

# IMPACTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2022



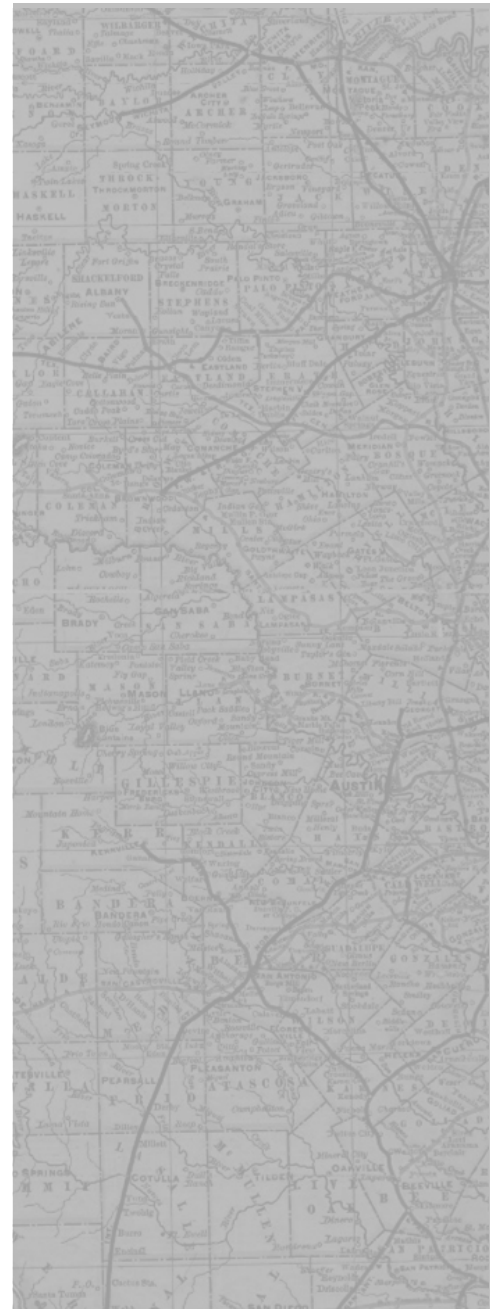
TEXAS A&M  
**AGRILIFE**  
EXTENSION

**SOUTH  
REGION**



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## SOUTH REGION OVERVIEW

The South Region is comprised of 41 counties and supported by the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Centers in Uvalde (District 10) and Weslaco (District 12). The region has a total population of 6,246,445 with an ethnic breakdown of 61% Hispanic, 30% Anglo, 5% African American, 4% Native American/Asian/Other. County populations range from over 2 million residents in Bexar County to 350 in Kenedy County. Throughout the 41 counties, 118 AgriLife County Agents and Specialty Agents, plus approximately 40 program assistants work to provide program support and educational capacity in the South Region.

## EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS

**1,658,021 Total Contacts**  
**709,278 Educational Event Contacts**  
**948,743 Contacts including Newsletters & Educational Resources**  
**1,557,108 Educational Session Contact Hours**

### OTHER CONTACTS:

**18,328 Social Media Posts**  
**461,721 Social Media Followers**

## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

**18,922 Total Volunteers**  
**921,079 Volunteer Hours Contributed**  
**\$27,571,069 Value (\$29.94 per hour)**  
**107,704 Contacts by Volunteers**  
**1,874 "Master" Volunteers (Gardeners, Naturalist, Wellness, Clothing)**

## REGIONAL TEAM

### JANA OSBOURN

Regional Program Leader  
 Family and Community Health  
 4-H Youth Development

### MICHAEL HAYNES

District Extension Administrator  
 District 10

### NELDA SPELLER

County Extension Director  
 Bexar County

### JASON OTT

Regional Program Leader  
 Agriculture and Natural Resources  
 4-H Youth Development

### DR. RUBEN SALDAÑA

District Extension Administrator  
 District 12

### MAGGIE JOHNSON

County Extension Director  
 Travis County

## BY THE NUMBERS

1.0M

### TOTAL EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS

including events, newsletters, and educational

921K

### TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED

\$27.5M

Total Value of Volunteer Time

## AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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. Also, 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 insecurity, and improve diet and human nutrition throughout the state.

