

CAMERON COUNTY EXTENSION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

What We Do

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is a unique education agency that provides programs, tools, and resources on a local and statewide level that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and enrich youth.

In all 254 counties, County Extension Agents serve families, youth, communities and businesses throughout the state.

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COVID-19 Response Efforts Cameron County AgriLife Extension



Cameron County Agrilife and Prairie View Extension Agents have continued to provide educational programs through videos and live streams in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Agents have adapted their educational approach in order to continue providing quality educational programs and to also meet the needs of our clientele.

Please visit our Cameron County Extension office website and our Facebook pages for the latest educational videos and documents that are available to you.

Thank you.



bit.ly/FB_AgrLifeCameron



cameron.agrilife.org

PPE Distribution Efforts

Childcare Providers: Texas A&M AgriLife and Prairie View Cooperative Extension agents in collaboration with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) continue to assist in distributing personal protective equipment to child care providers located in Cameron County. Agents distributed gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and in some cases a thermometer. Close to 100 child care providers were able to receive these items within this past quarter.

PPE Distribution for County Elections Department: The Cameron County AgriLife Extension Service aided in distributing two separate shipments of Personal Protective Equipment to the County Elections Administrator. The first shipment included cloth masks and face shields for election workers. The second shipment included 83 gallons of hand sanitizer to be used at the polling locations.





EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

By: Melissa DeLeon, EFNEP Agent

EFNEP MISSION

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is designed to assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

EFNEP Offers Practical Lessons On:

- Building a healthy plate
- Eating the right amount of calories
- Setting limits
- Planning, shopping, fixing, and eating more meals at home
- Being active
- Keeping food safe
- Encouraging family meal time behavior
- Practicing healthy behavior

EFNEP-Adult enrollment numbers

July - September : **256** with **255** graduated

EFNEP-Youth enrollment Participants
in Cameron County : **176**

Distance Education with EFNEP

Our educators now have the resources to conduct EFNEP nutrition education classes at a distance with the option of classes taught one-on-one or in small groups. EFNEP has several options available for both adults and youth.

bit.ly/EFNEPDistanceEducation

Healthy Bites, Healthy Moves - Telephone Series

- 6 lesson series - led by an EFNEP educator for no more than 30 minutes each
- Taught one on one or with a small group at a convenient time for the participants
- Participants learn about healthy eating (MyPlate), family meal planning, budgeting at the store, food safety and the importance of physical activity
- Participants receive an emailed guide of visuals to help follow along
- Graduation certificates are emailed upon completion of the 6 sessions

Eat Smart, Move More - Online Series

- 6 lesson series - each lesson is 45-60 minutes in length
- Self-led online learning through an interactive series
- Participants learn about healthy eating (MyPlate), family meal planning, budgeting at the store, food safety and the importance of physical activity
- Educators can conduct discussion interaction via a closed Facebook group that participants can choose to be a member
- Graduation certificates are emailed upon completion of the 6 sessions

Today's Mom

- 6 - lesson series - led by an EFNEP educator for 30-45 minutes each lesson
- Program is geared for expecting moms and dads
- Taught one on one or with a small group at a convenient time for the participants
- Participants learn about healthy eating and weight gain during pregnancy, importance of physical activity, food safety and other pregnancy information for mom and baby
- Educators can conduct discussion-based learning using a virtual platform to further engage participants

Healthy Bites, Healthy Moves - Virtual Series

- 6 lesson series - led by an EFNEP educator for no more than 30-45 minutes each lesson
- Taught on one one or with a small group at a convenient time for the participants
- Participants learn about healthy eating (MyPlate), family meal planning, budgeting at the store, food safety and the importance of physical activity
- Educators can conduct discussion-based learning using a virtual platform to further engage participants
- Participants receive an emailed guide of visuals to help follow along
- Graduation certificates are emailed upon completion of the 6 sessions

Healthy Teens, Healthy Future - Online Course

- 6 - lesson series lasting about 30 minutes each
- Program is geared towards 6th - 12th grade
- Self-led online learning through an interactive series
- Students learn about basic nutrition, MyPlate, making healthy food choices, food safety, basic culinary skills, and the importance of physical activity
- Each session will include a short lesson and a recorded recipe demonstration
- Certificate of completion at the end of the program

Healthy Hero Adventures

- 6 - lesson series lasting about 30 minutes each
- Program is geared towards K-5th grade and aligned with PE, Health & Science TEKS
- Interactive lessons led by an EFNEP educator, lessons can be customized to fit the needs of the students and school
- Students learned basic nutrition including: MyPlate, making healthy food choices, food safety, and the importance of physical activity
- Each session will include a short lesson and an optional recipe demonstration
- Graduation certificates are delivered upon completion of the series

Our total **Distance Education** EFNEP-Adult enrollment numbers for months of May '20 - September '20 is **233** of which **229** have graduated.

