



Agriculture

Cotton and Grain Pre-Plant Conference

The Rio Grande Valley Cotton and Grain Pre-Plant Conference was held at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show grounds in Mercedes. This was a free program for Rio Grande Valley producers who were looking to learn more about cotton and grain production right before planting season.

- There were **4** CEU's offered to pesticide applicators.
- Over **130** participants attended this event.
- Over **\$4,000.00** in sponsorships was raised to cover the luncheon and door prizes.
- Door prizes were given out to program participants.

Beef 706

Beef cattle producers from throughout the Rio Grande Valley participated in a **three**-part series of educational programs called the Beef **706** Program. Participants learned how to select and purchase calves at an auction, while learning about food and nutrition needed so they can process beef carcass into retail cuts.

- **Forty-two** beef cattle producers participated in this program.
- The **first** session was held at Triple G Livestock Auction where participants evaluated **eight** feeder calves and purchased a calf during a mock auction.
- The **second** session was held at Rio Beef Feedyard where **eight** calves were being fed. Participants learned how to grade live cattle and place grades on cattle they purchased.
- The **third** and final session was held at Texas A&M University-Kingsville meat lab where half of each carcass was shipped to. Participants learned about quality and yield grading and were able to fabricate each carcass into primal and sub-primal cuts.

Pasture and Forage Workshop

Beef Cattle and Hay producers from throughout the Rio Grande Valley attended a Pasture and Forage Workshop that was held at the District **12** AgriLife Center in Weslaco.

- There were over **70** participants who attended this educational program.
- **Three** CEU's were offered to participants including **2** General and **1** IPM.
- The following topics were discussed: Herbicides for Brush, Grass and Broadleaf Weed Control, Insect Control in Bermuda Grass Pastures, USDA-NRCS Programs for Pasture Management, and the Pasture, Range, and Forage Crop Insurance Program.

Marine and Coastal Resources



Texas Master Naturalist

Our Master Naturalist volunteers helped rescue **202** cold stunned sea turtles in the Lower Laguna Madre, early and late this year. They helped discover over **100** sea turtle nests on South Padre Island beaches during nesting season. Forty-one new Texas Master Naturalists graduated in **2022**. Our chapter members conducted outreach and education events in **2022** comprising **17,565** hours of volunteer service to our community valued at **\$526,072**! We have now trained **643** Master Naturalists in the Valley.

Bahia Grande

The restoration of Bahia Grande is now complete and fishing there is unbelievably rewarding after Cameron County spent over **40** years bring it to fruition. Over **100** pelicans were saved in early and late **2022** on Highway **48** at the Carl "Joe" Gayman bridge Bahia Grande.

Horticulture



RGV Small Acreage Program

The target audience is socially disadvantaged, beginning, young, veteran, small farmers and ranchers.

- Over **334** participants attended the RGV Small Acreage workshop series.
- **88.2%** of the participants (n=**133**) plan to adopt what they learned in the training sessions.
- Participants (n=**133**) estimated an average economic benefit of **\$1,162,005**.
- Since **2016**, participants estimated an economic benefit of **\$2,258** avg. per farm or a total of **\$4.12** million.

Earth-Kind

Use of Earth-Kind practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.

- Over **20** Earth-Kind Presentations including composting, native gardening, pollinator gardening, Texas Superstar and many more.
- Master Gardeners also provided native plant tours, vegetable tours, subtropical and tropical fruit tree, palm care and maintenance, and composting programs throughout the year.
- **52** Horticulture Newspaper articles were published with two magazine article in RGV Edible.
- Master Gardeners also volunteered throughout Cameron County at the Los Fresnos Nature Park, New Hope Presbyterian Church and help at the Mercedes Community Garden.

Master Gardeners Training Program

This program trained **8** new Master Volunteers and a total of **15** graduated from **2020-2022**. The classes consisted of **35** hours of instruction by Texas A&M AgriLife Specialists from across the State and **30** hours of local instruction to cover growing condition specific to our area.