Additionally, safeguarding our precious natural resources and maintaining a clean and healthy environment are among AgriLife Extension's top priorities. We encourage production practices and the use of technologies that 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 pesticide use training, and the integrated pest management program.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

Animal Agriculture and Wildlife generates over \$1.1 billion in agricultural revenue in the South Region.

- Contact totals for **Animal Agriculture and Wildlife** were 30,923 through 961 educational activities conducted in all 41 counties. South Texas livestock and range management program fit hand in glove with most programs not only addressing livestock production aspects, but also addressing the proper management of rangeland resources. Predominate topics included sire selection, value of replacement females, stocking rates, pasture recovery and brush control practices, forage economics, herd health practices, and marketing strategies.
- 8 Brush Management, 4 Livestock, and 1 Wildlife Management **Demonstration and Applied Research Trials** were conducted in the South Region.
- **Land Management Programs** in Eastern District 10 highlighted with the Luling Foundation Field Day, registered an anticipated economic benefit to their operation of over **\$1.6 million** by 618 contacts.
- **LGRV Bull Gain Test and Heifer Development** program an official 112-day bull gain test and heifer development program that continued for its 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Total value of this program since its inception is \$12.7 million.
- **Sheep and Goat Ranching** programs were offered by 7 counties through 93 group meetings in the Hill Country. 23 participants in the Livestock Guard Dog Program reported managing 164,000 acres and anticipated an economic benefit of \$10.97/hd from their participation.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### CROP AND FARM BUSINESS

Crop Production generates over \$1.3 billion in agricultural revenue in the South Region.

- Contact totals for **Crop and Farm Business** were 2,794 through 187 educational activities conducted in all 12 counties.
- 4 Cotton, 3 Sorghum, 2 Corn, 1 Sunflower and 1 Peanut **Variety Trials** were conducted in the South Region. Additionally, a Weed Management Demonstration on peanuts was also completed.
- **Cotton and Grain** producer programs include Field Days, Tours, Pre-Plan Conferences and Fall Producer Meetings conducted in the Coastal Bend, Rio Grande Valley and Winter Garden areas. The economic impact of the LRGV IPM program to the cotton industry is estimated at \$433,500. Soil Testing Campaigns in the Coastal Bend and Rio Grande Valley are conducted annually.
- 16 **IPM Pest Audio Updates** were given during the grower season for **163 subscribers** (52% increase) made up of mainly growers and ag industry people who signed up to receive them via text.
- 30 Producers and Crop Consultants attended a **Cotton Scout School** in the LRGV.
- **Peanut production** was supported by grower newsletters, Annual Growers Meetings, demonstration work, and Peanut Producer Tours. 63 individuals participated in peanut programs managing a total of 28 thousand acres. 87% of participants anticipated an economic benefit.
- Supporting Texas **Strawberry** production, demonstrations on herbicides, fertility, varieties, and low tunnels were conducted along with 2 educational events.
- A **Spinach Field Day** with 80 attendees was conducted in the Winter Garden.
- **Summer Turf Grass Educational Workshop** was held for 16 growers in the Winter Garden Area where 40,000 acres of turf are in production.



## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### HORTICULTURE AND PUBLIC / AG INTERFACE

- **Horticulture** continues to be in strong demand by South Region clientele. The Extension response in the South Region thrives through our expert Horticulture Agents, County Extension Agents, and our vast volunteer engagement through the Master Volunteer programs. With the metropolitan areas of Travis, Bexar, Hidalgo, Cameron counties, and the I-35 corridor counties our outreach is vast. **Total contacts of 90,325** in 8,632 events.
- There are 7 Chapters of **Master Gardeners** serving 10 counties in the South with 623 volunteers to assist with educational outreach. These members contributed 36,797 volunteer hours, a **\$1.1 million** value to the horticulture educational effort in 83 schools and 29 demonstration gardens, yielding **17.4 tons of donated produce**.
- **Master Naturalist** are 1,200 strong in the South. Fifteen chapters report 60,000 hours donated for a total value for volunteer service of nearly **\$1.8 million**.
- There are approximately 1,400 farms under 9A in the LRGV and this **Small Acreage Production** has a combined vegetables, fruit, and nursery sales market value \$214 million. 334 people attended small acreage workshops. 88.2% of the participants will adopt at least one practice from this program. Participants estimated a total economic benefit of **\$1.16 million**.
- **Children's Vegetable Garden Programs** reached 13,863 youth. The program teaches Ag Literacy, Environmental Stewardship, and Earth Science through activities utilizing plants and bugs.
- **Grow It Cook It** program series is an interdisciplinary program that taught 66 participants how to grow and prepare tasty meal items with various vegetables. 98% of program participants plan to vegetable garden because of this program.



