the home by teaching participants (1) how to build gardens and (2) the skills needed to successfully grow and harvest fresh produce. The community gardens also serve as an outdoor classroom for participants who want to apply their knowledge at home (i.e. backyard garden). The program also includes nutrition education from Extension Better Living for Texans (BLT) educators to help participants learn how to incorporate their fresh produce in healthy and budget-friendly recipes. The program is evaluated by assessing the amount of produce harvested and participant feedback via a pre and post survey.

During 2016, 20 Starr County adults completed the GNHC program; 20 participants completed the retrospective post surveys.

Results

Participant Characteristics

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.





Participants were primarily female (45%) and Hispanic (55%). Thirty percent (n=6) of the participants had completed high school and 45% (n=9) had completed some college or a college degree.

Thirty percent (n=6) reported they had grown vegetables or fruits before and 85% of the participants (n=17) identified the GNHC program as the first Extension program they had attended.

Gardens

A total of 5 community gardens have been established in Starr County through the GNHC program yielding more than 2,189 pounds in 2016. Cabbage, beets, lettuce, squash, tomatoes, and watermelons were the vegetables and fruits grown most often.

Impact of the Gardens on Availability and Accessibility of Vegetables and Fruits in the Home

Compared to when the program ended, there was statistical evidence that more vegetables and fruits were available in the home. (Table 1).

Table 1. Availability and Accessibility of Vegetables and Fruits in the Home

Question	Average Response* Pre	Average Response Post	Significance
We have fruits and vegetables in my home.	3.13	3.81	.0001
In my home vegetables are served at meals.	3.12	3.76	.007
In my home, fruit is served for dessert.	2.53	3.18	.037
In my home, there are vegetables available to have as a snack.	2.82	3.47	.017
In my home, there is fruit available to have as a snack.	2.81	3.25	NS
In my home, there are cut-up vegetables in the fridge for me and my family to eat.	2.53	3.24	.009
In my home, there is fresh fruit on the counter, table or somewhere else where I and my family can easily get them.	2.94	3.47	.024

*Based on a 4-part Likert scale: 1=hardly ever; 2=sometimes; 3=often; 4=almost always. **NS means no change from a statistical standpoint although an upward trend is always encouraging.

Summary

These results suggest that the GNHC program is playing an important role in improving the availability and accessibility of fresh produce (particularly vegetables) in the home of the GNHC participants. Although not shown, participants who had gardened before reported a significant increase in self-perceived knowledge/skills related to gardening.

Making a Difference

Child Care Provider Conference Starr County 2016

Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-Family Consumer Science

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 16th 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 15, 2016, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Rio Grande City for **115** child care providers and directors who provide care for **1,980** children enrolled in **18** child care centers or family day homes. One hundred and fifteen participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of **920** 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 = 115)*

Variable	Percentage*	Mean
Age (in years)		35.8
Number of Years in Child Care Profession		7.8
Gender		
Female	91.3	
Male	4.3	
Ethnicity		
African American	0.9	
Caucasian	0.0	
Hispanic/Latino	97.4	
Other	0.9	
Education		
Less than High School Diploma	0.0	
High School Diploma	41.7	
Associates Degree	33.0	

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

College Graduate	20.0	
Program Type		
Home Day Care	0.0	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	7.8	
Head Start	83.5	
Other	4.3	
Program Licensed and/or Registered		
Yes	87.0	
No	0.9	
Attended Extension-Sponsored Training in Past		
Yes	63.5	
No	13.9	
Not Sure	13.0	
*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. One hundred and fifteen participants completed written surveys (See Table 2 for participant responses).