Our total **Distance Education** EFNEP-Youth enrollment in Cameron County is **847**

Agriculture & Natural Resources

By: Marco Ponce, CEA – Agriculture

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Cotton Result Demonstration Plot

Cotton result demonstration plots were heavily damaged by Hurricane Hanna. However, agents were able to hand pick cotton samples for fiber quality testing which includes: grade, staple, and micronaire. Over 90% of the cotton crop in Cameron County was destroyed by Hurricane Hanna.



Beef Cattle Production Webinar

Agriculture Agents conducted a virtual Beef Cattle Production Webinar for cattle ranchers from the Rio Grande Valley. Topics included the Bull Gain Test, Bull Development & Selection, fly control, and a Fever Tick Update.



Private Applicator Training

County Agents from the Rio Grande Valley hosted a first of its kind virtual online Private Applicator training. Participants took part in several hours of coursework that served to prepare them to take the certification exam.



COASTAL & MARINE RESOURCES

By: Tony Reisinger, CEA - Coastal & Marine



 bit.ly/FB_AgrilifeCameron  bit.ly/Cameron_CoastalMarine

Texas Master Naturalists

Cameron County's two Master Naturalist Chapters, with over 400 members, began online educational programming this quarter utilizing Facebook Live and WebEx for presentations.

The South Texas Border Chapter had two educational programs with over **100 online attendees** via web and Facebook.

Our Texas Master Naturalists and Coastal Naturalists form the core of volunteers for Sea Turtle, Inc. They survey our Cameron & Willacy County Beaches annually for nesting endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles from April to August. This year's results revealed an active nesting season with **85 nests** and **5,624 hatchlings** released.

For the Birds

Black skimmers are a magnificent site while gracefully skimming our local waters for food. Their numbers in Texas are declining and they are losing nesting habitat. **Hurricane Hanna** did impact their nesting site. Studies have revealed skimmers will re-nest after such an incident, but these never returned. Let's hope the colony makes a comeback next year.

Finally, through our efforts, an injured white pelican was rescued by a group of volunteers in Palm Valley and is being rehabilitated by a Brownsville Veterinarian, Dr. Ronald Hines. "Peli" will be returned to peacefully reside at ponds in Palm Valley, once fully recuperated. The bird will never fly again, but its wing was saved.

The Cameron County Shrimp Fishery

The shrimp season was in full swing this quarter and production high for those boats that could get crews. Seasonal workers were not available to all fleets due to problems with the H2B program, which supplies crews from Central America and Mexico. Central America and Mexico for our fleet. It is estimated 10% - 20% of the fleet is not fishing due to this snafu. Two hurricanes this quarter sent the Cameron County fleet scurrying into safe harbor this quarter. They returned to a bonanza of production after each storm. When storms go ashore, they leave murky offshore water full of suspended food, which our major species, brown shrimp, take advantage.

Aftermath of Hurricane Hanna

Extremely high tides persisted in South Texas after hurricane Hanna and were exacerbated in mid-September by hurricane Sally and a following norther. After the storms, we conducted a post hurricane survey accompanied by outdoor reporter Richard Moore. From South Padre Island north to the Port Mansfield jetties we documented minor dune erosion and two major cuts completely through the island around 20 miles north of County Beach Access 6. One cut was still active and prevented travel to the jetties during high tides in late September.

For more information on the Outdoor Report visit:
bit.ly/MooreOutdoorReport



HORTICULTURE

By: Jennifer Herrera, CEA - Horticulture

 bit.ly/FB_AgrilifeCameron  bit.ly/CAM_HORT



Cameron County Master Gardeners

The **Master Gardener Virtual Volunteer Training** began September 10 with a total of **13 participants**

The **Texas Gardening 101** had a total of **10 participants**

Topics Included:

- Plant Growth & Development
- Earth-Kind
- Soils



RGV Small Acreage

The **Fall Vegetable Gardening Webinar** was held on August 26 with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Vegetable Specialist, Dr. Juan Anciso. A total of **98 participants** were in attendance.



Earth Kind

Earth-Kind programs uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum garden and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting the environment.

Turf & Ornamental Agent Training:
42 participants

Lawn & Ornamental Training:
63 participants

What's Blooming Wednesday Videos:
3 videos - over 300 views



Healthy Lawns & Healthy Waters

The **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's** Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters program hosted a residential rainwater harvesting and turf management training on September 3rd for Cameron & Hidalgo Counties.