*AgriLife Learn: 66 Agriculture & Natural Resource courses with 542 completions.*

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

The goal of AgriLife Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) programs is to foster health and wellness through educational program delivery to reduce the risk of chronic disease and for the management of targeted chronic diseases. This is done through educational programs developed by subject matter experts and delivered locally by Extension agents and trained volunteers. The primary focus of FCH programs is human nutrition, active living, chronic disease prevention, food safety, mental health and wellness, and community safety.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### HUMAN NUTRITION

- **Better Living for Texans**, the SNAP-Ed education program of AgriLife Extension, made **4,989 contacts** with limited resource individuals from 26 counties. The adult educational series - *Fresh Start to a Healthier You*, *Get the Facts*, *Healthy Carbs*, *Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities*, *Be Well Live Well*, and *Walk 'n Talk* - improved individual's ability to prepare nutritious, safe meals, stretch food dollars, and increase physical activity. **1,905 adults** and **1,540 youth** graduated from a BLT program series.
- **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs** educated **2,465 limited resource families** and **21,246 youth** in Bexar, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Travis Counties on topics related to dietary quality, food resource management, food safety and physical activity. Upon exit, 94% of adults indicated improvement in 1 or more Diet Quality practices and 90% indicated improvement in Food Resource Management practices.
- **Adult Nutrition Programs** in the South Region reached **1,834 adults**; of these 652 individuals from graduated from a program series including *Dinner Tonight* or *Cooking Well* series. These programs provided busy families with quick, healthy, cost-effective recipes and taught meal planning and food preparation skills.

### ACTIVE LIVING

- **Active Living** programs – *Strong People Strong Bodies*, *Step Up Scale Down*, *Maintain No Gain*, and *Healthy Living* - provide motivational tools, healthy recipes, and physical activity to assist participants to become more active and lose/control their weight. **351 adults** from 8 counties completed one of the program series.
- **Walk Across Texas** events engaged **6,913 individuals** including 1,816 adults in 17 counties and 5,097 youth in 11 counties. Over **509,333 miles** were logged by youth and adult participants. For adult participants, the lifetime estimated health care cost savings (diabetes and cardiovascular prevention/control) is over **\$11 million**.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

- **Diabetes education** teaches basic nutrition and self-care management topics to help individuals with diabetes learn skills needed to manage their disease successfully. **678 adults** participated in one of the five program series including *Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes*, *Cooking Well with Diabetes*, *Si Yo Puedo Controlar Mi Diabetes*, *Wisdom Power Control*, or *Coping 2 Control*.
- **Hypertension programs** teach nutrition and self-care management to reduce hypertension and prevent or manage high blood pressure. **19 adults** participated in either *Cooking Well for a Healthy Blood Pressure* or *Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension*.

For the adults completing a **Chronic Disease Prevention** program series, there is an estimated lifetime healthcare cost savings and improved productivity **economic benefit of \$3,283,993.**

### FOOD SAFETY

- **Food Protection Management** was developed to meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments. **225 individuals** in 8 counties completed the *Food Handler* certificate program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services and trains front-line food service workers on basic principles of food safety. The 2-day Food Protection Management class prepares dietary managers to successfully complete the *Certified Food Management* exam. In 2022, **112 participants** in 3 counties successfully completed the course.

### MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

- AgriLife **Mindfulness** programs teach individuals the practice of mindfulness to reduce and manage stress and live life more fully. These programs in the South Region reached **1,098 adults**; of these 400 adults and youth graduated from a program series including *Stress Less with Mindfulness* or *Mindful SELF*.



## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

- **Passenger Safety** programs work to reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes. In 2022, the **Silver Drivers** program assisted **844 seniors** with education and “car fit” events. Additionally, **197 child safety seats** were inspected in the South Region, and **142 seats** were replaced. By reducing the risk of injury and death which leads to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings and improved quality of life, the **economic impact** is an estimated **\$401,257**.
- **Watch UR BAC** is an awareness campaign that refers to blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and teaches Texans about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs. In 2022, **44 programs** reaching **9,622 youth and adults** were delivered through a grant from Texas Department of Transportation.
- **Early Childhood Educator Training** conferences in the South Region reached **558 educators** who care for over 10,000 children daily. A total of **2,664 clock hours** of training were provided to professionals seeking to meet the state mandated requirements.
- **Parenting Connections** is a fee-based program to help reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by encouraging positive parenting practices. **54 parents** in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties completed the court-mandated program in 2022.

### Texas Extension Education Association & Study Groups

The mission of the Texas Extension Education Association, Inc. and Extension Study Groups across the South Region is to work with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development and community service. Across the Region, 4 counties work with **109 TEEA members** and 4 counties work with **159 Study Group members**. Numerous community service projects are completed by these **268 volunteers**.

### FCH Master Volunteers

Master Wellness Volunteers (MWV) and Master Clothing Volunteers (MCV) are key support groups in 3 counties in the South Region. **51 Master Volunteers** donated **3,891 hours** in 2022 extension education to **4,907 participants**. The value of the service hours = **\$116,535** (@ \$29.95/hour).

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*AgriLife Learn: 407 Family & Community Health courses with 46,364 completions*

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## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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.

## 4-H PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

### South Region 2021-22 4-H Enrollment

Club Membership = 12,618

Special Interest + Curriculum Enrichment = 107,173

**Total Membership = 119,791**

**275% increase over 2020-21**

Youth & Adult Volunteers = 6,197

#### *Top 5 4-H Projects...*

1. Foods & Nutrition
2. Shooting Sports
3. Beef Cattle
4. Goats
5. Rabbits

#### *Top 5 Special Interest/Curriculum....*

1. JMG/LGEG/Horticulture
2. Wildlife & Fisheries
3. 4-H Afterschool
4. Science of Ag/ Path to the Plate
5. Hatching in the Classroom

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**61** 4-H members  
received **\$672,000**  
in 4-H Foundation  
scholarships!

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### LIVESTOCK & AGRICULTURE

- 4-H Youth from across the state dedicate 6 days to understanding production agriculture and what it takes to feed this country through the **Youth Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (YALL)** tour. **30 youth leaders** were selected to participate in the 2022 tour. Leaders in the agriculture industry shared production practices, job opportunities and the issues facing agriculture in the future. The program is sponsored by industry businesses and coordinated by Bexar, Gillespie, Kerr, and Llano County AgriLife Extension.
- **Path to the Plate/Science of Ag** Youth Expos were held in 19 counties reaching **7,737 youth** with the message that ag provides the essentials we need to live while connecting agriculture to health.
- **Hatching in the Classroom** was conducted in 6 counties teaching **3,595 elementary students** about egg anatomy, the incubation process, and chick anatomy.



## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

- The largest 4-H project in the South Region is **Foods & Nutrition**. We have 4-H members involved in the F&N project in **all 41 counties** in the region. Youth learn kitchen safety and how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks through a variety of learning experiences which focus on nutrition, food purchasing, food preparation, food safety, and related careers. 4-H'ers compete on the County, District and State levels in 4-H *Food Challenge*, *FCH Quiz Bowl*, and *Food Show*.
- **Fashion & Interior Design** teach youth the basics of design, construction, and consumer skills when purchasing clothing and household items. Project workshops taught construction and shopping skills and personal care and grooming to **364 youth**. 4-H members share what they have learned while competing in the 4-H *Duds 2 Dazzle* contest, *Fashion Show*, and *Storyboard* contest.
- In the **Consumer Decision Making** project, **127 youth** learned how to compare prices, test for quality, and make purchases based on facts and research. 4-H members compete on teams at the District and State 4-H *CDM Contest*, plus multiple statewide invitationals.
- With a focus on 'county experiences', **796 4-H members** in the South Region participated in County FCH contests this past year.
- **45 Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors** volunteered **1,593 hours leading** over 150 educational programs and **volunteering** with over 125 service-learning events.