Table 2. Child Care Provider Conference Outcomes (N = 115)*

Item	Percent in Agreement*	Percent not in Agreement*
Acquisition of New Information		
Learned new information	98.3%	0.0%
Will utilize new information to strengthen program	99.1%	0.0%
Intent to Use Information		
Will use now	99.1%	0.0%
Will use in future	99.1%	0.0%
Training's Influence on Provider/Program Quality		
Will be more effective provider	99.1%	0.0%
Will lead to improvements in quality of care offered	98.3%	0.0%
Relevancy of Training		
Helped provider obtain required clock hours	95.7%	0.9%
Topics relevant to daily work	98.3%	0.0%
Other		
Training cost-effective	90.4%	4.3%
Plan to attend another Extension conference	96.5%	0.0%
*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 = 115)*

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?	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%	38.3%	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 98 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, **82%** of providers rated the training "Better" or "Much Better" compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

Inclusive Child Care for Preschool and School-Age Children: A 6-Hour Training for Child Care Providers and Directors



On March 11, 2016, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a 6-hour workshop in Rio Grande City for child care providers and directors on best practices for including children with special needs in child care settings. Thirty participants attended the training. The following tables contain participant evaluation results from the training:

Participant Satisfaction with the Training

Not at all = 1 Slightly = 2 Somewhat = 3 Mostly = 4 Completely = 5

Item	Average
Overall, how <u>satisfied</u> are you with this training?	4.7
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the training?	
Information being <u>what you expected</u> to receive	4.7
<u>Accuracy</u> of information	4.8
Information being <u>easy</u> to understand	4.8
<u>Completeness</u> of information being given	4.8
<u>Helpfulness</u> of the information	4.7
<u>Relevance</u> of the information presented to the work that I do in the child care profession	4.7
<u>Quality</u> of training materials	4.8
Instructor's <u>knowledge level</u> of subject matter	4.8
Instructor's <u>speaking/presentation abilities</u>	4.9
Instructor's <u>organization/preparedness</u>	4.9
Instructor's <u>response to questions</u>	4.9

Participant Ratings of Quality of Training Compared to Other Trainings

Much Worse = 1 Worse = 2 Same = 3 Better = 4 Much Better = 5

Question	Average	% Reporting "Better" or "Much Better"
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended, how would you rate the quality of today's training?	4.7	83.3

Additional Survey Items

Question	% Yes	% No
Did you learn new information from this training?	100.0	0.0
Do you plan to take any actions or make any changes based on this training?	100.0	0.0
Would you recommend this training to others?	96.7	0.0

Making a Difference

Starr County

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

2016

Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-Family Consumer Science

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 – Better Living for Texans (BLT)

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

During 2016, 173 Starr County adults completed the BLT *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* series. 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. Of those participants, 138 completed the 30-day follow-up survey which allows us to assess the extent that targeted behaviors were adopted.

Results

Participant characteristics

Average household size was 3.86 %; the average age of the participants was 47.60 years. Participation in the selected assistance programs was as follows: SNAP 56%, food pantries or other emergency food assistance 29.1%, free/reduced school meals 36.6%, Head Start 16.4%, TANF 2.2%, and WIC 24.6%.

Evaluation results

Changes in targeted behaviors were examined by evaluating the pre, post and (where available) 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	3	1.8		4	2.4		0	0.0
1-2 times a week	32	18.9		52	31		45	32.8
3-4 times a week	56	33.1		45	26.8		40	29.2
1 time a day	35	20.7		24	14.3		19	13.9
2 times a day	28	16.6		29	17.3		30	21.9
3 or more times a day	15	8.9		14	8.3		3	2.2
Vegetable Consumption								
None or rarely	5	3.0		8	4.8		1	0.7
1-2 times a week	57	33.7		51	30.9		50	36.5
3-4 times a week	51	30.2		49	29.7		42	30.7
1 time a day	29	17.2		29	17.6		23	16.8
2 times a day	21	12.4		21	12.7		21	15.3
3 or more times a day	6	3.6		7	4.2		0	0.0
% of Plate Filled with Fruits and Vegetables								
0	2	1.2		0	0.0		0	0.0
1/4	53	31.7		27	16.6		3	2.2
1/3	49	29.3		23	14.1		11	8.0
1/2	49	29.3		103	63.2		121	88.3
3/4	14	8.4		10	6.1		2	1.5

