



OFFICE OF CAMERON

COUNTY EXTENSION

1390 W. Expressway 83

San Benito, TX 78586

956-361-8236 Phone

956-361-8289 Fax

<http://cameron.agrilife.org>

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

FEBRUARY 2014 - MAY 2014

Cameron County Extension Programs

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Expanded Food & Nutrition Program | 2 |
| Coastal & Marine Resources | 3 |
| Agriculture & Natural Resources | 4 |
| Family & Consumer Sciences | 5 |
| 4-H & Youth Development | 6 |
| Urban Horticulture | 7 |
| Upcoming Programs | 8 |

Improving Lives.

Improving Texas.

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



Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Written by Agent Beatriz R. Loya



Picture: families at the Harlingen Housing learning about cooking healthier snacks

Four Nutrition Education Assistants instruct Adult classes and 2 Nutrition Education Associates instruct Youth classes throughout Cameron County. During the months of January thru May, the EFNEP Adult program conducted a total of 589 classes were conducted with graduated **995** Adult participants from the EFNEP Adult Program. As well, **359** classes were conducted and **5,693** Youth participants graduated from the EFNEP Youth Program.

Volunteers contribute to the EFNEP program with in-kind donations (hours, food donation, class usage, and copies). Partial volunteer contributions during this time volunteers donated their time, efforts, and food donations to equal **\$52,301.97**.

Parents taking the EFNEP Adult program receive many incentive items such as booklets, measuring cups, re-usable grocery lists, food thermometers, calendars, and certificates. This ensures that they are able to keep good references at home that they use later. Below is a validation of the success of the outcome of the EFNEP Program:

"The Nutrition program helped me because I learned to eat healthy and measure the food. I am active with my body by exercising 30 minutes every day for 5 days of the week. My children exercise all week because it is best for their health. I use 100% whole wheat bread for sandwiches. Now I eat vegetables and 100% vegetable juice. I learned to read the nutrition facts before I buy. I use canola oil and olive oil for cooking. I make my grocery list and plan my meal with healthy plates. I use less money. I learn to eat less sodium, less fat, and less sugar. I like making better choices for my family. I use the measuring cup to measure the serving of food what we must eat. I have healthy food in my refrigerator. I am using the refrigerator thermometer and always wash my hands and clean the kitchen before and after I cook. I want to see my family healthy." – G. Velasquez

"I am a parent volunteer at Lamar Elementary. Every Friday we have been having Ms. Wanda come and talk to us about nutrition foods. I learned many things that I did not know. I have never eaten spinach or broccoli in my life until now. That was a new experience for me. At home I also tried making some of the recipes that we learned in class and my family enjoyed them. Even some of my friends at work would make them at home. After class I would go to work and talked to my co-workers about what we learned at class. They were interested about some of the recipes that we did. It was a very educational and interesting experience for me."

- A. Mancillas, Harlingen, TX

Written by Agent Tony Reisinger

Marine extension efforts in Cameron County for this quarter were focused on turtle excluder device, TED, inspections, bycatch reduction device, BRD, study analysis Master Naturalist trainings, and the Texas Coastal Naturalist program.

This quarter we boarded 23 shrimp vessels training 51 crewmembers in TED compliance. Eleven Texas Parks and Wildlife Law Enforcement officers were also trained. Trainings were conducted aboard commercial shrimp vessels in Cameron County. These efforts trained captains and crews on proper TED construction, installation and tuning.

A preliminary report and analysis of data collected during a our fifty day BRD Proof- of-Concept Study was developed for review and we recommended five potential BRD models for further investigation according to our results.

Our Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalist program now has 180 members and we conducted two 10-week classes, 3 hours per week between January and April at two locations, San Benito and Mission. We graduated 55 new naturalists in April. The total value for local volunteer work by our naturalists from January through May 2014 was \$180,220!

Our Texas Coastal Naturalist program is the fastest growing of all with 243 individuals enrolled in the program. Trainings are held in conjunction with the UT Pan Am Coastal Studies Lab on South Padre Island and we offer classes for first response in harmful algal blooms such as red tide, marine mammal stranding response, cold stun sea turtle rescue efforts, oil spill response and other marine related classes.

Spring arrived late with multiple cold fronts hitting the Valley, impacting our marine resources. Flounder are not showing up in high numbers in the Lower Laguna Madre according to fishermen; and heavy concentrations of Sargassum seaweed washed onto our beaches presenting problems to beachgoers and beach managers. The theory behind the high concentrations is the late cold fronts kept the Sargassum offshore longer and it utilized the nutrients in the Gulf of Mexico to grow into enormous concentrations. It usually hits our beaches in early spring in lower amounts, but this year's crop was overwhelming.



2014 Master Naturalist Class Graduates



Raul Arteaga of BISD Signs His Catan Print at a Coastal Naturalist Class with Instructor Tony Reisinger Looking on



RGV Chapter President Alicia Cavazos (right) Presents Educational Chair Carolyn Cardile her Coastal Naturalist Certificate

*Pre-Plant Cotton &
Grain Conference*



*Agriculture Result
Demonstration Planting*



*Agriculture Producer Pesticide
Recertification Training*



*Sugarcane Aphid Informational
Meeting (Emerging Issue)*



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Written by Agent Dr. Enrique Perez

Pre-Plant Cotton and Grain Conference

Agriculture producers participated at the Annual Pre-Plant Conference January 16, 2014. Information was presented by Extension Specialist in the area of plant physiology, cotton and hybrid varieties that proved successful through Agriculture Result Demonstrations at cooperators irrigated farms in Cameron County. A session on current Market Outlook and future Market Outlook were also the highlight topics of interest to agriculture producers with irrigated farm land. More than 150 agriculture producers from the Rio Grande Valley participated in this Pre-Plant Cotton and Grain Conference.

Agriculture Production Research Result on Farm Demonstrations

A series of agriculture result demonstrations consisting of hybrid varieties of crops (cotton, corn and grain sorghum) were established at various producers farms in Cameron County. Irrigated cotton, corn and sorghum are major crops the agriculture industry in the county. Local agriculture producers (farmers) volunteer approximately 40 acre tract for research in for Ag. Result Demonstrations. Local agriculture producers then participate in a field day at each farm site to visually evaluate hybrid varieties of cotton, corn and sorghum.

Series of Pesticide Safety Recertification Training's for County Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers in Cameron County participated in a series of Pesticide Safety Recertification Training's. These recertification training are made available to individuals interested in obtaining continuing education units for their Private Applicator License. This license is used for the purchase of State restricted pesticides for farm use. Texas Department of Agriculture is the sole State Regulator and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is the educator for use of agriculture pesticides. Approximately 250 participated the two event held in January and February.

Pesticide Safety Training Held for Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers in the county participated in a series of Pesticide Safety Training's. Training's are made available to individuals interested in obtaining a Private Applicator License for use of State restricted pesticides issued by Texas Department of Agriculture. After completion of training and passing of exam participants received a Private Applicator License for use of state restricted use of pesticides. The license is for the purchase of restricted State pesticide for use in agriculture production.

Rio Grande Bull and Heifer Development Program for Beef Cattle Producers

Local beef cattle producers participated in the Rio Grande Bull Gain & Heifer Development Program. Cameron County Agent presented awards to beef cattle consignors at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock during the Simbra and Santa Gertrudis open show judging. Purpose of the program is to provide beef cattle producers a sound awareness on animal performance.

Sugarcane Aphid Informational Meeting-Emerging Issue of Concern for Grain Sorghum

More than 170 agriculture producers from the Rio Grande Valley and Northern Tamaulipas Matamoros Mexico participated at a Sugarcane Aphid Informative Meeting on May 20th. The meeting was initiated by the Cameron Crops Committee and Northern Tamaulipas Research Center for Agriculture. Joint effort to control the pest was the main focus of the meeting. Due to the efforts of Cameron Chairperson for the Crops Committee Cesar Pacheco, the meeting was organized and information shared as to the control of the pest on both sides of the border.

Family & Consumer Sciences

Written by Agent Lilian Mezquida

Friend to Friend Program

Get screened regularly



The Friend to Friend program promotes increasing screening for breast and cervical cancer. Its focus is to screen women underinsured and uninsured.

On April and May, 196 women and men attended the educational event. All were introduced to the importance of screening for Cancer under the American Cancer Society standards. Professional experts urged all participants that it is very important that a mammogram and pap screening to be done annually. Due to the Friend to Friend program participants requested help from professionals to secure appointments for screening of breast and cervical cancer. The events were very successful due to the efforts of Extension volunteers and the partnership with the San Benito CISD and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas provided the funding for screenings and transportation for those in need of screening services.



The Better for Living Texans assistant conducted multiple nutritional programs from January to May 2014 and 100 adults completed the program. During the summer, they will be conducting Summer Camps providing nutritional information, crafts and physical activities.



Visit our Webpage at <http://cameron.agrilife.org> for upcoming programs and activities



4-H & Youth Development



Written by Agents Marco Ponce & Roxanna Salinas



*1st Place Livestock Judging Team
– San Antonio Livestock Show*

The Texas A&M Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program has been working continuously on youth development in Cameron County. Our successes have reached over 5,000 youth. This includes 4-H membership, special interest/short-term programs, and school enrichment programs.

We have been growing everyday by creating 4-H clubs and enrolling more 4-Hers these past few months. We create the first 4-H club in Port Isabel with about 75 kids. Port Isabel 4-H Spin Club is to help kids explore 4-H. We have been teaching them about photography, food and nutrition and curriculum such as welcome to the real world. The second club we created was at the San Benito Housing Authority. Working with about 25 kids has been great. On earth day 4-H went out to the La Hermosa and planted an edible garden. The kids really enjoy 4-H coming and doing a program with them once a month. Another big outreach we have been doing is in the Brownsville ISD. Winning with nutrition is a sports nutrition curriculum were we go teach kids that they can make a sports drink at home verses going to the store and spending a lot of money.



*San Benito Housing
Authority Program*

Cameron County 4-H members participated in the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show in Mercedes. Over 20 Cameron County 4-H members made the Sale of Champions with their top placing livestock and horticulture projects. Two Cameron County 4-H members also received academic scholarships from the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show. Cameron County 4-H members also participated in the livestock judging contest where we also had the 1st place senior and junior livestock judging teams. We also had the overall senior and junior level high point individuals for this contest.



*Rio Grande Valley Livestock
Show- Livestock Judging Team*

Cameron County 4-H members participated in the District 12 4-H Roundup contest held on the campus of South Texas Community College in Rio Grande City. Cameron County 4-H members placed very high with their public speaking presentations, swine skill-a-thon, celebrate 4-H routine, vocal, poetry, and musical presentations. 4-H members also participated in the District 12 4-H Livestock Judging contest held in Fredericksburg. 4-H members placed 3rd in the Junior age division and our two senior teams placed 2nd and 3rd in this contest. Both senior level teams advanced to the State Livestock Judging contest to be held during State 4-H Roundup in College Station.

In addition to electing a new county council in May, we have a summer of lots of activities coming up. We have 17 kids enrolled in Texas 4-H Roundup in College Station on the Texas A&M University campus. We have Steer validation which is county wide with over 80 steers. Rounding up June we have District 12 leadership lab that consist of 20 southern counties. With the BIG help of the stripes campaign last year we are able to send 26 youth to attend this leadership camp. We continue to grow our numbers and programs every day, this continue success shows a bright future for the youth of Cameron County.



District 12 Roundup



*2014-2015 Cameron
County Council*



Urban Horticulture

Written by Agent Jennifer Herrera



San Pedro Community Garden



Arborist Workshop



Master Gardener Association Meeting

Cameron County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension received a grant, “Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities” from the Texas A&M Nutrition department to increase Cameron County residents access to fresh produce by teaching basic gardening skills that allow and promote the development of backyard and community gardens. The project targets underserved areas and areas defined as food deserts by USDA. Through this grant we were able to hire a full time program assistant. Thus, far we have developed four community gardens throughout Cameron County reaching over 70 families. The sites of the community gardens are Los Indios, Santa Rosa, Port Isabel, and San Pedro. Two more community gardens will be installed in the fall. A series of 6 horticulture educational classes are given to families participating in the program. The program assistants with the existing *Better Living for Texans* program will provide nutrition educational programs and cooking demonstrations to teach participants how to incorporate the produce grown into their family’s meals, thereby improving diet quality and stretching food resources.