### STEM

- **STEM**-based education teaches youth more than science and mathematics concepts. The focus on hands-on learning with real-world applications helps develop a variety of skill sets, including creativity and 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. The South Region STEM projects encompass **Photography** (1,109 youth), **Robotics** (290 youth), and **STEM** (525 youth) with a total of **1,924 youth** participating.
- Growing good kids through an interdisciplinary program that emphasizes Science, Math, Language Arts, Physical Education and Health, youth **gardening programs** such as Learn Grow Eat Go (LGEG), Early Childhood Learn Grow Eat Go (EC LGEG), and Junior Master Gardener (JMG) in the South Region impacted **5,552 elementary students**.
- At Texas 4-H Roundup, South Region members place 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in **Discover Science Method Research** Poster.



## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### NATURAL RESOURCES

- For kids who love to be outdoors, there is a project in **Natural Resources** they will enjoy. In the South Region, NR projects include Entomology, Outdoor Education, Range Science, Shooting Sports, Sportfishing, Wildlife & Fisheries and Water Education. According to 4-H enrollment data, one of the Region's largest projects is **Shooting Sports** with **1,724 members**. Another popular project is **Wildlife** with **963 4-H'ers** enrolled. After participating in months of project workshops, youth compete in district and state contest in this area.
- Water conservation programs teach individuals to conserve water while helping to reduce demand on this limited resource. **298 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students** completed the *Investigating Water* program which included a Water Fair with rotations on Aquifers, Rainfall & Runoff Simulation, Water in the Body, the Water Cycle, the Enviroscape, Xeriscaping, and Indoor/Outdoor Water Conservation. Additionally, **443 elementary students** participated in Water Fairs throughout the region.

### LEADERSHIP & CITIZENSHIP

- The goal of the South Region 4-H program is to grow the leaders of tomorrow! Youth develop their individual leadership skills by learning more about themselves through all project areas. But for those individuals who want to focus on their leadership development, a variety of programs and projects are available. In 2021-22, **1,625 members** participated in *leadership*-specific project work.
- The 4-H Ambassador program teaches leadership, problem solving and public speaking skills. Over 2/3 of the South Region counties participate in some type of Ambassador program. County 4-H Ambassadors, Livestock & Horse Ambassadors, Healthy Texas/Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors, and Tech Ambassadors are the largest groups.
- At Texas 4-H Roundup, South Region members placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> in **Leaders 4 Life** and 1<sup>st</sup> in **Open Educational Presentation**.
- 2021-22 enrollment for the region's **Clover Kids** program = **1,133** Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade youth.

#### South Region 4-H'ers Competing in National Contests

National Wool Judging Contest – Reserve Champion Team – Kimble County  
 National Food Challenge – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Team – Bexar County & 4<sup>th</sup> Place Team – Guadalupe County  
 National Western Roundup Meats Judging – Champion Team – Guadalupe County  
 National Western Roundup Parli Procedure – Reserve Champion Team – Guadalupe County  
 National Western Roundup FCS Skill-a-thon – Champion Team – Wilson County  
 National Western FCS Presentation – Champion – Bexar County  
 Askarben Livestock Judging – Gillespie County

## DISASTER ASSESSMENT & RECOVERY

AgriLife Extension is uniquely positioned to provide disaster assessment and recovery due to its statewide network of educators, volunteers, and offices serving all 254 Texas counties. The agency has rapidly deployed specialized professionals to disaster impact zones as a member of the Texas Emergency Management Council, continuing to support the lead state agencies during such operations. The agency has a demonstrated history of responding to the needs of Texas communities affected by floods, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and pandemics.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### TRAINING AND OUTREACH (Blue Sky)