Meal Planning and Food Management Practices

	Pre			Post			Follow-Up	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Plan meals in advance								
All of the time	45	28.3		49	30.2		42	33.9
Most of the time	56	35.2		62	38.3		64	51.6
Some of the time	41	25.8		37	22.8		17	13.7
Hardly ever	14	8.8		6	3.7		1	0.8
Not sure	1	0.6		5	3.1		0	0.0
Shop for food with a list								
All of the time	67	39.6		90	53.6		80	58.4
Most of the time	41	24.3		40	23.8		47	34.3
Some of the time	32	18.9		24	14.3		9	6.6
Hardly ever	16	9.5		7	4.2		1	0.7
Not sure	1	0.6		1	0.6		0	0.0
Compare prices when shopping								
All of the time	80	47.9		97	58.		91	66.4

				8			
Most of the time	47	28.1		42	25.5	33	24.1
Some of the time	19	11.4		16	9.7	11	8.0
Hardly ever	13	7.8		4	2.4	2	1.5
Not sure	2	1.2		0	0.0	0	0.0

Food Safety

	Pre			Post			Follow-Up	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
Wash hands before preparing meals								
All of the time	161	95.3		159	94.6		136	98.6
Most of the time	5	3.0		8	4.8		1	0.7
Some of the time	2	1.2		1	0.6		1	0.7
Hardly ever	1	0.6		0	0.0		0	0.0
Not sure	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0
Wash fruits or vegetables before eating or preparing								
All of the time	163	96.4		162	97.0		137	99.3
Most of the time	6	3.6		4	2.4		0	0.0
Some of the time	0	0.0		1	0.6		1	0.7
Hardly ever	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0
Not sure	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0

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	55	32.5		57	33.9		36	26.1
Most of the time	60	35.5		66	39.3		70	50.7
Some of the time	41	24.3		42	25.0		30	21.7
Hardly ever	12	7.1		3	1.8		2	1.4
Not sure	1	0.6		0	0.0		0	0.0

Other findings:

53.2 % 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.

76.9 % of the participants rated the BLT program as “excellent” while 19.5 % rated the program as “very good.”

In addition, 87.6 % of the participants reported they were “very likely” to recommend BLT to another person; 10.7 % said they were “likely” to recommend the program. In addition, the 98.2 % of participants reported they were “very likely” or “likely” to attend another BLT program.



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M Agrilife.

Making a Difference

Friend to Friend in STARR County, 2016

Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-Family Consumer Science

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.
- Through a grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), funding was provided for screenings and transportation for uninsured and underserved women in need of 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

- 36 counties held *Friend to Friend* events throughout Texas in 2016.
- 195 women attended the *Friend to Friend* events on May 9, 2016 at the Ft. Ringgold Campus in the city of Rio Grande City, Texas. A second event took place in Starr County on May 17, 2016 at the ACE Parent Center/La Grulla Middle School in the city of La Grulla, Texas.
- Demographics of women who attended the events:
 - Median age was: 40.
 - **Second event: 45**
 - Ethnic breakdown:
 - African American: 0.6%
 - American Indian/Native American: 0%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%
 - Latina/Hispanic: 94.8%
 - **Second event: 89.4 %**

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

- White: 0.6%
- Multiple race/ethnicity: 1.2 %
- Other/missing: 2.9%
 - **Second Event: 10.6 %**
- 20 total volunteers assisted at the May 9, 2016 party/events, and 6 total volunteers assisted at the May 17, 2016 party/events.
- A Nurse Practitioner and a Breast Cancer Survivor urged women at both events to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the events.
- At the end of the May 9th event 89.2 % of women, aged 40 or over, correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year. At the end of the May 17th event 87 % of women, aged 40 or over, correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year.
- 211 Women requested help to navigate screening and diagnostic services. (Total between the two events 165+ 46=211)
- 28 Clinical sites contracted statewide for screenings, diagnostics, radiologists and lab services.
- 173 Mammogram screenings and 23 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
- 250 Pap screenings and 10 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
- Women were referred to other available sources for Breast and Cervical screenings and diagnostics



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions



HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS IN STARR COUNTY

Using the proven agriculture-based Extension model, Healthy South Texas is creating a new crop of health educators to engage Texans where they live and work to take control of their own health and wellness. Our comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team engages families, enhances education, promotes behavior change, and improves quality of medical care and health outcomes.

HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS COALITION MEMBERS

Our county recruited, trained, and mobilized a community Healthy South Texas coalition, identifying the most critical health needs in our community and helping assess the best way to address those needs.

15 COALITION MEMBERS REPRESENTING:

Ag Producer/Industry (2)	Other (2)
City/County/State Government (4)	Retired (1)
Education (5)	Social Services (1)



**WALK
ACROSS TEXAS!**

**OVER THE COURSE OF THE 8 WEEK PROGRAM, 981
PARTICIPANTS WALKED A TOTAL OF 37,943 MILES.**



126 adult participants walked 10,182 miles and 855 student participants walked 27,761 miles.



In HST Year 1, including the cost of lost wages, the total potential economic impact for Starr County WAT! participants is approximately \$639,868.



In Year 1, the average weekly mileage of WAT! participants in Starr County improved 6.7 miles from week 1 to week 8.



It is estimated that 13 of the adults who completed the WAT! program could avoid or delay the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity.





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.

- Five Starr County youth have been selected through the application process and trained. Youth Ambassadors have recently toured the Starr County Memorial Hospital and promoted Walk Across Texas at the Health Occupation Students of America Fall Conference.



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,

- Starr County partnered with South Texas College, HEB, Starr County Memorial Hospital and Working on Wellness Coalition to host a "From Our Kitchen to Yours" Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School with more than 52 participants on May 19, 2016. Agents and specialists and a local chef modified local favorites to provide healthier alternatives, provided a recipe book, and reinforced partnership with local collaborators.



Healthy recipe demonstration!



HEALTH EDUCATION

- Provided educational programming for 29 individuals with Type 2 diabetes and their families/support system using the ¡Si, Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes! curriculum. Overall, this program helped individuals increase their confidence to engage in diabetes self-care behaviors, improve their performance of routine health behaviors to better manage their diabetes, and improve their HbA1c levels.
- 173 adults graduated from the education lesson series "A Fresh Start to a Healthier You" and Walk and Talk.



OTHER LOCAL PROGRAMS

- Two Friend to Friend events were held in May that reached out to over 254 women to assist them in meeting the screening guidelines for breast and cervical cancer.
- 34 water screening samples submitted as part of the HST collaboration with the Texas Well Owner Network and eight samples came back with very high rates of arsenic. That equates to 23% of the samples collected. In addition to arsenic, 20% of the samples came back testing positive for E-Coli and 41% came back with very high rates nitrates.
- A total of 7 Fitness and Health events were held that reached over 1,522 participants of all ages.
- Six schools with 425 3rd graders completed the Learn, Grow, Eat, & GO! curriculum.
- There are currently 10 community gardens in operation in Starr County and one orchard. The gardens are located at churches, community centers, government housing complexes, library, soup kitchen, and senior centers.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a member of The Texas A&M University System.

Texas A&M AgriLife does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and provides equal access in its programs, activities, education, and employment.



