

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
SOUTH REGION
IMPACTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2018



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South Region Overview

The South Region consists of District 10 and District 12 which are the southwest and southern districts in Texas for A&M AgriLife Extension. The South Region demographics include a total population of 5,669,802 with 32.26% white, 59.89% Hispanics, 5.31% African American, 1.16% Native American and 2.06% other. In addition, the South Region is comprised of 41 counties and supported by 2 District headquarters at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Uvalde (D10) and at Weslaco (D12). Also, the South Region has two urban counties who are designated a County Extension Director who oversee faculty and staff in Bexar and Travis County.

Today, the South Region continues its mission to support agriculture, families, and youth of South Texas with its technical expertise, training, and educational programs. Trainings and educational programs are implemented and conducted by A&M AgriLife Extension faculty and staff. Approximately, 110 County Agents, Specialty Agents and 50 program assistants work to provide program support and educational capacity in the South Region.

Educational Contacts

- Educational session contacts – 1,039,826
- Educational session contact hours – 1,894,351
- Direct individual contacts – 138,681

Volunteerism

- Total volunteers – 19,912
- Volunteer hours contributed – 1,453,289.70
- Value of volunteer time – \$34,239,506 – (\$23.56 per hour)
- Total Volunteer Contacts – 293,359

Regional Team

- Todd Swift – Regional Program Leader - ANR and 4-H Youth Development
- Jana Osbourn – Regional Program Leader- FCH and 4-H Youth Development
- Kathleen Greer – District Extension Administrator – District 10
- Dr. Ruben Saldana – District Extension Administrator – District 12
- Nelda Speller – County Extension Director – Bexar County
- Madelena Johnson – County Extension Director – Travis County

Feeding Our World

AgriLife Extension teaches agricultural producers to adopt best management practices based on new scientific knowledge that will help them increase production, enhance sustainability, and conserve natural resources. And by educating the public about agriculture and food production, AgriLife Extension creates a partnership with all Texans that can improve food safety and security, reduce the prevalence of food deserts in our urban areas, and improve nutrition throughout the state.

Accomplishments

- Beef Cattle** educational efforts in this major commodity area reached a total of 35,843 clientele through educational methods. 14 county programs in the South outlined best management practices to 1,930 beef producers through face to face educational programs and 15,099 producers were reached through indirect contact. 30 result demonstrations established or continue to be conducted in beef, forage, and rangeland management. 87.3% of participants planned to adopt at least one best management practice and 94.1% reported an increase in understanding. An estimated 1 million-dollar potential economic benefit from participation in these programs was reported by clientele.
- Crops and Forage** In 2017, 3,701 educational events were conducted related to crops and forage reaching 39,513 contacts through 7,663 face to face delivery methods. 15 counties in the South have significant Cotton, Vegetable, Grains, and Forage crop production and participants estimated an economic impact of 21.4 M dollars from producer participation in our programs. Twelve counties continued to work on Sugar Cane Aphid education as over 400,000 acres of Grain Sorghum are planted in the Rio Grande Valley each year alone. Projected estimates of crop savings cumulative since 2014 from the educational efforts and the section 18 approval of pesticides are over 350 million-dollars in LRGV and Upper Gulf Coast.
- Food Protection Management** was developed to meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments. The two-hour food handler program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services, trains front-line food service workers on basic principles of food safety. There were 525 individuals who completed the program with an 87.59% rate on the post exam. The 1- or 2-day Food Protection Management class prepares managers to successfully complete the Certified Food Managers exam. In 2017, 35 individuals successfully completed the program.

\$ 2.245 Billion-Total Annual Ag Income Top Six Enterprises:

- Beef Cattle \$987 million
- Hay Crops \$290 million
- Hunting \$279 million
- Vegetables \$209 million
- Cotton \$208 million
- Fruit and Nuts \$ 91 million

Protecting Our Environment

Safeguarding our precious natural resources and maintaining a clean and healthy environment are among AgriLife Extension's top priorities. We promote sustainability in agricultural production, conduct conservation programs that reduce drought impacts, improve and preserve water quality, minimize wildfire risks, and help maximize water supplies through more efficient irrigation and conservation. We also help to promote the safe and reduced use of pesticides through the integrated pest management program.

Accomplishments

- **Water** quality and conservation continues to be a major issue across Texas and is of particular interest in the arid southern counties. Twenty-nine counties conducted events that reach adult and youth audiences in the areas of home landscape, well water screenings, and agriculture production activities. 90,589 total contacts related to water were made with 21,554 face-to-face contacts at events including Rainwater Collection, Water Well Screenings, Rainfall Simulators, 40 Gallon Challenge, Irrigation Efficiency workshops, Master Gardener presentations, Healthy Streams, Aquaponics, and Earth-Kind. 5,341 Youth participating in Water Fairs and returning surveys reported that 76.2% had a better understanding of how an aquifer functioned. 82% said water conservation should be practiced by everyone.
- **Environmental Stewardship** programs reached 239,200 total educational contacts with 40,946 being face to face educational delivery. 24 counties held local based programs targeting small acreage or new landowners addressing sustainable agriculture, natural resource protection, and country living.
- **Earth-Kind** educational programs were presented at 5,527 events with 14,790 contacts with participants interested in Earth-Kind information. Total annual economic benefit of \$101,329.00 as a result of their attendance.
- **Pesticide Safety** and Integrated Pest Management educational activities were offered in all 41 counties in the South. 23,658 total contacts were made during 3,056 events that offered pesticide applicator training or CEUs for license holders. Proper pesticide application is critical to both the environment and financial bottom line of landowners.