- Reported contact totals for Blue Sky Training and Outreach was 460 through 25 educational events conducted across the region.
- The **DAR Side Newsletter** serves as a quarterly communication piece for situational awareness of pressing issues that are faced throughout the State. The newsletter is distributed to AgriLife personnel, as well as, key stakeholders within the region. A total of 2,631 copies have been distributed.
- South Region DAR Agents participate in **Operation Border Health** sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services. The purpose of the exercise was to provide emergency response teams with real-time training, while simultaneously servicing the local population of companion animals to be prepared and well equipped for a potential public health emergency in the future. Disaster Assessment and Recovery Agents coordinated and worked alongside the TAMU-VET Unit in Raymondville for this event. 715 dogs and cats were provided with primary care and wellness examinations.
- **Fire Wise Landscapes and Brush Pile Burning Workshops** have been delivered to 24 participants.
- **Active Shooter Training** was provided to 14 AgriLife Employees by DAR Agents.
- Guidance has been given to multiple **LEPC and AIC Meeting** held across the South.
- **Emergency Preparedness Dinner Tonight Cooking Schools** were conducted.

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*AgriLife Learn: 2 Covid-19 courses with 198 completions*

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## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE (Grey Sky)

- DAR Agents assisted with **COVID-19 Mission** at the San Antonio RSA until July 2022. During the Pandemic a total of 974,596 pallets of PPE were delivered, over **1 million doses** of vaccine distributed, 4 million COVID-19 test kits were dispensed, and **193 trainings** were conducted by South Region – DAR Agents. Additionally, 73,793 individuals were tested for COVID-19 at the State Capital.
- **Eastland Complex Fire Response** was initiated on March 18 and again on July 19 for the **Somervell County-Chalk Mountain Response**. Collectively, 380 animals were sheltered, 1,070 round bales, 314 square bales, and 53.8 tons of feed were distributed in these responses.
- The DAR Unit was activated on October 4 as part of an EMAC Request in response to **Hurricane Ian** in Florida. 3 South Region DAR Agents participated in the deployment by providing logistical and administrative support to TAMU-VET, which provided care for 38 HR Search Dogs.
- **Severe Weather Response** was provided to Red River, Morris, and Lamar counties on November 10, led by a South Region DAR agent. The team conducted assessments of exterior fencing damage from the severe weather incident. Damage to 16 miles of fencing and 5 structures was identified and documented during the deployment.



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE (continued)

### AgriLife Extension Response to the Uvalde Tragedy

- At the request of the county office, Miquela Smith, Health Specialist, provided mental health resources for parents, students, staff, and community immediately after the shooting.
- Molly Flores, Uvalde CEA-FCH, coordinated the initial Team Uvalde meeting. The group of 39 individuals represented 26 agencies serving the community. Team Uvalde has continued to meet monthly to assist in coordination of programs, events, and services for the community.
- The Wellness & Healing Fair was held on August 12, 2022. Molly served as a coordinating advisor. 1,050 people attended the event with 22 vendors. Through generous donations 225 bikes and 1,000 stainless water bottles were distributed.
- Texas 4-H sponsored a backpack drive. Uvalde County 4-H distributed 500 backpacks at the Wellness & Healing Fair.
- Texas 4-H members and TEEA members quilted and donated over 500 hearts for the "I Found A Heart" project. Uvalde County 4-H members 'hid' the hearts throughout the community for individuals to find.
- 175 "Love Bug" pillows were made and donated by District 10 4-H members. Molly coordinated the distribution of these to students from Robb Elementary.
- Uvalde County 4-H distributed 300 gun locks at the annual Hunter's Round Up.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Makenna Elrod Seiler Memorial Roping and Scholarship Presentation will be held April 14-15. Uvalde County 4-H is supporting the event through numerous volunteers. Makenna was a 4-H member. Additionally, a scholarship has been established in Makenna's honor through Texas 4-H.



