

CAMERON COUNTY EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

January 2022 - March 2022

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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IN THIS ISSUE:

1. 4-H & Youth Development.....
2. Horticulture.....
3. Coastal & Marine.....
4. Family & Community Health.....
5. Agriculture & Natural Resources.....
6. Better Living for Texas.....
7. CEP Family & Community Health.....
8. Expanded Food & Nutrition.....
9. CEP 4-H & Youth Development.....

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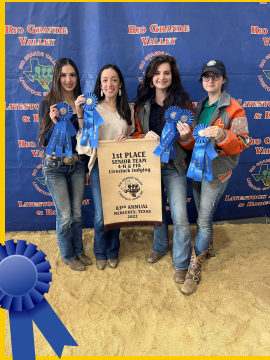
4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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



RIO GRANDE VALLEY LIVESTOCK SHOW

Cameron County was well represented at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show especially with one of our very own members being crowned **Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Covergirl, Ryleigh Greer**



Cameron County 4-H had a total of **13 clubs** compete at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and a total of **450 entries** for the show.



CAMERON COUNTY 4-H FASHION SHOW

CAMERON COUNTY 4-H ROUND-UP

2022 Cameron County Fashion Show Results	
Construction	
Everyday Living	
Senior	1st place - Bailey Helmer - Arroyo 4-H
Junior	1st place - Alana Cisneros - Deep River 4-H
Semi-Formal	
Senior	1st place - Carissa Cantu - Deep River 4-H 2nd place - Tatum Helmer - Arroyo 4-H
Costume/Theatre	
Senior	1st place - Hollie Cantu - Deep River 4-H
Natural Fiber - Cotton	
Senior	1st place - Hollie Cantu - Deep River 4-H 2nd place - Bailey Helmer - Arroyo 4-H
Intermediate	1st place - Tamara Mauricio - Deep River 4-H



Cameron County 4-H Round-up Results	
Share The Fun - Poetry/Prose	
Senior	1st place - Avalyn Macias - Harmony School of Innovation 4-H
Public Speaking	
Senior	1st place - Carissa Cantu - Highland Hustlers 4-H
Ed. Presentation - Open	
Senior	1st place - Hollie Cantu - Highland Hustlers 4-H

HORTICULTURE

By: Jennifer Herrera, CEA - Horticulture



MASTER GARDENERS

Master Gardeners hosted a **spring vegetable gardening workshop**, a **composting workshop**, **organic landscape gardening** reaching over **50 participants**. Master Gardener also volunteered at the **Winter Outdoor Wildlife Expo** and provided horticulture publications to **over 100 participants**. Master Gardener trainees completed their 50 hours of instruction and started on their hand-on workshop and tours. Tours included a **native plant tour** and **Earth-Kind demonstration garden tour**.

EARTH-KIND

A **Hügelkultur Composting** class was provided at the Los Fresnos Nature Park reaching over **30 participants**. Two **RGV Landscaping for Pollinators** program were provided at Indian Lake and at Sunshine Country Estates reaching along with an **Earth-Kind Rose Pruning and Propagating workshop** over **120 participants**. Over **100 students** learned about local horticulture during a career fair at **Sullivan Environmental Science Academy**.



RGV SMALL ACREAGE

A **"Grow Your Farm"** training was provided reaching over **25 new and beginning farmers**. An **ISA Certified Arborist** training was provided to train the public and professional arborist on all aspects of tree care. Over **30** were trained for the **ISA Certified Arborist Exam**. Through a partnership with the **Harlingen Farmers Market** a **Health and Wellness** event was held reaching over **100 participants**. We also hosted a **Kidpreneur (25 youth)** event to increase interest in youth farmer and rancher entrepreneurs.



COASTAL & MARINE

By: Tony Reisinger, CEA -Coastal & Marine Resources

ILLEGAL GILLNETS CAPTURE SEA TURTLES



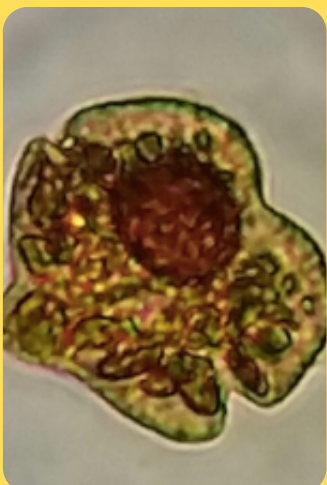
In February an illegal gillnet washed up on Boca Chica with **five dead green sea turtles entangled**. Longshore currents during this period indicated the net's origin was Mexico. U.S and Texas law enforcement agencies have encountered hundreds of fishing violations along our maritime border associated with illegal gillnets from Mexico over the last several years. NOAA announced beginning in February, Mexican fishing vessels will be prohibited from entering U.S. ports, and denied port access and services. Hopefully the action will deter the illegal netting which targets primarily red snapper. It will have a negative impact on the Brownsville Shrimp Basin which regularly provides Mexican shrimp vessels with fuel and services.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS



Two Texas Master Naturalist Chapters serve Cameron County, Rio Grande Valley and South Texas Border Chapters. **Three-hour virtual** classes to become a Texas Master Naturalist were held weekly throughout this quarter. Weekend field trips were held in person. Each chapter conducted monthly board and general educational meetings. We now have **trained over 600 naturalists!**

RED TIDE READY



Cameron County has not experienced a red tide **since 2017**. This year NOAA provided us with a grant to train Red Tide Rangers along the Texas coast. We have had one Ranger training in this quarter. NOAA returned two of our HABscopes, a high-tech tool for rapid red tide cell counts, which had been used in the recent devastating blooms in Florida. We are ready in case a red time bloom occurs this fall.



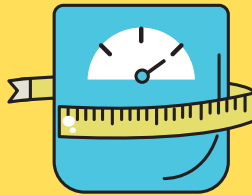
FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

By: Lilian Mezquida, CEA - Family & Community Health



STRONG PEOPLE STRONG BODIES

The Strong People Strong Bodies class completed their **3-month program** and Health Screening. The results so far are **Glucose level and cholesterol improved**.



COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

"Now I'm using 5 lbs. dumbbells and it feels so good"

"I lost 2 inches from my hips"



"Now my arms are more flexible, and the exercises are easier than before"

ANNUAL SPANISH CHILDCARE CONFERENCE

Multi county Annual Spanish Childcare Conference.



We had **50 participants** and offered **3 clock hours**.

AGRICULTURE

By: Marco Ponce, CEA - Agriculture

COTTON AND GRAIN PRE-PLANT CONFERENCE



This years Rio Grande Valley Cotton and Grain Pre-Plant Conference was held at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show grounds in Mercedes. **4 CEU's were offered** at this program along with many door prizes for participants.

Topics for this year's conference included: **Input Management Strategies for Cotton, Weed Management Strategies, and Updates related to Corn, Grain Sorghum, and Cotton.**

BEEF 706

Participants from throughout the Rio Grande Valley took part in the **first of three part series** of educational programs. This session included discussion on factors that impact the quality of feeder cattle. Participants also broke out into groups to evaluate live feeder calves and then they took part in a mock auction where each group purchased an actual calf.



COTTON RESULT DEMONSTRATION TRIAL



Cameron County Agriculture Agent planted a **10 variety Cotton Research Demonstration Trial** in San Benito. Each variety was planted on **6 rows with 40 inch spacing** between the rows. The varieties were replicated three times to ensure data accuracy. Each variety will be harvested, weighed, and sampled for quality separately in order to accurately measure performance data in each variety.

GRAIN SORGHUM RESULT DEMONSTRATION TRIAL



Cameron County Agriculture Agent planted a 6-variety grain sorghum result demonstration trial in San Benito. Each variety was planted on **6 rows with 36 in spacing** between the rows. The varieties were replicated three times in order to ensure harvest data accuracy. Each variety will be harvested, weighed, and sampled separately for moisture and bushel weight.

BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

By: Nidia Garcia, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans
Esmeralda Avila, Nutrition Education Associate



COLOR ME HEALTHY:



Students from the **after-school program at IDEA - Sports Park** participated in the **kindergartners 9 session Color Me Healthy** nutrition program. Students learned about trying new fruits and vegetables and about the importance of physical activity.

HEALTHY CARBOHYDRATES:



Participants learned how to use the healthy plate to balance carbohydrates and about the importance of portions and physical activity to prevent chronic disease. **16 Adults completed the 4-week program.**

GROWING & NOURISHING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

By: Kristina Loreda, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans



The Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC) Program completed programs at Russel Elementary and Pena Elementary with a total of **9 graduates**. Pena Elementary installed **2 garden beds with tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants**. Russel Elementary planted container gardens with peppers and herbs. Both schools in Brownsville had a big interest and impact in learning all about gardening.

The Learn, Grow, Eat and Go! program was completed with Rodriguez Elementary in Harlingen with a total of **31 2nd grade students** who learned all about gardening, nutrition, **soil and spacing**. **Kale, Brussel Sprouts, Lettuce, and herbs** were planted in the fall and the children were able to see through the harvesting process.



PENA ELEMENTARY GNHC PARTICIPANTS LEARN HOW TO BUILD AND PREPARE THEIR SOIL FOR THEIR RAISED GARDEN BEDS.



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

By: Gloria Carter, CEP- Family & Community Health

MONEY SMART



20+ participants from the Proyecto Juan Diego program in Brownsville attended the FDIC Money Smart virtual classes in the month of February. Participants learned how to prepare a budget and how to prepare & recover financially during times of disaster.

In March, **14 staff members** from the HCISD ACE program participated in the Mind Matters: Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience empowering course. This program was developed to meet the needs of people who have suffered trauma. Their human brokenness is the guiding light of this research-based skills curriculum to rebuild their resilience and increase their hope. Mind Matters draws from current research and best practices to explain the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and their role in toxic stress.

