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COUNTY EXTENSION

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TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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Cameron County Extension

Dear Cameron County Commissioner Court,

We are pleased to be able to provide you with the information contained in this newsletter current educational information supported by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. We have included Agriculture/Natural Resources, Family Consumer Sciences, 4-H & Youth Development, Coastal Marine Science, Urban Horticulture and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education information that should be of interest to you and helpful in improving the quality of life in communities. Keep in mind that we have a wide variety of extension educational publications that are available upon request from our office or by accessing the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension web site at <http://agrilifebookstore.org>.

You are encouraged to read this "Extension News" newsletter and keep abreast of all ongoing Extension events and activities. If you are interested in participating in any of the mentioned Extension educational programs, field days, tours, seminars, etc., throughout the year please feel free do so.

All Extension programs are sponsored by Extension program area committees for any ones educational benefit. We would like to acknowledge the Extension volunteer base, Extension Specialists and cooperators who contributed to the planning of all educational information compiled this educational newsletter. Should you have any questions pertaining to your agricultural operation, please feel free to contact our office located at the San Benito Annex Building at 956-361-8236.

Please visit us at <http://cameron.agrilife.org>

Mission Statement: To improve the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high quality, relevant education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Enrique Perez
County Coordinator
County Extension Agent-Agriculture

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, 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

Family & Consumer Sciences

Written by Agent Lilian Mezquida

When Sean Speaks

On March 5, 2015 at Berta Cabaza Middle School more than **300** students participated in “**When Sean Speaks**” The purpose for this event was to spread the word that alcohol, automobiles and asphalt don't mix. It is just as important to be careful of whose car you get into as a passenger. Sean and his Mom, Jenny, have taken their message to tens of thousands of young people to help prevent drunk driving and to make people aware of the consequences of their choices. The San Benito Police Department also provided information related to alcohol and driving at this event.



Friend to Friend

Friend to Friend was implemented in Cameron County and more than **150** women attended the Friend to Friend event on May 9, 2015 at Berta Cabaza Middle School in the city of San Benito. A Physician, other Health Professional, and Breast Cancer Survivors urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the event. After the event women had time to ask questions and sign for mammogram and Pap screenings.



Parenting Connections and Anger Management

For more than seven years the Cameron County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has conducted multiple parent education workshop series' in Cameron County utilizing the Parenting Connections curriculum. Topics covered included guidance/discipline, parent-child communication, promoting a healthy self-esteem in children, and child development. Parent/Child Behaviors participants were evaluated after completing the parent education series using retrospective evaluation tools. Significant behavioral changes from pre and post occurred in the following areas: parent-child communication, parental self-confidence, and use of positive disciplinary practices. Cameron County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has implemented the Anger Management Program. The purpose of this program is to identify anger triggers and find more effective ways to deal with their anger, quick list of ways to cope with anger, symptoms of anger and a plan for dealing with anger.



Better Living For Texans

The Better Living for Texans Assistants conducted multiple education workshop series' in Cameron County utilizing: Back to Basics series. This program focuses on meal planning, stretching food dollars, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. More than **130** Adults participated in this program. Also the Assistants reached out **480** youth providing nutritional programs.





4-H & Youth Development



Written by Agent Marco Ponce & Guadalupe Castro

The Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service has been working continuously on youth development in Cameron County. Our successes this past year reached over 14,000 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 two new 4-H community clubs in the county. Three new clubs have already formed and are currently enrolling new members.