Growing Our Economy

All AgriLife Extension programs make an economic impact and create a significant return on investment for Texans. For more targeted economic investment, Extension helps communities grow by supporting entrepreneurship, developing leaders, and providing job-related continuing education. We help families and individuals learn to save and budget their money, make informed decisions about investing, and prepare for financial risks and major life events. Our custom-designed programs keep the Texas economy healthy and moving forward.

Accomplishments

- Many families face the constant challenge of managing limited resources to meet everyday expenses. Family Consumer Sciences Agent provided financial management programs to increase the financial literacy of a variety of Texans. A total of 1,494 participants went through the **Money Smart** financial literacy program in the South Region.
- Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. In the South Region, county extension agents and community partners held 5 multi-county and/or single county **Child Care Providers Conferences** receiving 1,903 clock hours of training.
- The 2017 **Student Education Fund Account** program in Zavala County has addressed the issue of youth from a median per capita income of \$21,747 having a high education opportunity. 75 youth from this program attended 12 educational opportunities to learn how to manage and plan for a post-secondary education with the funds they acquire from participation in the 4-H livestock program. Now in its 10th year of existence 92% of youth have established savings or checking accounts with over \$240,000 currently in these accounts representing 78 youth.



Improving Our Health

Through a wide range of programs, AgriLife Extension educators help Texans take control of their own health to prevent and manage chronic diseases and conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and obesity; prevent infectious diseases; improve meal planning and food budgeting; increase physical activity; and improve food safety. With a new focus on health, Extension's goal is to reduce avoidable hospitalizations, health complications, and emergency room visits.

Accomplishments

- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety in settings convenient for the participants. In the South Region there are 5 county EFNEP offices. A total of 8,053 participated in the adult phase of the program. In the youth phase of EFNEP, a total of 57,158 youth completed the 6-week series.
- Better Living for Texans** program in the South Region reached 2,834 participants with the Fresh Start to a Healthier You, Walk & Talk, Eat Smart, Live Strong or Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities. Each curriculum helps individuals improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars and increase physical activity.
- With the incidence of diabetes rising, the **Do Well, Be Well Diabetes** and **Si Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes** programs helped people adopt strategies to improve management of their disease. In the South Region there were 132 participants that completed either educational series. The potential health-care costs savings resulted from improved management of diabetes was an estimated \$6,484,236.
- Walk Across Texas!** is an 8-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. A total of 3,941 adults and 12,018 students participated walking 1,241,000 miles with a potential economic impact of \$36 million dollars in future health care costs savings.
- Dinner Tonight** healthy cooking schools teach quick, healthy, cost effective recipes that taste great. In the South Region, 674 individuals participated in one of the 10 signature events.
- The **Master Wellness Volunteer** Program provides volunteers with 40 hours of training in health and nutrition education. In return, the volunteers agree to give back 40 hours of service. In the South Region, 31 Master Wellness Volunteers provided 501 volunteer hours of service. The value of volunteer time is \$11,723 (\$23.40/hr).

COST – BENEFITS OF EFNEP

Studies have shown that for every \$1 spent of EFNEP, \$10 were estimated to be saved in health care costs and \$2 saved in food costs by participants. For the South Region, this is \$13.5 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost \$2,747,248 in food costs.

Enriching Our Youth

For over a century, AgriLife Extension has conducted youth development programs, including Texas 4-H, working in partnership with schools and youth organizations as well as with thousands of volunteers. Today, we offer hands-on learning experiences that help young people develop leadership, responsibility, and a spirit of service. Our goal is to ensure the health and well-being of our young people and to encourage them to be the leaders and motivators of tomorrow.

Accomplishments

- The Counties of Bandera, Caldwell, Bexar, Gillespie, Kerr, Kimble, and Mason combined efforts to offer the fourth and South Texas edition of the YALL tour (**Youth Agriculture and Lifetime Leadership**). This tour promotes Ag Literacy and agriculture careers to youth and was open to all senior age 4-H members of Districts 7,10,11, and 12. Two-hundred and six youth have participated in this tour with 32 attending the South Texas addition in 2017. A linear evaluation strategy will be used to determine if attending this tour influenced their decision to pursue an agriculture related career. 45% indicated the tour has helped shape their current career plans.
- **Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors** are local, high school students recruited and trained to serve as a community health and wellness advocates. Ambassadors assist County Extension Agents in providing leadership to the youth components of Healthy South Texas. 114 HST Youth Ambassadors from 13 counties provided 1,027 volunteer hours in 2017.
- **Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go** emphasizes science, math, language arts/reading, social studies and health through effective learning activities. LGEG engages children and their families in school gardens, vegetable tastings, classroom activities and take-home family stories. In 2017, LGEG was implemented in 13 counties reaching 1,626 youth and families.

South Region 4- H Enrollment

- 4-H Club Enrollment: 15,465
- Curriculum Enrichment/Special Interest: 141,058
- Total 4-H Enrollment: 157,302
- 4-H Adult Volunteers: 5,336
- 4-H Youth Volunteers: 2,095





About the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Extending Knowledge. Providing Solutions.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service strives to help all Texans learn and prosper from practical, research-based knowledge. With a statewide network that includes 252 county offices, extension educators and their more than 96,000 volunteers serve all 254 Texas counties, making some 25 million teaching contacts a year. Major outreach efforts include improving water quality and conservation, human health, and food systems. Our Texas 4-H Youth Development Program engages nearly 600,000 youth annually. Extension education provides a unique force for the betterment of Texas.

Learn more at AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu or follow us on Twitter at [@ttextension](https://twitter.com/ttextension).