A total of:
43 participants



4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

By: Klarissa Cantu,
CEA - 4-H & Youth Development

 bit.ly/FB_4HCameron  bit.ly/Cam4HYouth

4-H Cameron County Food Show Workshop

We had the Food Show workshop on September 22 via Zoom with a presentation hosted by guest speaker **Texas 4-H & Youth Development Extension Program Specialist Julie Gardener** and guest presentations from 4-H Cameron County Council Officers, Julia Macmanus & Avery Fohn. We had **5 youth participants** in attendance.



4-H Project Leader Training

The **4-H Project Leader Training** was held on September 23rd. This training focused on the newly revised 4-H online website including Youth & Adult Registration, Best Virtual Practices in the era of COVID19, Contest changes within County & District, Online Resources, and the upcoming 20-21 Cameron County 4-H Schedule. A total of **8 adult participants** were in attendance.



Cameron County 4-H Awards Video

Because of the current COVID-19 Pandemic we were unfortunately unable to host our annual 4-H Awards Banquet.

We still wanted to recognize this years 4-H Awards winners by putting together a video including Cameron County 4-H Officers as hosts. The video was released on Facebook on September 23 with over **651 people reached**. Congratulations to all the outstanding Cameron County 4-Hers!

To watch the video visit:

bit.ly/CameronCounty4HAwards

Ag. Product ID Lesson #1 - Beef

The **AG. Product ID Lesson Series** is in relation to the AG Product ID Contest which is a 4-H Contest normally offered at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show. This is a great way for 4-H kids to learn more about agriculture and how to identify different commodities in their everyday lives. This 5 lesson series began on September 30 with the first lesson on Beef. A total of **6 youth participants** were in attendance.

One Day 4-H Community Service - Harlingen Human Society



Held On
October
10



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

By: Guadalupe Castro,
CEP - 4-H & Youth Development



bit.ly/FB_PVAMU4H_Cameron bit.ly/CEP4HandYouth

4-H Virtual Youth Lab (College & Career Readiness Camp)

PVAMU's Cooperative Extension Program provided a virtual summer camp from July 14 - 17 which prepared youth for future college and career endeavors.

This 3-day virtual youth lab had over **97 youth participants state-wide** and **5 youth participants from Cameron County**.



Virtual Training for After School Teachers

A virtual training was held via Zoom with a total of **5 HCISD After School Teachers** were trained in Photography and Learn Grow Eat Go curriculum.



4-H Mission to Mars STEM Challenge: Statewide Program

The Mission to Mars STEM Challenge inspires kids to imagine they are the first human explorers on Mars with the 2020 4-H STEM Challenge. This statewide program is a collection of activities that teaches kids skills like mechanical engineering, physics, computer science, and agriculture.

This event took place on **August 22** with **7 Youth from Cameron County** in attendance.

National 4-H Leaders in Equity Institute

What is the True Leaders in Equity Institute?

4-H believes in **youth and adults** working in partnership to leverage the unique strengths that each group brings to their communities and world.

This years event took place from September 11 - September 12 with **2 Cameron County Youth** and **1 Adult Volunteer** in participation.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

By: Lilian Mezquida,
CEA - Family & Community Health



Prior to any event or activity, county agent followed local guidelines, requirements, mandates, and/or approvals required or set by local health authorities, cities, and/or county government.

 bit.ly/FB_AgriLifeCameron  bit.ly/CAM_FCH

Parenting Connections and Anger Management (Online)

The Parenting Connections and Anger Management now is also available ONLINE.
So far, we had **11 clients** complete the Parenting Connections Program.
Anger Management had **1 person** complete the program.

CAMERON COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

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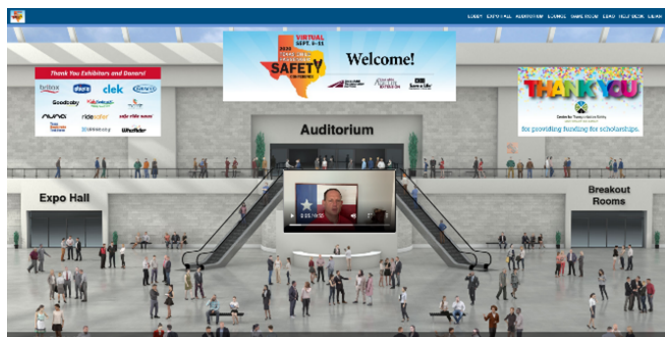
PARENTING CONNECTIONS

Spanish & English Sessions now available online!

Professional Development

In September, FCH Agent - Lilian Mezquida participated in the **2020 Texas Child Passenger Safety Conference** held virtually.