Cameron County Master Gardeners and Interns completed **3,177** service hours valued at **\$86,425.28**.

- **86%** of respondents were mostly or completely satisfied with the overall Master Gardener Program.
- **100%** of respondents indicated that they definitely will or have already adopted Earth-Kind Horticulture practices learned from the Master Gardener Training Program.
- **43%** anticipate an economic benefit between **\$50** to **\$349** as a direct impact from the Master Gardener Training program.



2022



4-H & Youth Development

Kids, Kows, & More

4th grade students from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties attended the Kids, Kows, and More program at the Rio Grande Valley livestock Show grounds in Mercedes. This educational event focusses on educating youth on local agricultural commodities grown here in the valley.

- 4th Grade students from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties attended this event.
- Over **1,500** 4th grade students participated in this event.
- **18** total schools were represented at this event.
- Topics included honeybees, mobile dairy unit, wildlife, cotton, and drones.

Thanksgiving Holiday Help

4-H members from throughout Cameron County donated turkeys and canned food items for **20** families that belong to the Harlingen parental involvement center. This was a collaborative community service project between Cameron County 4-H members, Cameron County Farm Bureau, and the Harlingen Parental Involvement Center.

- There were **43** 4-H members who participated and helped sort food items into bags.
- 4-H members donated **20** turkeys and **20** bags of food items for the families.
- **20** different families benefited from the food items that were donated.



2022



CEP 4-H & Youth Development

Heroes 4-Health

The goals of the Heroes 4-Health program are to mobilize underserved youth to take action around nutritional deficiencies, healthy food choices, and physical activity. This year, the CEP Family & Community Health agent and CEP 4-H & Youth Development agent collaborated to implement the Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness curriculum (3rd-12th grade), which includes 8 nutrition lessons, food demonstrations, and physical fitness activities. The target audience was afterschool youth in various schools within Harlingen, San Benito, Santa Rosa, and Brownsville school districts. Across all program sites, **463** youth participants were reached. In addition, **10** Heroes 4-Health program ambassadors were recruited from Porter Early College High School, to implement nutrition programming in their school and surrounding community.

Growing U

The Growing U initiative was established with goals to reduce childhood obesity, increase vegetable consumption, and improve children's fitness and weight. It combines programs such as Learn, Grow, Eat & Go! (LGEG), Walk Across Texas, and Junior Master Gardener (JMG) to teach youth about making healthy choices. Growing U was implemented at Sullivan Environmental Science Academy in San Benito, TX, as an afterschool program, where **43 students** in grades 3-5 participated in various aspects of the program. Youth and adult volunteers established **14 garden beds**, one large garden area, and one greenhouse on campus, in which they planted and harvested fruits, vegetables and herbs throughout the year. Additionally, **33 youth** were enrolled as 4-H members and participated in project activities related to Horticulture and Foods & Nutrition.



2022 Family & Community Health

Strong Bodies

The Strong Bodies Program, also known as Strong Women Strength Training, is a nationally (and internationally) disseminated evidence-based community 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. Individuals in the program meet twice per week for six-months to strength train using basic equipment such as dumbbells and ankle weights.

Participant Demographic Information for Cameron County

-38 adults (89% identified as female) enrolled in Strong People Strong Bodies program from September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022.

Childcare Provider

Two Childcare Provider Conferences were implemented in District 12. The conference targeted approximately **692** childcare centers and their staff in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. The State of Texas requires each childcare provider to acquire **24** clock hours of training annually, of which $\frac{1}{2}$ are required to be instructor led.

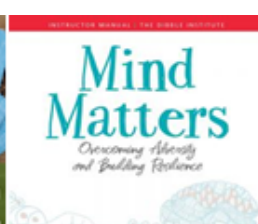
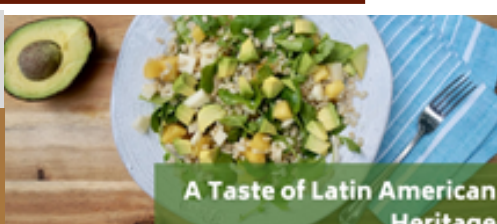
- 29 enrolled in **Spanish Childcare conference**
- 44 enrolled in **English Childcare Conference**

Childcare providers evaluation results: 100% learned new information from trainings. **100%** will use the information learned today to strengthen the childcare program. **100%** agreed the topics covered were relevant to the work they do as an early childhood educator.

