



Marcel Valdez
County Extension Agent
Ag. and Natural Resources
County Coordinator

January—Over 75 4-H youth participated in the 2019 Zavala County Junior Fair and generated over \$120,000 dollars in prize money from the sale of 4-H animal projects. These projects taught youngsters responsibility, care and management and humane treatment of animals, sportsmanship but most importantly provide youth with life long skills for the real world. Also over 45 youth in grades K through 2nd grade participate in 4-H Clover Kids Rabbit Show. The 4-H Clover Kids program helps increase 4-H youth enrollment. Total reached (parents, 4-H members and volunteers) through the 4-H animal projects program 264. The spinach and crop improvement committee met to review previous years planted acres, estimates for the 2019 growing season and assist the extension agent with information to be included in the annual crop increment report. Economic impact in the county from the spinach and vegetable industry is over \$4.5 million (source-crop increment report)



Betty C. Ávila
County Extension Office
Office Manager



↑ Batesville 4-H Projects January 2019

February—Zavala County 4-H members participated above the county level at the San Antonio Livestock Show Rural Youth Day to promote 4-H to over 700 visitors who visited the 4-H promotional booths. \$2,500.00 were awarded to Zavala county 4-H members who participated in the calf scramble. Over 120 spinach cultivars were evaluated by an Extension results demonstration conducted by Extension staff, Extension vegetable specialist to determine and evaluate spinach disease resistance, yield



↑ Equipment used for spinach fungicide evaluation. Equipment courtesy of Crawford Farms—Zavala County

and quality of fresh market spinach and potential for commercial production in the region. Over 45 producers, seed companies, chemical representatives and buyers of spinach toured and visited these demonstration plots.

March— The annual Spring planting planning meeting was held in Zavala County to provide producers with upcoming planting strategies and management practices which can be implemented in row crop production. Over 45 producers attended this meeting at the cotton gin conference room in Batesville. Cooperating producers agreed to plant over 15 demonstration acres to evaluate over 35 corn and sorghum varieties.

April—Over 175 4-H youth, parents and volunteers attended the stock show check distribution and financial literacy event held in Zavala county. Zavala County Bank hosted a financial literacy educational program for 4-H families discussing the importance of saving money, college and technical school costs and how to manage money through saving and checking accounts. \$120,000 dollars were distributed to 4-H youth at this event.



↑ 2019 4-H Financial literacy participants

May—Zavala County Farm Bureau and The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted the annual ag fair/agricultural literacy program to teach 4th grade students about the importance of agriculture and how agriculture affects our daily lives. Over 170 students were taught about grains, how they are grown and what products are made from grains used everyday by consumers.

June— Food safety refresher course was offered to over 25 producers from Zavala and surrounding counties. Attendees completed the produce safety alliance (PSA) course and thus are in compliance with the new Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) law affecting all growers across the country. These producers represent over 300 seasonal jobs in the area and over \$8.5 million in harvested, packed and shipped fresh vegetables from the region.

July-The Zavala County 4-H Program continues to improve 14.75 acres of Land were donated to the 4-H program from the Puente Family Estate . The land is currently being developed to accommodate 4-H outdoor events such as 4-H camps, archery, 4-H family picnics and other activities. The Zavala County 4-H Acknowledges the Puente Family for their donation and support of the 4-H program in Zavala County. Current projects for this property is to establish the first ever Zavala County 4-H Archery Range and later expand to a rifle range for over 120 4-H members, volunteers and parents to develop their 4-H shooting sports skills.

August- The month of August signifies the start of the 2019 4-H year begins. Over 200 youth in Zavala County participated in educational programs during this new 4-H year. This included 4-H Clover Kids that are an important part of the 4-H recruitment, retention and expansion of the 4-H Program in Zavala County, Agricultural literacy and financial literacy programs and school enrichment programs.

September- 465 4th grade students were taught about grains and how they are grown, what products are made from grains and the importance of agriculture in the region. This was a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Agri-Women venture.

October- Over 65 4-H youth participated in National 4-H week. During this month the 4-H members, volunteers conducted a community service project during One Day 4-H. The La Pryor club collected over 200 pounds of trash from the La Pryor cemetery.



November-The Zavala County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in cooperation with Del Monte Corporation established an outdoor Nursery to evaluate 310 spinach varieties and evaluated 18 different fungicides for the control of white rust (a detrimental disease in Spinach). The results of these Extension results demonstrations are shared with spinach growers in the county and the region. These results demonstrations provide valuable, timely and applicable

information for spinach producers who currently cultivate over 3500 acres of fresh market and processing spinach with a market value of \$4.2 million dollars annually.

December- The 14th Annual Zavala County CEU conference was held on December 30, 2019. Over 45 agricultural producers, who hold a valid Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicators license attended and receive 6 CEU credits in one day. Additionally food safety education was conducted for agricultural harvesters, packing shed packing crews and other handlers of fresh spinach and vegetables. To date over 380 workers have been trained in both English and Spanish which provides training for these individuals in the spinach industries efforts to prevent the contamination of spinach and other vegetables with food borne illnesses such as e-coli and other food illness causing pathogens.



According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) about 48 million people in the U.S. (1 in 6) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die each year from foodborne diseases. To date no confirmed cases of e-coli or other food borne illness causing pathogens have been traced to spinach and vegetables grown, harvested and shipped from Zavala county. This is due in part for the annual food safety training efforts conducted by the Zavala County Extension Agent in collaborations with the Texas Department of Agriculture, The Winter Garden Spinach Producers Board and individual producers in Zavala County. These efforts are critical to continue in 2020 and beyond.

Acknowledgement It is a pleasure to provided you with this report to highlight some of the educational programs, services and opportunities afforded to the people of Zavala county. These efforts would not be possible without the support of The Zavala County Commissioners Court. Thank you for supporting the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Zavala County.

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