MIND MATTERS

Mind
Matters
*Overcoming Adversity
and Building Resilience*



CHOOSE HEALTH: FOOD, FUN & FITNESS



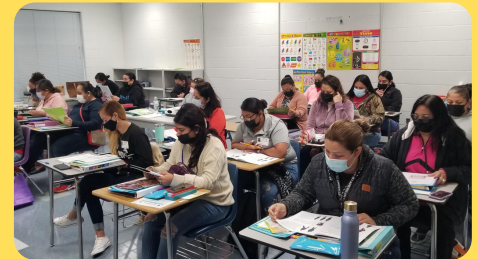
FCH Agent, Gloria Carter conducted in-person nutrition and cooking lessons from the Choose Health: Food Fun and Fitness curriculum which focus on nutritional lessons, and food demonstrations, to **12 students** from Frank Roberts Elementary during the month of March.

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

By: Beatriz Loya, Extension Agent- EFNEP



SUPPORTING TEXAS FAMILIES WITH GREATEST NEED SINCE 1969



In Texas, ethnically diverse EFNEP nutrition assistants and associates reach youth and adult groups. During the months of **January-March 2022**, **212 families** enrolled in EFNEP. 100% of EFNEP participants had children under the age **19**. **67% of families** enrolled in one or more food assistance programs. **12 new volunteers** were enrolled and donated a total of **92.5 hours of work to EFNEP**.

VOLUNTEERS STRENGTHEN EFNEP



October 2021-March 2022, **26 volunteers** have donated **293 hours** of work to EFNEP. At the Texas rate of **\$26.43/hr.**, this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of **\$7,743.99**.

SUCCESS STORIES

"Este programa me ha ayudado a cambiar mi forma de pensar al respecto de como preparar mis alimento y mejorar la forma de comer de mi familia, para ser mas saludables. Se me ha ensenado como leer las caloria por lo cual ahora estoy checando mis alimentos. Muchas gracias Miss Dorado he aprendido mucho en el programa exelente clase, pero sobre todo una Buena charla y experiencias."

-K. Valdez, La Feria ISD

"My son never eat vegetables and since started this class I make many changes at home to have more vegetables and fruits I change a lot my eating habits for me and my family and now my son he is eating more vegetables with the foods."

-R. Cameron, La Feria ISD

"I liked the program because I learned to be organized with my budget, how to protect my family from bacteria's and germs at home, save time to make new and different and faster recipes and my family and I don't get boring from the same food every day, to learn about portions was really a good experience to save money with the family thanks for this information."

-M.Montalvo, BISD ESL

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

By: Stephanie Bowman, CEP- Cooperative Extension- 4-H & Youth Development



PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY

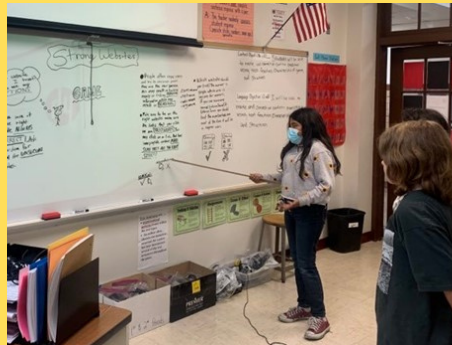
HEROES 4-HEALTH



The Heroes 4-Health Program was kicked off at **Jubilee Academy in Harlingen**. CEP-FCH agent, Gloria Carter and CEP-4-H agent, Stephanie Bowman, conducted the first three of eight nutrition sessions for **415 pre-kindergarten through eight grade students**. The first session was conducted virtually for the families and included a healthy recipe demonstration cook-along. Once a week during their athletic conditioning class, students are learning about various **nutrition and health topics, as well as engaging in different types of physical activities and mindfulness exercises**. The sessions will continue through the end of the school year.

TECH CHANGEMAKERS

The Tech Changemakers program **empowers 4-H youth to teach digital skills workshops** to help people access important resources and learn the most in-demand skills. **San Benito ISD 4-H youth at Riverside Middle School** are implementing this program in their school by providing digital literacy workshops at parent meetings. In addition, CEP-4H agent, Stephanie Bowman, provided the Tech Changemakers training to **nine youth at Vernon Middle School to begin implementing the program**.



JUNTOS 4-H

CEP-4H agent, Stephanie Bowman, and San Benito ISD afterschool coordinator, Albert Sanchez, received training certification for the **Juntos 4-H Program**. The Juntos-Operation College Access Program provides intensive long-term support for Latino youth via **5 wrap-around components: family engagement workshops, individualized success coaching, the 4-H club experience, a summer college experience, and online college and career readiness assessments and curriculum**. This program will be implemented beginning in the **Fall of 2022 at Berta Cabaza Middle School**.