



## Extension Education in Zapata County

# Making a Difference

2016

# Zapata County

# 2016

## *Table of Contents*

*Page*

Zapata County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts .....	3
--	---

### ***Agriculture & Natural Resources***

2016 .....	4-6
------------	-----

### ***Healthy South Texas***

2016 Healthy South Texas Initiative .....	7-8
---	-----

2016 Walk Across Texas .....	9-11
------------------------------	------

### ***4-H and Youth Development***

2016 .....	12-14
------------	-------

### ***Personnel***

2016 Staff .....	15
------------------	----

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.

## Zapata County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts

<b>Total Contacts:</b>	<b>27,340</b>	
Educational Events	8,560	
Other Contacts	18,780	
	<b>Contacts</b>	<b>Hours</b>
All Session Contacts	8,560	13,791
<b>Plan Level</b>		
In Depth	5,002	2,240
Outreach	3,556	11,550
Organizational Support	2	1
<b>Task Type</b>		
Planning Group	556	947
Educational Method	7,954	12,773
Interpretation	50	72
<b>Delivery Method</b>		
Face-to-Face	8,560	13,791
Technology Assisted	0	0
<b>Demographics Ethnicity</b>		
White	302	930
Black	4	3
Hispanic	1,633	3,902
<b>Age</b>		
Adult	1,247	2,249
Youth	692	2,587
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	896	2,341
Female	1,133	2,495

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### 2016 Zapata County Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Zar Rodriguez-Extension Agent Ag and Natural Resources

#### Relevance

The goal of this plan is to be able to help cattle and wildlife producers in Zapata County to be able to identify issues that are relevant to them and their surrounding neighbors and be able to address those issues through quality program delivery. It is relevant to the situation to try and deliver assistance and education to those producers that want to build better herds (both beef and wildlife) and that want to be able to produce a higher quality and more profitable product.



#### Response

It has been a little tough to get going as producers in this county are more self-sufficient and rely mostly on their history and experience. It is my goal to try and get them to open up to different ideas and techniques that will help them enhance their operations and help them find easier, less expensive, and more environmentally friendly means of operations while still being able to produce a high quality product and being able to get their profit margins as high as possible.

A list of programs conducted this year in Zapata County and in multi county settings as well.

- A multi county effort between Starr, Brooks, and Zapata Counties was held in June in San Isidro in Starr County (event was also marketed in the Rio Grande Valley and in Jim Hogg County). Over 130 producers attended a daylong event and were shown strategies to maximize forage production, culling strategies in a cow/calf operation, and were shown methods and benefits of chemical brush control featuring a fence line chemical application demonstration.

## **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

- Private Pesticide Applicators Certification training was held in June in Jim Hogg County. Another multi county effort between Starr, Brooks, and Zapata Counties. 15 participants from 4 counties attended the class and tested at a later date to earn their license. This was also part of the Healthy South Texas initiative.
- A Beef Cattle Fever Tick Program was held in Zapata County in August. The program was structured to give producers the ability to learn about the history and eradication procedures of the Fever Tick. Basic herd health management and an agency overview of laws and regulations from the Texas Animal Health Commission were also addressed. Over 40 producers from Zapata County and the surrounding area attended and were able to ask questions and interact with the presenters.
- Chronic Wasting Disease training and certification class was held in December in Zapata County. 50 participants were trained and certified in drawing, packaging, and shipping procedures to test samples from deer heads.

Collaborators and Volunteers that helped in these programs:

- Zapata County Ag and Wildlife Committee
- NRCS office in Zapata County
- Texas Animal Health Commission
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Specialists and Personnel
- Neighboring CEA's in Starr and Brooks and their respective committees
- IBC Bank-Zapata

## **Summary**

Overall I felt that the programs offered this year through the Zapata County Office were helpful to ranchers and producers and will help them attain their goals for their operations as well as their finances. Will continue to work with committees, producers, and volunteers to put on quality and impactful programs and grow committee and volunteer number.



## 2016 Healthy South Texas Initiative

Developed by: Sammy Luera - Extension Agent-Health

### Relevance:

The overall goal is to reduce preventable diseases and their consequences in South Texas by 25 percent by 2025, by piloting first in 27 counties in Texas. The focus will be initially on building highly functioning interdisciplinary health coalitions within each county, addressing the need for physical activity through Walk Across Texas and other physical activity programs and recruiting and training 4-H Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors. Community-based coalitions will work with agents to identify and implement other program goals based on local needs of the county.

### Response:

In order to achieve the Healthy South Texas goals, our county recruited diverse groups and organizations from our local community to form a Healthy South Texas Coalition in efforts to provide and assess health and nutrition programming for chronic diseases prevention. The effort will educate community members on healthy food preparation, encourage regular physical activity, and provide resources for preventing diabetes, asthma, and infectious disease. We will engage families and work with community partners such as hospitals and clinics.

### Healthy South Texas Coalition

13 COALITION MEMBERS REPRESENTING:	
City/County/State Government(1)	Health Department(1)
Community Organization(1)	Self-Employed/Business Owner(4)
Education(3)	Social services(1)
Education Officials(2)	

### Results:

Our Healthy South Texas Coalition worked hard in creating a community survey to identify the local health issues and concerns of our community. As a result, our Healthy South Texas Coalition was able to implement major programs, events, and other activities such as:

- **Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors** - local, high-school age youth recruited by agents and trained to serve as a community health and wellness advocate.
- **Walk Across Texas** – a web-based, 8-week program to help people of all ages support each other as they engage in regular physical activity.

## Family and Consumer Sciences

- **Healthy South Texas Coalition Health Fair** – with over 30 agencies participating, the health fair was able to provide health screenings, flu shots, cooking demo and much more to the community.
- **MyPlate presentations** – As part of the Fresh Fruits and Vegetable program (FFVP) to the local school district, Healthy South Texas was able to provide a MyPlate symbol and benefits of exercising presentation along with a smoothie bicycle demonstration to the participating elementary schools.
- **Health and Wellness** – presentations on diabetes and nutrition, as well as education on Portion Control and physical activity at the local nutrition center.
- **Drunk Driving Awareness** – as per Healthy South Texas Coalition survey, provided the *When Sean Speaks* drunk driving awareness presentation to all local high school students.
- **Private Pesticide Applicators Certification training** – Zar Rodriguez, ANR/4-H CEA provided a Private Pesticide Applicators Certification training as part of a multi county effort between Starr, Brooks, and Zapata county.
- **4-H 101-** provided a nutrition and hydration education presentation to 4-H kids and parents along with an infused water demonstration.

## Summary of Results

### 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 advocates. These ambassadors also assist county Extension agents in providing leadership to the youth components of Healthy South Texas.

- ◆ Two Zapata County high-school students have been selected by our Health Agent and trained to serve as community health and wellness advocates.
- ◆ Youth Ambassadors have helped with multiple events such as MyPlate presentations at the elementary schools, WAT celebration, local health fairs and smoothie bicycle demonstrations.
- ◆ One project which Youth Ambassadors are proud of and are taking the lead role right now during the spring semester is the Milk Mustache Campaign at our local high school. Hopefully leading to a fruits and vegetable campaign in the future, as well.
- ◆ Organizing an informational health fair at their local high school for their peers.
- ◆ Organizing summer health and wellness camp for the local youth.





## Zapata County Walk Across Texas!

*Walk Across Texas!* is an eight-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. *Walk Across Texas!* is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

### The Issue

- 32.4% of Texans are obese<sup>4</sup>.
- 27.2% of American adults report no leisure time physically activity<sup>2</sup>.
- 16.6% of youth report no physical activity<sup>2</sup>.
- Only 19% of adults and 30% of youth reported they get regular, moderate exercise to meet physical activity guidelines<sup>2</sup>.

### Background

- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the risk and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression<sup>3</sup>.
- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications.
- Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 86% of U.S. health-care costs<sup>1</sup>.
- Community-wide programs like *Walk Across Texas!* have been associated with significant increases in physical activity.

### Severity of the Problem

- Texas ranks 9th as the most physically inactive state<sup>4</sup>.
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates<sup>4</sup>.
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest rates of obese 10-17 year olds<sup>4</sup>.