Over 20 Cameron County 4-H members and leaders attended Texas State 4-H Roundup in College Station. State 4-H Roundup is a state level competition for 4-H members who have placed first at our district competition and then advanced to state. Cameron County 4-H members placed first in state with their Share the Fun Celebrate 4-H routine. 4-H members placed second in the state in the Poultry judging contest. Many other 4-H members competed in illustrated talks, food challenge, swine skillathon, and livestock judging. Cameron County 4-H member Justin Macmanus was also awarded a \$20,000 scholarship from the Texas 4-H Foundation. This is the highest scholarship a 4-H member can receive and it was sponsored by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Cameron County 4-H members participated in the State 4-H Livestock Judging contests held during Texas State 4-H Roundup. Cameron County 4-H had the 7th place livestock judging team in the state and was the High Point Team in the Swine Division. Jake Rhyner of Highland Hustlers 4-H was recognized as the overall High Point Individual for the state in this contest. He was also the High Point Individual in the Swine Division. Jake Rhyner and Angelina Galvan also placed in the top 10 individuals in the Beef Division. Cameron County 4-H livestock judging team members included Jake Rhyner, Angelina Galvan, and Hannah Wells.

Over 20 Cameron County 4-H members participated in our District 12 4-H Leadership Lab that was held on the campus of South West Texas Junior College in Uvalde. This year 4-H members were able to attend several concurrent sessions related to team building, leadership, safety. One of the sessions served to educate 4-H members on the dangers of texting and driving. 4-H members also participated in team building exercises such as a variety of Olympic games and other outdoor activities. Each night was capped off with a nightly dance and an assortment of games for youth to participate in. The highlight of the week was the Drum Café in which a team of African Drummers came in and did a performance complete with audience participation. Each 4-H member and leader was provided a drum in order to participate.

Cameron County 4-H members will be preparing to participate in a community service project in which we will be distributing emergency management publications to clientele entering the county building here in San Benito. 4-H members and leaders are now chartering their clubs and getting ready for the new enrollment period to begin next month.

Guadalupe Castro is the new 4H Cooperative Extension Program Agent with Prairie View A&M University working in conjunction with Texas A&M Extension. She has one year experience working with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension and the Cameron County community as a Better Living for Texas program assistant and 4 years experience working in public schools as an elementary school teacher. She is very excited to be starting her new role as 4H CEP agent and has already begun to reach out to the community to assess their needs pertaining to the youth. As an 1890 land grant CEP agent her main focus is to reach low resource areas in the Cameron County community and work with the youth and families to provide leadership opportunities that will help them to develop and grow into successful members of Cameron County. The CEP mission is to respond to the needs of underserved Texans through life-changing learning opportunities that empower families and youth, promote agriculture, and strengthen communities with the vision to be the premier 21st century outreach and continuing education organization responding to the needs of the people.

Since she has started in June 2015 she has begun to work together with Texas A&M Extension by assisting the Better Living for Texas summer camps held in Bob Clark Social Services center and reached over 100 kids using the Learn, Grow, Eat, Go curriculum. When she was there she also had the opportunity to sit and talk with the director of the center and discuss the opportunity to bring in the 4H program. She also reached out to Projecto Juan Diego in the Cameron Park area in Brownsville and is in the process of chartering a new 4H club in conjunction with the organization. In July 27-29 Prairie View A&M University will be hosting a Youth Leadership camp which will provide leadership training and seminars for the youth free of charge. Cameron County 4H CEP will be taking 5 youth and 2 adults to the Youth Leadership camp which will be held in Prairie View Texas.





Urban Horticulture

Written by Agent Jennifer Herrera



Through the Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC) grant project two new community gardens have been established. One of the new community gardens is located in San Benito and was developed in partnership with the City of San Benito and the San Benito Consolidated Independent School District. The six series gardening educational classes continue to be administered throughout Cameron County in underserved areas and areas defined as food deserts by USDA.



Three of eight educational webinars on Small Acreage Horticulture Crop have been conducted for Cameron County residents interested in going into business growing fruits and vegetables. Live webinars will be conducted through December 2015.

This year the Horticulture and Family Consumer Science Agent collaborated on a Backyard Basics program series. This program supported healthy living through home-based food production, preparation, and preservation. Classes were given on various topics such as, vegetable gardening, pickling, canning, meat selection and grilling. This agent is looking to expand the Backyard Basics program to include cheese making and egg production.

