



# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

## Atascosa County

### 2020 A Year in Review

**Foreword:** This document is being provided to you to highlight some of the educational programs, services and opportunities afforded to the citizens people of Atascosa County. These efforts would not be possible without the support of The Atascosa County Commissioners Court, Commissioners Mark Gillespie, Stuart Knowlton, Eliseo Perez, and Kennard Riley and Judge Robert Hurley. Thank you for all that you do in support of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Atascosa County. This is only a highlight of some of the programs and activities conducted during 2020.

### ***COVID-19 Response***

In response to the 2020 pandemic, the Atascosa County Extension office came together to keep our duties to the county and its citizens and help where needed at the state level. The agents continue to act as liaisons for our producers and local officials under the CARES Act Assistance program. Ag/Nr Agent Dale Rankin and Assistant Ag Agent Georgina Macias helped pick up and deliver test kits, delivered PPE, and assisted with needs that arose in the efforts around the state. FCH agent, Druann Benavides, helped with statewide contact tracing for 4 ½ months. All agents helped with the delivery of PPE for the county voting sites and daycares. Together, office staff supports our local school, workforce, county producers, and citizens by offering education. We appreciate our County Judge and Commissioners Court for supporting our extension efforts at the local and state levels.

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

In the area of Ag and Natural Resources, January yields many calls and visits regarding plant I.D. and spring planting. The Atascosa Cattlemen's Assoc., the Atascosa Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, and the South Texas Home and Garden groups met this month to plan for upcoming activities. Atascosa's Club Calf Breeders produced a calf sale video in February featuring 40 head for an online auction held in April, generating \$63,400 in sales. In January we also hosted the North American Strawberry Growers Association at several Poteet Farms.

In February there was A Multi County Feral How Management Workshop held with 23 producers attending

In March we hosted a field day to show the strawberry result demonstration work that he have been doing this demonstration has been made possible by the Texas Department of Agriculture Specialty Block grant. There were 12 producers present at the program.

The South Texas Peanut Growers held their annual meeting in March with 40 producers attending. The South Texas Peanut Tour, was cancelled in September due to the passing of the cooperating producer.

In May, 28 cattle producers were in attendance for the virtual multi county beef cattle and forage program. Prepared a path to the Plate Family Grilling Facebook Live Video. Prepared Beef Cattle Facebook Videos on EPD in cattle.

In June we established a weed result demonstration showcasing new products.

In July, 27 held a sports field and maintenance program with 9 participants representing 2 grass farms and 3 ISD.

In September, huisache brush result demonstrations were established. Subsequent evaluations were conducted in November. A fall small grains variety was also established. Both were conducted with the assistance of agency specialists. December's Preparing for the Spring CEU virtual Workshop had 105 producers in attendance.

In October, 280 county fourth graders were introduced to agriculture science at the annual Ag Science Fair held virtually. A total of 9 different stations showcased the importance of agriculture in our everyday lives.

A spring and fall multicounty water well screenings were offered to residents and conducted to address contamination concerns. 68 total screens were tested for nitrate, salinity, fecal coliform contamination, and hydrocarbons.

A total of 5 private applicator training courses were hosted in our office throughout the year and a total of 14 continuing education credits were offered to applicators, including 7 at our end of the year CEU Shootout program held in December.

## ***Family and Community Health***

Family and Community Health County Agents (FCH) work to keep their community safe, healthy, and of course, happy. We promote healthy lifestyles that transfer into lifelong practices. Programs offered to reflect this effort.

**Safety:** The Atascosa/Wilson County Car Seat Coalitions work hard and year-round promoting Car Seat Safety. FCH and community partners educate individuals and groups on distracted driving, hot baby (not leaving children or pets in car), buzzed and drunk driving, and seatbelt usage for all ages.

- Even though we could not have a Child Passenger Safety event this year, we could still help through education and even some virtual installs. FCH agent recorded 2 podcasts on the dangers “Hot Baby” and seatbelt use in general. Car safety is important.
- Food Protection Management: Food Handlers Certification: A total of 27 participants, with roughly half having experience in the food business. In response to COVID-19, 21 individuals were able to get their certificates online.

**Health** Promoting health in the community is also a priority. Diabetes and heart disease effect approximately fifty-five percent of residents in Atascosa County. Increase diabetes and high blood pressure knowledge, self-care and dietary management, and disease management in people with type 2 diabetes and hypertension to reduce their risk of complications by providing a general combined approach to program efforts. Throughout the year, programs were: Do Well Be Well with Hypertension (10), DASH your way to a Healthy You (15), and Walk N’ Talk Rethink your Drink (55). Education for General Nutrition, MyPlate guidelines and Eating Healthy on a Budget were distributed through food pantries and the help of the MHM Wesley Nurses.

**FABLOW** AgriLife is a multi-county collaboration between the FCH agents of Frio, Atascosa, Bandera, and Wilson County and part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Family & Community Health. Our goal is to implement and promote Better Living for Healthy Texans, another FCH program, by addressing health and wellness topics through online content. We received State, Regional and National awards again this year in Communications for our podcast, digital newsletter, and social media education. We have continued with the newsletter and podcast throughout the year and implemented an interactive program on social media this year.

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

**Livestock Shows:** Over 168 Atascosa 4-H members help set a record-breaking sale at the Atascosa County Livestock Show in January. Our county show was the preface to Texas stock show season, which produced several placing projects. In February, 156 members participated in Fort Worth, San Angelo, and San Antonio Stock Shows. In March, 105 Atascosa 4-H members entered the Austin and Houston Livestock Show but could not participate because of the Covid 19.

**Spring:** Unfortunately, our Spring contests were also canceled due to COVID-19. However, we could have the popular photography contest with 15 participants and 12 advancing to district. 3 Fashion Show members and 3 storyboards were ready for District 12 Fashion Sensation, but the contest could not be held.

**Summer:** With technology, the State Contest for Consumer Decision Making continued, and Atascosa had 2 participants. We also had 1 member able to participant in the Outdoor Adventure Camp held in Brownwood. Election Convention was held virtually, and 2 County Council delegate participate, and 1 4-H member ran for District 12 Treasure position and won. Atascosa was well represented for Record Book with 17 competing at county with 10 advancing too district and 1 making it to state. Several livestock project workshops were held on our campus for 4-H members, including a 4-H Livestock and Health Workshop, the workshop focused on show livestock nutrition. The Atascosa 4-H Awards Banquet was held virtually, and through a drive-through, members received awards and were recognized for their accomplishments. A virtual commissioner's court Interpretation piece was also developed for Commissioner's Court.

**Fall:** With the loosening of restrictions in the fall, a focus on nutrition and livestock took place. For Food Show activities, we were able to have our County Food Show and even a couple of workshops with 9 in attendance and 8 able to advance to district. The Atascosa County Fair, held in October, provided several 4-H members the opportunity to show projects at the prospect show. The annual Atascosa 4-H fundraiser, the South Texas Double Trouble Prospect Show, was held in November, raising \$8,781.48 for the program. Also, this month, Atascosa 4-H was represented at the District 4-H Virtual Food Show.