## IMPACT / TESTIMONIALS

- **IAN** caused more death (87) in Florida than any hurricane in almost 90 years. 66% of the deaths occurred in those aged 60 or older. *"DAR and Vet should be integrated in every USAR mission carried out."* – Ohio Task Force 1
- **\$29.1 million in agricultural losses** were reported in the Eastland and Chalk Mountain Fires. 174 structures were lost, and 661,218 acres burned.



## HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

Shifting culture towards healthy living to reduce health disparities across the state is the focus for the 13 counties in the South Region which are part of **Healthy South Texas**. Counties include: **Brooks, Cameron, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kleberg, Kenedy, Live Oak, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata**. Every day, AgriLife Extension, working through local coalitions of volunteers, program partners, and organization/agency representatives, AgriLife Extension agents work with subject-matter specialists to develop and deliver educational programs, services, events, and activities to meet and address the most critical health needs in each community it serves. *During FY22 outreach and program delivery was impacted by vacancies in 4 of the 13 counties.*

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### TRAINING AND RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- Each county maintains a **Healthy South Texas Coalition**. Members are recruited and trained each year. The HST Coalitions meet a minimum of 3x each year, and in some counties they meet monthly. The HST Coalitions work with the agent to plan, implement, and evaluate educational programs which meet the needs of their communities.
- **Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors** are youth 'health experts' who motivate others to make changes in their lifestyle and improve their overall health. **31 HSTYAs** volunteered **997 hours** assisting with **231 educational programs and events**.

### COORDINATION/COLLABORATION

- A new **data portal** was implemented for use in FY22 which tracked participants' **health biometrics**. To maximize the potential of the data portal, relationships were strengthened with Texas A&M Health Science Center. Quarterly "HUB" meetings were established for AgriLife agents and specialists to **coordinate** with the HSC staff to gather the needed biometrics from participants prior to and at various points during/after a program series.

### NUTRITION EDUCATION & CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

- **Healthy South Texas Adult** nutrition and health programs included *Dinner Tonight*, *Cooking Well with Diabetes*, and *Step Up Scale Down*. During FY22, **812 adults** participated in these series which taught nutrition, incorporating more fruits/vegetables in the diet, food safety, food preparation skills and increasing physical activity. The programs which were implemented in 8 D12 HST counties and involved volunteers, HSTYAs, and HST Coalition members.
- **Healthy South Texas Youth** programs have involved multiple teacher in-service trainings to implement the *Learn Grow Eat Go!* curriculum. In partnership with multiple School Districts and After-School Programs, these nutrition programs reached **1,392 students** during FY22.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

- AgriLife **Mindfulness** programs teach individuals the practice of mindfulness to reduce and manage stress and live life more fully. In the South Region's Healthy South Texas counties, **394 individuals** graduated from either *Stress Less with Mindfulness* (for adults) or *Mindful SELF* (for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students).
- **Mental Health First Aid** (MHFA) is a skills-based training that teaches participants about mental health and substance abuse issues. It equips professionals with the resources to connect individuals in need with help. D12 HST counties are served by **5 trained MHFA Instructors**.

### ACTIVE LIVING

- **Walk Across Texas!** Is the physical activity program designated by the Texas Department of State Health Services as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program for both *Adults* and *Youth*. WAT! was implemented in 9 counties in partnership with school districts, county governments, businesses, cities, and colleges/universities including Texas A&M University-Kingsville. **3,771 youth and adults** walked over **200,000 miles!** For the adult participants, the lifetime estimated health care cost savings (diabetes and cardiovascular prevention/control) is **\$2.6M**. Special accomplishment – *Jim Hogg Co. met the goal of 100% participation from all schools in the county!*
- **Strong People Strong Bodies** is an evidence-based strength-training program that aims to improve the health and well-being of adults by increasing access to structured, safe, and effective strength training programs. In FY22, the newly launched program was implemented 2x/week for 24 weeks in 5 counties graduating **62 'strong people'**.



**HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS**

## ABOUT THE TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health thereby improving the wellbeing of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service. With a statewide network that includes 252 county offices, extension educators and their more than 93,000 volunteers serve all 254 Texas counties, making some 25 million teaching contacts a year. The programs, tools and resources provided by AgriLife Extension teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and enrich youth. 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](https://AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).