Cooking Well with Diabetes

Cooking Well with Diabetes program was developed to teach people with type 2 diabetes and those that prepare food for them how to manage diabetes and reduce their risk complications. The **4-lesson program** focuses on motivating participants to make small changes for their health while preparing healthy and delicious recipes. **29** adults enrolled in Cooking Well with Diabetes, here are some results.

- 62%** of participants had improvements in weight with an average reduction of **-4.1lbs (n=63)**.
- 57%** of participants had improvements in Triglycerides with an average reduction of **-11.5 mg/dL (n=55)**.
- 44%** of participants had improvements in Hemoglobin A1c blood levels with an average reduction of **-0.02% (n=45)**.



2022 Family & Community Health

Balance Living

The **"Balanced Living"** wellness curriculum, authored by the University of Idaho Extension, is designed for busy- adults and teaches a range of skills for balanced living. Participants gain knowledge and skills for managing time and stress, eating mindfully, getting enough exercise, and sleeping well. **Twenty-two** participants from the Proyecto Juan Diego organization attended the weekly Zoom classes.

Adult & Youth Mental Health

Mind Matters is a program that teaches participants methods to take charge of their emotions and improve their states of mind through practical, hands-on activities. The program was implemented for **8th-grade** students at Jubilee Academies – Harlingen campus and as professional development for Harlingen CISD's Federal Programs department staff. Over **30** individuals participated in the program.

Adult Nutrition

A Taste of Latin American Heritage (ATOLAH), a plant-based nutrition & cooking program created by Oldways: Health Through Heritage. Oldways' belief is that the best way to inspire healthy eating is through introducing them to the traditional healthy foods and flavors of their ancestors. **40+ adult** participants from Cano Health-Brownsville and C.E. Vail Elementary learned the principal foods of the Latin American Diet Pyramid and how to prepare them easily and learned about the vibrant history, culture, and nutrition of Latin American heritage foods.

Youth Nutrition

HCISD Teen Cuisine – CEP FCH Agent Gloria Carter trained **nine staff members** from the Harlingen Consolidated School District's Afterschool Centers for Education program regarding the implementation of the Teen Cuisine youth nutrition curriculum. The staff members taught the lessons over thirteen weeks at their schools, wherein the students learned key concepts about nutrition, food preparation and cooking, food safety, and physical activity. Over **135 students** participated in the program.

2022



Better Living for Texans

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

In **2022**, the **Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities Program** took place throughout Cameron County. Brownsville ISD participants implemented and added garden beds at Perez Elementary, Pena Elementary, Del Castillo Elementary, Burns Elementary, and container gardening at Breeden Elementary. Participants learned what types of vegetables do well in our region and learned the importance of planting dates, soil types, and basic garden maintenance.

The Learn, Grow, Eat and Go!

The **Learn, Grow, Eat and Go!** program was held at Rodriguez Elementary in Harlingen where **31 2nd** graders completed the **10 week program** introducing the importance of My Plate, Physical Activity, and growing your own vegetables. The 2nd graders in the after-school gardening club were recognized by the Nationally known program, Junior Master Gardener Program, and are now certified Junior Master Gardeners (JMGs)

Healthy Carbohydrates

The **Healthy Carbohydrates** curriculum focuses on nutrition practices with hands-on activities and a goal setting to help participants understand how carbohydrates play a role in preventing and managing chronic disease. Sessions were implemented in collaboration with Brownsville ISD, San Benito ISD, Santa Maria ISD, and the La Feria Recreation Center with a total of **103** adult participants.