This conference provided information on the safety measures and precautions for Child Passengers. This is vital for the citizens of Cameron County who may need assistance on properly installing a car seat for their new born child, or when child upgrades car seats.



BLT/SNAP-Ed. Virtual Training -

The following were topics held during the Better Living for Texans and SNAP-Ed Virtual Training.

- Reflections on the Safety Net: Stories from South Texas.
- Facilitating Socially Distanced Programs
- In-Person Team Building in Your Program
- Mindfulness for Your Daily Life
- Reaching New Audiences through Self Analysis
- Community Development Leaders include the Poor



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

By: Gloria Carter
CEP – Family & Community Health


bit.ly/Facebook_CEPFCH

bit.ly/CEP_FCH



"Common Pantry Pests: The Impact of Household Insects on Your Food"

Pantry Pests are found occasionally in nearly every home. Although many of these pests are no more than an inconvenience, others can significantly damage food. Strategies are available to help you manage infestations that develop in your home.

The program was held on July 7th & July 8th in collaboration with Cameron County's Communities in Schools Program. Where a total of **18 participants** were in attendance.

"Home Run to Health" In collaboration with MD Anderson

I conducted a heart healthy recipe demonstration for the MD Anderson Health Disparities Research Department's "Home Run to Health" virtual health fair. This event took place on July 24th with hundreds in attendance.

Balanced Living

On September 8th and September 16th, sessions were held from the Balanced Living Curriculum on stress management during the COVID19 Pandemic with a total of **15 participants**.

"Parenting Skills Programs" In Collaboration with the HCISD Virtual Academy

On August 18th and August 25th, parenting skills programs were held in collaboration with the HCISD Virtual Academy.

"A strong partnership between parents, students, and teachers is needed in order to provide a successful education. To achieve this goal, it is important to increase the knowledge and preparedness not only of students and teachers but of parents too. The HCISD Virtual Academy includes parent, student, and staff portals that provide live and pre-recorded sessions with information about academics, health, and wellness."

Topics Included:

- "Social Media, Gaming & Mental Health"
- "The 5Rs for a Happy Home"



BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

By: Nidia Garcia,
Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans
Esmeralda Avila,
Nutrition Educate Association

 Better Living for Texans Cameron County
 bit.ly/CameronBLT

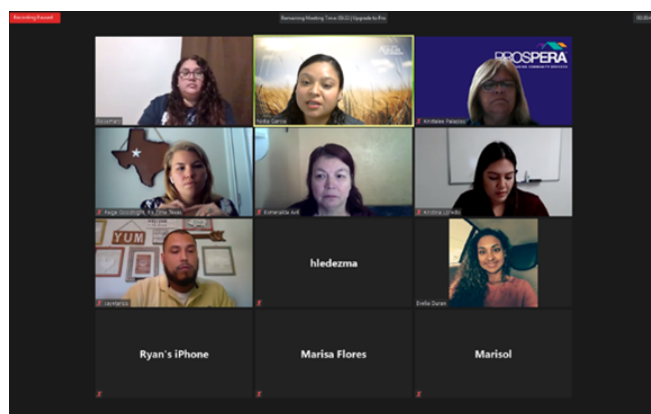
The Better Living for Texans virtual programs include:

- **A Fresh Start to a Healthier You:** 4-week series nutrition program focuses on increasing fruit and vegetable intake, food safety, and food resource management.
- **Get the Facts:** 4-week program explains how to use the Nutrition Facts label to make healthy food choices when shopping. Emphasis on sodium, fats, added sugars, and portion size.
- **Walk N Talk:** 8-week physical activity program. Two discussion topics: Fruits & Vegetables and Rethink Your Drink!



Cameron County Better Living for Texans Advisory Board Committee

The Cameron County Better Living for Texans Advisory Board Committee held their first virtual meeting. Extension Agents and partner agencies discussed new virtual online programs available for SNAP recipients and SNAP eligible residents in Cameron County.



GROWING & NOURISHING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

By: Kristina Loreda
Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans

The Better Living for Texans Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities Program worked on gardening videos for a collaborative multi-county approach to virtual GNHC programming.

These videos are the complete series and available to be used as virtual programming and supplemental educational tools for virtual learning. Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities and Learn Grow, Eat, Go! are now available to be delivered virtually!



TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



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AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

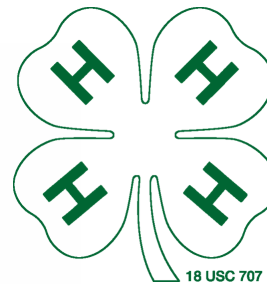


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BETTER LIVING
FOR TEXANS

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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating