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COUNTY EXTENSION

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TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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Cameron County Extension Programs

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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



Coastal & Marine Resources



Written by Agent: Tony Reisinger

The shrimp season opened July 15 and our primary focus was training captains and crews TED compliance to reduce potential sea turtle mortalities and increase the shrimp catch. We trained 135 shrimp vessel captains, crews, owners and turtle excluder device (TED) manufacturers for 32 shrimp vessels along the Texas Coast, teaching them to inspect and construct TEDs compliant with regulations. Texas AgriLife Extension journalist, Rod Santana videoed an interview I gave on the importance of TEDs for the shrimp fishery and sea turtle populations, and it was shot aboard a Brownsville shrimp vessel while training a crew in TED compliance. Santana, wrote and released a story and the footage which was picked up by numerous Valley and Texas media. We also trained three First Step County Agents on coastal issues and demonstrated how TEDs work during a tour of coastal area and exposed them to major coastal issues.

On the economic side of the fishery, Dr. Andrew Ropicki, Sea Grant economics specialist, was featured speaker with the Brownsville – Port Isabel Shrimp Producers Association meeting August 27 and he told us our economic multiplier of 3, we've used in the past is way too high, however the new program (IMPLAN) does not include processing which has a huge impact especially with Texas Pack employing over 300 in Port Isabel. He has plans to incorporate processing for this year's production and impact summaries.

In other news, two manatees were spotted in the Lower Laguna Madre and the Brownsville Herald covered one sighting which was picked up by all three Valley AIM newspapers on August 9th.

A massive shrimp kill was reported in several aquaculture ponds on the Arroyo Colorado. The owner of the ponds claims the crop was poisoned. We assured the public none of the shrimp were released to the market. This case became a major Emergency Management effort and we took and sent multiple samples to TAMUCC for analysis. We are currently working on this with our Office of Emergency Management. We are not sure of the cause of the mortalities and have determined the shrimp are safe to eat after rigorous state testing.

This quarter was fishing tournament season and we trained eight weighmaster candidates at three fishing tournaments: Cameron County 4-H Fishing Tournament 7/19 with 159 anglers, the Port Mansfield Fishing Tournament 9/24-27 with 259 anglers, and the Texas International Fishing Tournament 7/29 – 8/3 with 1249 anglers. Offshore anglers have the highest economic impact in the county.

We gave a Red Tide Ranger course on sampling, identification, enumeration, and impacts of red tide to 15 members of the NOAA Environmental Cooperative Science Center (ECSC) for a Bioindicators Workshop on South Padre Island, 9/16. Red tide did begin showing higher cell counts in September, but it has not exceeded counts that can lead to shellfish closures or have any impacts on fish, dogs or humans.

Plans for next quarter include: the end of the shrimp farm investigation and we will begin refocusing on summarizing the bycatch reduction Proof-of-Concept study, and TED trainings for the shrimp fleet in the Gulf of Mexico to reduce sea turtle mortalities. Our Master Naturalist Chapter is splitting into two chapters. A new one is forming in Hidalgo County, the South Texas Border Chapter. I will assist them in the transition and try to hook them up with a Texas AgriLife Extension agent in Hidalgo.



2014-15 Extension Leadership

Advisory Board



Sugarcane Aphid Awareness Field Day



2015 Farm Bill Program Agriculture Producers



Agriculture Result Demonstration Harvesting Cotton



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Written by Agent: Dr. Enrique Perez

Extension Leadership Advisory Board Plans for Upcoming 2015 Texas Community Futures Forum

The Cameron County Extension Leadership Advisory Board will be conducting the 2015 Texas Community Futures Forum. The TCFF is a process in which county residents representing local groups, organizations, agencies, school districts, governmental entities assist in identifying and prioritizing critical issues/needs in local communities. At this meeting critical issues identified will be prioritized. Then local Extension program area committees, task forces, and Extension Specialist will assist in addressing issues/needs within the county with educational programming. Dr. Jose Luis Cavazos chairperson for the Extension Leadership Advisory Board will provide training and instruction to local Extension volunteer members as to their role at the Texas Community Future Form (TCFF) scheduled early next spring.

Sugarcane Aphid on Grain Sorghum Crop– Emerging Issue for Agriculture Producers

Early this spring agriculture producers with grain sorghum crop began to experience significant damage with their crop due to the sugarcane aphid. Cameron Extension Agriculture Production Committee met with Agriculture producers from Mexico and agriculture agency representatives to discuss emerging pest problem. Cameron County Texas A&M Agrilife Extension with Extension specialists and counterparts from Mexico began a series of educational meeting and field days. At these special educational events agriculture producers were provided with pest management (spraying) alternatives to the control and eradication of the pest in grain sorghum. These pest management practices contributed to the stability in yields with the grain sorghum crop.

2015 Farm Bill Program

A series of educational farm bill meetings were initiated by Texas A&M Agrilife Extension in spring and summer this year. A Farm Bill meeting is scheduled October 30th. The purpose of these meetings are to better prepare agriculture producers in making the right decision for all their base crop acreages within their agriculture operation. County Extension and USDA are working as partners in making sure that agriculture producers have the understanding of the changes in the new 2015 farm bill. Extension Economist are providing the needed tools to agriculture producers to assist them in making a decision for the future in agriculture. More then 300 agriculture producers have already participated at these meetings.

Pesticide Safety Training's for County Agriculture Producers and Commercial Pesticide License

Cameron County agriculture producers continue to participate in a series of Pesticide Safety Training's. These trainings are made available to individuals interested in obtaining a Private Applicator License for use of State restricted pesticides from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture Production Research Result on Farm Demonstrations

The production of cotton, grain sorghum and corn in Cameron County continue to be the largest cash crops in the county. This past year (2013) estimated value of crops was approximately more then 130 million dollars. This year it will surpass this due to excellent weather conditions and crop management. Texas A&M Agriculture Extension plays a major role in providing agriculture producers information on new available hybrids for planting. The Cameron County Extension provides leadership in the establishment of row crop result demonstration with agriculture production committee leading the program Agriculture result demonstrations provide growers with an understanding with new introduced hybrids (cotton, grain sorghum, corn). Every hybrid performance is different in reference to soil, crop management, water availability, pests management. Agriculture producers will be provided with information on each hybrid's performance and plant development before making decision on what to plant next year.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Written by Agent: Lilian Mezquida

Parenting Connections

Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) offers practical information for families: raising children and assists them in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and change behaviors necessary for a personal development and the improvement of total family life. I have implemented the Parenting Connections Series for parents referred by Child Protective Services. Participants were evaluated after completing the parent education series using a retrospective evaluation tool. Results indicate that the program had a very positive effect on specific parenting practices. Such as Significant behavioral changes in the following areas: parent-child communication, parental self-confidence, and parental use of positive disciplinary practices. In addition, parents reported a significant improvement in their children's behavior after participating in the program. Participants Comments: a) I did learn how important it is to set limits and rules for myself and my kids. I need to be consistent and specific. b) How to discipline and talk to my children instead of being abusive and spanking them. I need to control myself. Good class, c) I did learn how to discipline my child by using what I learned from the class. As a result of this program, I'm implementing two other programs the anger management and teen parenting.

Friend to Friend. Staying Well Together

Approximately **400,000** Texans live in border colonias. There are more than **2,333** Texas colonias, located primarily along the state's **1,254**-mile border with Mexico. Generally, the population of a colonia is predominately Hispanic people: **64.4** percent of all colonia residents and **85** percent of those residents under the age of **18** were born in the United States. Women living in rural areas, colonias of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Papanicolau (Pap) test within the past two years. Treatment costs and mortality are higher for rural women because of later diagnosis. The **Friend to Friend's** goal is to decrease breast and cervical cancer morbidity and mortality for women living in rural Texas counties by improving screening rates and early detection of cancer. Funding was applied for and awarded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to fund screenings and transportation to uninsured and underserved women in need of screening services. **Friend to Friend** was implemented in San Benito. **213** women attended the **Friend to Friend** events on **April 11, and May 30, 2014**. Surveys submitted 178, requests for help 173, Biopsies 23, Breast Cancer Diagnosis 3 and Cervical Cancer Diagnosis 0. Out of 23 breast biopsies that were done, three came back with a breast cancer diagnosis. Although there was not a diagnosis for cervical cancer in this group of ladies, we had 5 HPV+, and 2 recommendations for hysterectomies. Comments: a) I'm so thankful for this program because I will be able to get my mammogram and pap done. b) I did get good information and also they will help me to get my screenings.