### The Educational Program

For eight weeks, teams of up to eight people, school classes, or individuals virtually walk 832 miles across the State of Texas.

- Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- The program begins with a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent forming a community task force with members from targeted groups, such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- Plan Kick-Off, Half-Way, and Recognition activities.

## Family and Consumer Sciences

- Train site managers, captains, teachers, and other volunteer helpers.
- Register participants online.
- Enter mileage online.
- Participate for eight weeks.
- Provide recognition for various accomplishments throughout the program!

## Impact of Walk Across Texas!

This program significantly increases participant physical activity.

- 152 Texas counties participated in 2016.
- 36,518 people registered statewide in 2016.
- 82 adults in our county registered and participated in the WAT! program.
- 44 adults in our county completed the eight-week program.
- 14 adult participants' average weekly mileage increased 6.11 miles from week one to week eight.
- 608 youth in our county participated in the school version of *Walk Across Texas*!

## Economic Impact to the County

If the Zapata County participants completing the eight-week program continue walking at the same level as during Walk Across Texas!, they have the potential to save a collective \$ 415,080 in future health care costs by avoiding type 2 diabetes and by reducing work absences.

## Participants' Comments

- 100% reported they or their family benefitted from participating in Walk Across Texas
- *"My family and I have started running together and ran our first 5K together."*
- *"Every outdoor activity included my kids and wife. Now all exercise activities are a family event."*
- *"I benefited greatly from this program because I lost the ideal weight that I wanted and I've made working out daily into a lifestyle."*
- *"I have become more physically active and feel better about myself."*



## **Acknowledgements**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office of Zapata County would like to thank the following agencies for participating, sponsoring, and volunteering with all *Walk Across Texas!* Events:

Healthy South Texas Coalition of Zapata County  
Walk Across Texas Committee  
Zapata Farmers and Artisan Market  
Zapata County Independent School District  
International Bank of Commerce (IBC) of Zapata  
Zapata National Bank  
S.C.A.N. of Zapata  
Body Transformed Gym  
Foundation Sports Barn  
N2 Fitness  
Revolution Muscle & Fitness  
Get Fit Studio  
Zapata Hawks Tennis Teams  
U.S. Border Patrol of Zapata  
Miss Teen Galaxy International 2017, Vielka Gutierrez  
Trophies & More

## **Future Program Actions:**

We would like to increase the number of participants from the community and work closely with Zapata County ISD's School Health Advisory Committee to incorporate more schools with *Walk Across Texas!* Also, to maintain more involvement through the program by increasing the number of activities/events such as 5k run/walks for participants to stay motivated.



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4-H and Youth Development



PRAIRIE VIEW  
A&M UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

# Making a Difference in Zapata County

## Annual 4-H Program Summary

### County 4-H Youth Involvement

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

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

- 0 Youth Board Members attended 0 Meetings
- 0 County 4-H Council Members attended 0 Meetings
- 4 Adult Leaders/Parents Organization Members attended 4 Mtgs

Total Youth Reached

270



# of Youth Attending

### County Participation in 4-H Events

0

### County Participation in District Events

0

### County Participation in State/National Events

0

### Most Popular Club Projects in the County

Rabbits: 83      Chickens: 24  
Hogs: 68      Beef Cattle: 31  
Goats: 57  
Lambs: 51  
Turkeys: 32

### Most Popular Curriculum in the County

0

### County 4-H Volunteer Support

- 25 Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs
- 3 Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders
- 2,000 Hours Contributed by Volunteers in Support of Clubs

Value of Volunteer Time Supporting 4-H

\$46,140

\$300,000

Livestock Show Premium Sale Proceeds\*  
Includes all projects (4-H and FFA)



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

- 0 Attended State-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 0 Attended District-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 0 Attended District Leadership Lab
- 25 Received 4-H Scholarships valued at a total of **\$2,500**

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and AdultsSignificant Leadership & Personal Development accomplishments from county Events & Activities**County 4-H Agriculture & Natural Resource Programs**

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

Program Local Training Opportunities for Youthand AdultsSignificant 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 AdultsSignificant Family & Consumer Science accomplishments from county Events & Activities





# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Zapata County

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