- Annual 4-H Program Summary
- Kids Kows & More – Literacy Program
- 4-H Family & Consumer Science



4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT *Making a Difference in*

Annual 4-H Program Summary

County 4-H Youth Involvement

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

County 4-H Leadership, Advisory, and Support Organizations

Youth Board Members attended Meetings
 County 4-H Council Members attended Meetings
 Adult Leaders/Parents Organization Members attended Mtgs

Total Youth Reached



of Youth Attending

Participation in County 4-H Events

County Participation in District Events

County Participation in State/National Events

Most Popular Club Projects in the County

Most Popular Curriculum in the County

County 4-H Volunteer Support

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

Livestock Show Premium Sale Proceeds*

Includes all projects (4-H and FFA)

Value of Volunteer Time Supporting 4-H



County 4-H Leadership & Personal Development Programs

Attended State-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
Attended District-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
Attended District Leadership Lab
Received 4-H Scholarships valued at a total of

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Significant Leadership & Personal Development accomplishments from county Events & Activities

County 4-H Agriculture & Natural Resource Programs

Livestock Projects (all species)
Participated in County Livestock Shows
Attended State-level Livestock Shows
Attended District-level Agriculture & Natural Resources educational or competitive events
Youth Trained through "Quality Counts" Program

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Significant Agriculture & Natural Resource accomplishments from county Events & Activities

County 4-H Family & Consumer Science Programs

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

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Significant Family & Consumer Science accomplishments from county Events & Activities

Making a Difference

Starr County Kids & Kows & More Agriculture Literacy Program 2016

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, United States Department of Agriculture - NRCS 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 4th 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. Agent reviewed teacher evaluations from 2015 with the planning group to improve this years program.
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. A total of \$1,254 was secured to conduct the local program.

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

4. Agent hosted the Eleventh 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. Several changes were made to the schedule based on the feedback of the evaluations from 2015.

5. Agent 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 and social media (Facebook) 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 47 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 1105 4th 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, 96% of all respondents strongly agreed that the students acquired an increased knowledge and appreciation for agriculture. 92% increased their knowledge of where their food comes from. 90% of all respondents (teachers) agreed that they also gained knowledge about the local 4-H and Youth Development different program. Furthermore, 85% 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. Agent will use evaluation response to improve the learning experience for the 4th grade youth participants.

Making a Difference

4-H Family Consumer Science-Starr County 2016

Developed by Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-Family Consumer Science

Relevance:

4-H plays a pivotal role in youth development and public education. 4-Hers have the opportunity to interact with the public and educate them in the area of family and consumer science through demonstrations, 4-H exhibits, performances, contests, and 4-H promotion.

Response:

The Youth FCS program provided:

- Creative, fun and practical projects
- 4-H youth with access to safe learning
- Skills to manage money wisely
- Experiences to learn how to pick healthy foods, prepare nutritious meals, and make wise food purchases
- Challenging experiences that built life skills
- Opportunities for youth to learn, lead and contribute
- A better understanding and awareness of healthy life styles
- Learning opportunities that created positive results and great experiences
- Mastering skills in clothing construction and selection
- Basic skills that brought about confidence and gratification
- Best practices on gardening skills and the health benefits of eating fresh produce

Results:

- The number of teams competing in food challenge doubled this year
- A Food Challenge team went to Houston Livestock Show to compete
- The number of Food Challenge coaches and volunteers have doubled
- All the 4-Hers competing at District Fashion Show earned top awards
- The number of training sessions for foods and nutrition projects increased
- Ten school gardens engaged youth in garden project at all grade levels – preschool, elementary, middle school and high school
- In the second year of the Horticulture Division of the youth fair the number of entries doubled
- 192 youth participated in summer nutrition camps



County Competition



4-H D12 Fashion Sensation



4H Food Challenge Team Competing at the Houston Livestock Show



Gardening programs



Nutrition Summer Camps

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Starr County

Personnel

Elva Yolanda Morado, CEA-FCS
Heidi C. Arteaga, EPA-GNHC
Adela Mancha, BLT- PA
Robert Alaniz, Student Worker, BLT
Nilda N Gonzalez, Ext. Support Staff

Omar Montemayor, CEA-AgNR
Irma Ortiz, EPA-EFNP-CEP
Hector Guerra, BLT- PA
David Sanchez, BLT- PA
Elizabeth Barrera, Ext. Support Staff

Contact Us

500 N. Britton Ave.
Rio Grande City, Texas 78582
956-487-2306* fax 956-716-8197
<http://starr.agrilife.org/>