Color Me Healthy for SNAP-Ed

Color Me Healthy is a **9-session** nutrition and physical activity program for kindergarteners. It is aimed to stimulate the senses of young children: touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste by using color and music to teach children that healthy eating and physical activity are fun.

- **23** Kindergartners students enrolled from IDEA – Sports Park.
- **96** Pre-K and Kindergarten students enrolled from Harlingen CISD's Multi-Language Summer Program at Lamar Elementary. Program implementation was in collaboration with Gloria Carter, Family & Community Health Agent - Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program.

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!

Adult series with research-based lessons that consist of the importance of healthy nutrition with an increase of fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, food safety, and food resource management. **102** Adults enrolled in the program that was implemented with Santa Rosa ISD, San Benito ISD, Brownsville ISD ACE program, IDEA – Harlingen, and BCFS.

Choose Healthy

Choose Healthy is a **four-session** series focused to help young teens understand basic nutrition and wellness principles. The curriculum topics highlighted in this series are MyPlate, living a balanced life, making healthy choices, and healthy beverages. The series were implemented at Stillman Middle School, Oliveira Middle School, IDEA – Harlingen, and La Paloma Park with **306** middle school aged students participating.

Collaborations

In **2022**, many collaborations occurred, including a Soil presentation for Perez Elementary for **4th** and **5th** grade students with Jennifer Herrera (Horticulture Agent) and Kristina Loreda (Better Living for Texans Agent) discussing and helping kids to understand this state testing subject. Better Living for Texans also created gardening videos to be used to help supplement and reinforce teaching

Walk N Talk: Rethink Your Drink!

Eight-week physical activity program for all ages focuses on increasing physical activity and healthy beverage options. Participants learned how to maintain hydration while reducing intake of beverages with added sugars. A total of **26** youth and **45** adults participated in the physical activity program.



2022

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

SUPPORTING TEXAS FAMILIES WITH GREATEST NEED SINCE 1969

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps young families and youth with limited resources—those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity, and the inability to connect with available support systems. **EFNEP** offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management, and food safety in settings convenient for the participants. Program graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits. Texas has a need for **EFNEP—2019** data show that **16 percent** of Texas families with children under the **age of 18** were living below poverty level, compared to **14 percent** of U.S. families.

EFNEP REACHES DIVERSE AUDIENCES

In Texas, ethnically diverse **EFNEP** nutrition assistants reach youth and adult groups whose principal language may be English or Spanish.

In 2022:

- **980** families enrolled in **EFNEP**;
- **4,148** youth contacts were made through the **EFNEP** youth program;
- **81%** of EFNEP participants have children under the age of **19**;
- **61%** of families were at or below **100%** of federal poverty level.

EFNEP MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE

Adult Program Using “**hands-on**” experiences, **EFNEP** adult participants complete at least a six-lesson series on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. As a result of participation in **EFNEP**, participants will learn to prepare more meals and snacks at home, be more active, control portion size, and have more energy.

YOUTH PROGRAM

The **EFNEP** – Youth program is directed toward low-income school-age youth. A total of 808 students participated in a series of fun and educational lessons on good nutrition and food safety as part of summer programs and classroom and after-school activities. Through fun and engaging activities, youth learn to build a healthy plate, set limits on sugar, fats, and sodium, be active, food safety, and to practice healthy behaviors. It was observed that **83%** - improved ability to choose healthy food.

COST-BENEFIT OF EFNEP

Studies have shown that for every **\$1** spent on EFNEP, **\$10** were estimated to be saved in health care costs and **\$2** saved in food costs by participants. For Texas, this is **\$43 million** in estimated health care cost savings and almost **\$8.6 million** in food costs.

VOLUNTEERS STRENGTHEN EFNEP

In **2022**, **77** volunteers donated **846 hours** of work to **EFNEP** in Texas. At the Texas rate of **\$29.95/hr**, this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of **\$25,377.70**. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities and contribute to **EFNEP's** continued success.

For more information visit efnep.tamu.edu.



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