

Agriculture & Natural Resources



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension hosted as well as co-hosted a variety of educational programs in 2018. A beef cattle, wildlife, and rangeland workshop was put on by extension, topics covered; maintaining cow-calf operations, native and exotic wildlife habitat, and weed and brush control practices. The Willacy County wildlife and beef cattle Fall Tour was also put on as well. The East-Foundations-El Sauz Division hosted this even, topics discussed were; benefits of native range and grasses, prescribed burning on cordgrass test plots, Ocelot habitat management, wildlife and beef cattle field study, fever tick evaluation, and coastal prairie land utilization. 70 participants went through this program. A retrospective post-test evaluation was conducted by twenty five (25) participants. The results indicated that 95% of the producers had an increase of knowledge gained from the workshop and ranch tour.



Row crops and forage production are also two very critical topics in Willacy County in regards to Agriculture. A pre-plant conference, Willacy County Plant and Soil Workshop, and a Forage Field day were the educational events that were carried through AgriLife extension. A retrospective post-test was given to 23 participants that were heavily involved with the Willacy County Row Crop and Forage Plan for 2018. The survey was used to determine the level of understanding that was attained throughout the various educational opportunities that were offered. 96 % were overall satisfied with the educational presentations, 91% were satisfied with the programs all together. 80% of the producers are going to adopt practices and technologies that they learned from the programs and 33% had an average increase of understanding and/or knowledge.

4-H Youth & Development



Willacy County 4-H was heavily involved in community service this past year. The 4-H club collected 1,800 books for children in Willacy County. These books were donated to community libraries as well as the public library in Raymondville for children in Willacy County to be able to have access to books. Other community service events pertained to thanksgiving baskets that were distributed to families that were in need for Thanksgiving, 4-hers also participated in Christmas caroling at the children's center floor at the local hospital, as well as a water station for a memorial bike/run benefit.



Willacy County 4-H competed in a variety of livestock judging events in 2018. With judging events comes many hours of practice and organization of workshops were coordinated in order to optimize the 4-Hers knowledge on judging events. Livestock judging teams participated in Willacy County Fair, San Antonio Livestock Show, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show, and the District 12 Livestock judging event. This Livestock Judging Program was evaluated through growth of knowledge in livestock judging. I used the Willacy County Livestock Judging Event in January as my start and the District 12 4-H Livestock Judging Event in April as my finish. My goal was to see how much the 4-Hers progressed through 4 livestock judging events and 2 Livestock Judging Clinic. In addition I also gave the 4-Hers a retrospective posttest evolution to inspect knowledge gained. Both teams finished in the top 50% in their respective judging teams. The retrospective evaluation displayed an increase by all individuals by an overall of 20% knowledge gained through from January to April.

Cooperative Extension Program



The Cooperative Extension Program hosted several livestock educational programs for small production land owners throughout 2018. One program in which was organized through the Rio Grande Valley Small Acreage Program was on goat production for beginning ranchers & small acreage producers that are seeking opportunities in the area of raising goats in the Rio Grande Valley. During this four hour workshop, over 60 participants learned from Research Scientist from Prairie View A&M University College of Agriculture & Human Sciences and Texas A&M

Agrilife Extension Service Specialist on ways to improve their operation by utilizing basic management practices that procedures would need for a successful agriculture business. Result of a retrospective evaluation indicated that 83.8% of participants had a change of knowledge gain from programs.



Partnering and scheduling planning meetings with the State Soil & Water Conservation Board to discuss educational program was scheduled in the months of August and September. As a result of these meetings we developed topics for a Hay & Forage Work Shop to be held in Raymondville, Texas on October 10, 2018 at local producer's farm. Topics discussed included; Hay

fertility, Sampling Hay, Economic Impact. I provided a demonstration on how to collect and send hay samples for nutrient analysis to a group of 40 producers. Results indicate that 88% will adopt forage and hay production practices.



Many low income youth do not understand the importance of the food and fiber industry and how it impacts their daily lives. As a concern in our community I developed a committee along with co-workers to create a youth agriculture literacy program for 4th grade students from all four school districts. This agriculture literacy educational event called "Wild in Willacy Youth Agriculture Day" provided educational to over 300 student to acquire

hands knowledge about the food & fiber industry. 97% of participating youth have a better understanding of where there food comes from.

Healthy South Texas



On September/October 2017 Walk Across Texas was implemented with 789 students participating, Two Dinner Tonight Cooking School, one on February 2018 with 135 in attendance and the second on August 2018 with 80 community members attending, On November 2017 Maintain No Gain had 40 participants, Cooking Well With Diabetes with 25 participants on April 2018, Mobile Cooking School with 35 participants in August 2018, and Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go with 489 participants in February 2018.



All these programs were evaluated with Pre/Post Test. A total of 50% of students had behavioral change on the consumption of vegetables, while adult nutrition education had 76% improved eating habits.



The future plans for these programs are to interpret the results to our key stakeholders and county leaders by demonstrating the healthy impact it has in the community. These programs had a positive impact in the Willacy County communities as many attending the Healthy South Texas Programs learned simpler ways to make healthier choices when preparing meals and being physically active with their families as this will improve health and wellness in the community.