Friend to Friend Program



Better Living for Texans

Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a component of the National Food Stamp Program for food stamp eligible audiences in Texas. Better Living for Texans helps to improve participant's ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely. Additionally, BLT provides educational programs that help the target audience improve their overall diet quality and increases their level of physical activity. It teaches many one-shot programs throughout the year on the basics of food safety, the importance of good nutrition, the New My Plate program, Get the Facts, and how stretch food dollars regularly. In addition, I teach several special request programs to this audience in the areas of nutrition and food safety. So far 206 participants graduated from the Back to Basic. Participants comments: a) Thank you for sending Ms. Castro to teach us how to help our families live and eat healthier better lives, Belinda Roth-Rosemont Apt. b) I never use to eat vegetables but since we made that vegetable chili I have been open to trying more food that has vegetables. Raymundo Mata-Juvenile Boot Camp





BLT Cooking Demonstration



BLT Nutrition Summer Camp



BLT Adults Nutrition Class



Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

Written by Agent: Beatriz R. Loya

During the months of June through September, 4 Nutrition Education Assistants conducted **388** Adult classes and graduated **645** participants. During the same months, 2 Nutrition Education Associates conducted **103** Youth classes throughout Cameron County and graduated **453** students with additional students continuing the next month.

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 **\$46,469.58**.

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:

"This program has made grand changes in my life. I have learned how to eat moderate and controlled portions and doing exercise has helped me not only to lose weight, but now my feet don't hurt and I sleep better, because before I used to have problems going to sleep. Also, with this program, I have learned to plan my meals, read food labels, and compare prices before purchasing, and now I have better hygiene to not contaminate my food."

- L.Pena, adult participant at Cunningham Manor, Brownsville, TX

"I learned the way one should maintain our foods in the refrigerator and how they should not stay outside of the refrigerator long because bacteria can begin to grow that can cause our defenses to not fight the bacteria and we can get very sick. I also learned that I should use different cutting boards for different foods and mix them with others. I learned about the pyramid of health, which foods are healthier, food quantities and portions."

-M. Lagunes, Santa Rosa ISD



Lucio Middle School students preparing a recipe in Brownsville, Texas



Parent group graduation at Le Moyne Gardens in Harlingen, Texas



Summer nutrition camp at Brownsville Housing Authority in Brownsville, Texas



Graduation and presentation of certificates Santa Rosa Texas home



2nd Place Swine Skillathon Team



4-H Members at D-12 Leadership Lab

4-H Members attending Texas
4-H Congress4-H Member placed 3rd in Discover
Scientific Method Poster Contest

4-H & Youth Development



Written by Agent: Marco Ponce

The Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service has been working continuously on youth development in Cameron County. Our successes this past year reached over 12,000 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 recently met with four new prospective club managers in the hopes of forming four new 4-H community clubs in the county. Two new clubs have already formed and are currently enrolling new members.

27 Cameron County 4-H members participated in the District 12 4-H Leadership Lab that was held on the campus of South West Texas Junior College in Uvalde. 4-H members participated in several learning sessions including one that focused on the dangers of texting and driving. This session also allowed 4-H members to utilize a driving simulator that demonstrated to them the effects that texting and driving has on an individual. Leadership Lab participants also enjoyed nightly dances and several outdoor recreational activities.

Cameron County 4-H members participated in the Texas State 4-H Roundup contest held on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station. Cameron County 4-H members placed very high in their respective contests. The 4-H members participating in the Celebrate 4-H - Share the Fun Contest place 1st in the state. The swine skill-a-thon team place 2nd, and a 4-H member conducting a musical presentation placed 3rd. Cameron County 4-H also had one of it's members place 3rd in the Discover Scientific Method Poster Contest. Cameron County 4-H had two members who were awarded 4-H Opportunity Scholarships at State Roundup. They received a total of close to \$20,000 in order to continue their education. Two Cameron County 4-H Livestock Judging teams also competed at the State Livestock judging contest held during State 4-H Roundup.

Cameron County 4-H had two of it's members attend Texas 4-H Congress held at the Texas State Capitol in Austin. This was a four day mock legislative session in which 4-H members were able to participate first hand in the law making process. 4-H members served as Senators, Representatives, lobbyists, and press corps during this mock legislative session. 4-H members submitted bills for debate and then voted to see which bills passed and were formed into law. Most of the discussion and debate was held on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives.

Cameron County 4-H members will be preparing to participate in our upcoming County Food Show and Food Challenge contest that will be held October 25th. All first place winners will be advancing to our District 12 4-H Food Show and Food Challenge contest which will be held in Three Rivers. 4-H members will also be participating in several county validation events in the next couple of weeks. 4-H members will be validating Commercial Heifers, Registered Heifers, sheep, goats, and swine in preparation for all of the upcoming County Fairs and Major stock shows.