This year we have 12 Cameron County Master Gardener interns working towards completing the Master Gardener program. The Master Gardener Interns have completed 30 hours horticulture educational training and average 65 hours of volunteer service.

The Second Annual Arborist Workshop was conducted for city and county employees working in the Park and Recreations department by Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the City of Brownsville. Over 80 employees throughout the Rio Grande Valley became certified arborists.

Two of six educational webinars on Small Acreage Horticulture Crop have been conducted for Cameron County residents interested in going into business growing grapes, peaches, tomatoes, watermelons, pecans or other horticultural crops at the Cameron County Extension office in San Benito.

Webpage: <http://txmg.org/cameron> or

Facebook : [Cameron County Master Gardeners](#)

Upcoming Activities 2014

Extension Educational Programs

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| Tip Of Texas Meeting | June 2, 2014 | D12 4-H Officer Retreat | Aug. 1-3, 2014 |
| Parenting Classes | June 2,9,&16, 2014 | Tip of Texas Meeting | Aug. 4, 2014 |
| Texas 4-H Roundup | June 9-13, 2014 | Master Gardener Exec. Meeting | Aug. 7, 2014 |
| South TX Judge & Commissioners | June 9-12, 2014 | RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec & Board Meeting | Aug. 12, 2014 |
| Master Gardener Class | June 11, 2014 | Master Gardener Class | Aug. 13, 2014 |
| Master Gardener Association. Meeting | June 12, 2014 | Master Gardener Association. Meeting | Aug. 14, 2014 |
| Agriculture Committee Meeting | June 13, 2014 | Fall Program Planning | Aug. 21, 2014 |
| 4-H County Record Book Judging | June 17, 2014 | Small Acreage Horticultural Crop Webinar- Practical Weed Control Webinar | Aug. 21, 2014 |
| Sugarcane Aphid Field Day | June 19, 2014 | Vet Science Training | Aug. 25, 2014 |
| Small Acreage Horticultural Crop Webinar- Grafting Vegetables Crop: Principles & Practice | June 19, 2014 | 4-H Council & Managers Meeting | Aug. 25, 2014 |
| D12 4-H Horse Show | June 20, 2014 | Leadership Advisory Meeting | Aug. 27, 2014 |
| Cotton & Grain Field Day | June 24, 2014 | Private Applicator Training | Sept. 2, 2014 |
| D12 4-H Leadership Lab & Election Convention | June 24-27, 2014 | Parenting Class | Sept. 8,15,22,2014 |
| FCS/BLT Advisory Meeting | June 27, 2014 | Master Gardener Exec. Meeting | Sept. 4, 2014 |
| Master Gardener Exec. Meeting | July 3, 2014 | Tip of Texas Meeting | Sept. 8, 2014 |
| Tip Of Texas Meeting | July 7, 2014 | Master Gardener Class | Sept. 10, 2014 |
| RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec& Board Meeting | July 8, 2014 | RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec.& Board Meeting | Sept. 9, 2014 |
| D12 4-H Record Book Judging | July 9, 2014 | Master Gardener Association Meeting | Sept. 11, 2014 |
| Master Gardener General Meeting | July 10, 2014 | 4-H Council & Managers Meeting | Sept. 15, 2014 |
| TCAAA | July 14-17, 2014 | D12 Program Planning Workshop | Sept. 18, 2014 |
| CEP Youth LAB | July 15 & 16, 2014 | | |
| 4-H Cameron County Fishing Tournament | July 19, 2014 | | |
| TEAFCS | July 29-31, 2014 | | |

Visit our Webpage at <http://cameron.agrilife.org> or

Facebook : [TX A&M Agrilife in Cameron County](#) for upcoming programs and activities.