Urban Horticulture

Written by Agent: Jennifer Herrera

Cameron County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has completed the one year “Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC)” project. This grant was obtained by 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. In spring 2014 four community gardens were installed in Cameron County and reached a total of 64 families with an average household of five and produced approximately 822 lbs. of fresh vegetables. A series of six educational sessions were administered at each garden location to families participating in the GNHC program. The *Better Living for Texans* program provided 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.

Community Garden Location	Families Participated	Yields
Los Indios City Hall	4	≈62 lbs.
Santa Rosa Village Housing Authority	8	≈85 lbs.
San Pedro Catholic Church	28	≈468 lbs.
Port Isabel Housing Authority	24	≈207 lbs.
Total	64	≈822 lbs.

Texas A&M AgriLife has just been informed that the GNHC grant will continue for another year in Cameron County. This fall we have installed two new community gardens in San Benito and Rio Hondo and are working on installing a community garden in Combes.

This year 12 Cameron County Master Gardener interns have completed the Texas Master Gardener Training program. The Master Gardener Interns have completed 70 hours horticulture educational training and average 65 hours of volunteer service.

During the summer months over 150 youth completed the Nutrition in the Garden program. The youth learned about basic gardening skills and healthy eating. The *Better Living for Texans* program assistants provided nutrition educational programs for the youth on healthy snacks.

Five 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.



Master Gardener Intern
Educational Tour



Produce from Los Indios
Community Garden



Cooking demonstrations at
Santa Rosa Village



Community Garden in
Port Isabel

Upcoming Activities 2014

Extension Educational Programs

Tip Of Texas Meeting	Oct. 6, 2014	Master Gardener General Meeting	Nov. 13, 2014
Leadership Advisory Board Meeting	Oct. 7, 2014	D-12 Food Show and Food Challenge	Nov. 15, 2014
Master Gardener Class	Oct. 8, 2014	4-H Council & Managers Meeting	Nov. 17, 2014
Sugarcane Field Day	Oct. 8, 2014	Vet Science Lesson	Nov. 17, 2014
Master Gardener Association. Meeting	Oct. 9, 2014	RGV Roundup Gala	Nov. 22, 2014
4-H Awards Banquet	Oct. 11, 2014	4-H Thanksgiving Holiday Help	Nov. 26, 2014
RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec& Board Meeting	Oct. 14, 2014	Tip of Texas Meeting	Dec. 1, 2014
Farm Bill Meeting	Oct. 15, 2014	Parenting Class	Dec. 1, 8, 15, 2014
Food Safety for the Small Acreage Producer	Oct. 16, 2014	Anger Management Class	Dec. 1, 8, 15, 2014
Crops Fertility Workshop	Oct. 16, 2014	Extension Leadership Advisory Board Meeting	Dec. 4, 2014
2014 Regional Career Ladder Peer Review Mtg	Oct. 20-21, 2014	Leadership Advisory Board Luncheon	Dec. 4, 2014
Bull Gain Weighing	Oct. 23, 2014	Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	Dec. 4, 2014
Texas Master Naturalist Conference	Oct. 24-27, 2014	RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec & Board Meeting	Dec. 9, 2014
4-H Council & Managers Meeting	Oct. 20, 2014	Master Gardener Association. Meeting	Dec 11, 2014
Vet Science Lesson	Oct. 20, 2014	Small Acreage Webinar	Dec. 11, 2014
County 4-H Food Show and Food Challenge	Oct. 25, 2014	Canning Class	Dec. 12, 2014
Fall Sugarcane Aphid Field Day	Oct. 28, 2014	Vet Science	Dec. 15, 2014
Tip of Texas Meeting	Nov. 3, 2014	4-H Council & Managers Meeting	Dec. 15, 2014
Private Applicator Training	Nov. 5, 2014	4-H Christmas Holiday Help	Dec. 19, 2014
Bullgain Weighing	Nov. 6 & 7, 2014	Cotton Growers Meeting	Jan. 8, 2015
Kids, Kows and More	Nov. 5 & 6, 2014	Agriculture Producers Meeting	Jan 13, 2015
Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	Nov. 6, 2014	Cotton & Grain Producers Program	Jan. 15, 2015
Aquaponics Field Day	Nov. 7, 2014	Result Demonstrations	Jan, 2015
Registered Heifer Validation	Nov. 7, 2014	District Faculty Meeting	Jan. 18- 20, 2015
RGVC TX Master Naturalist Exec& Board Meeting	Nov.,11, 2014		

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upcoming programs and activities.**