This agent along with Vegetable Specialist and Viticulture Specialist conducted a Grapevine Field Day. This program covered how to grow, harvest and maintain grape vines in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. An additional class was added to teach wine making to small growers.



The Cameron County Master Gardeners held their annual Home Gardening Extravaganza and Plant Sale. Educational exhibits were displayed on composting, rainwater harvesting, soil testing, native plants, vegetables and herbs. Children's gardening activities were conducted. A popular table was our Plant Clinic that was run by Texas A&M AgriLife Specialists. Homeowners brought insects and diseased plants for identification. Over 200 participants walked through the Home Gardening Extravaganza.



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

Facebook : [Cameron County Master Garden-](#)



Coastal & Marine Resources



Written by Agent Tony Reisinger

We now have two Texas Master Naturalist Chapters in the Valley, the Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalists headquartered in San Benito and the South Texas Border Chapter in McAllen. The chapters have 138 members and 74 members respectively, training 36 and 22 interns this spring. The South Texas Border Chapter shares Cameron and Hidalgo Counties with the Rio Grande Chapter Valley for membership and volunteer work. The Rio Grande Chapter has Willacy County as part of its territory and the South Texas Border chapter has Starr County. This quarter the Rio Grande Chapter Master Naturalists volunteered 6,534 hours with local partners, valued at \$152,895.60 and the South Texas Border Chapter Master Naturalists volunteered 1,390 hours with their partners valued at \$32,526.00.

Our Texas Coastal Naturalist program responded to two dolphin strandings this quarter on Boca Chica, a spinner dolphin, which died during its rehabilitation and a juvenile bottlenose dolphin now being cared for at the Texas State Aquarium. Training in beach ecology was held in May at the Port Isabel Event & Cultural Center and South Padre.

Two hundred fifteen shrimp fishermen, including four net makers were trained in Turtle Excluder Device, TED, compliance this quarter. This is an increasingly important issue governed by the Endangered Species Act, since the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle population has drastically declined since 2010.

Finally we are concerned about the brown shrimp season, set to open around July 15. Texas has had record rainfall, dropping bay salinities significantly. Browns are a high salinity loving species. The last time we experienced heavy rains such as this was 1992 and Cameron County declared the season a disaster, making SBA loans available for vessel owners. Let's hope for a great season!



Young bottlenose dolphin, at the UTPA - Coastal Studies Lab. She was stranded and saved by the Texas Coastal Naturalists, June 21, 2015.

Brigette Goza photo

Agriculture & Natural Resources

2015 Texas Community Futures Forum a Successful Event



2015 Texas Community Futures Forum-Participants Addressing Issues of Concerns



2015 Cotton and Grain Sorghum Result Demonstrations



Grain Sorghum Aphid Workshop Well Attended by Agriculture Producers



Written by Agent Dr. Enrique Perez

2015 Texas Community Futures Forum A Success in Cameron County

The Cameron County Extension Leadership Advisory Board hosted the 2015 TCFF (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 in Cameron county. **Dr. Jose Luis Cavazos chairperson and co-chairperson Cris Perez with the Extension Leadership Advisory Board took leadership in this TCFF.** More than 80 Cameron county stakeholders representing homeowners, organizations, agencies, groups, and school districts participated in the Texas Community Futures Forum on March 10th, 2015 at the San Benito Annex. **The top critical issues/needs identified at the TCFF were; Environmental Stewardship, Water Quality and Conservation, Childhood and Adult Obesity Education, Parenting Skills Education, Children's Health, Youth at Risk, Drug Awareness, Teen Pregnancy and Eco-Tourism.** **Special Thanks to TCFF facilitators:: Joe Vega, Anita Westervelt, Ivette Torres, Monica Salinas, Cris Perez, Dr. Jose Luis Cavazos, Dr. Juan Anciso.**

2015 Cotton and Grain Sorghum Research Establishment on Hybrids/Varieties

Result Demonstrations

The beginning of the year the Extension Agriculture Program Committee lead the establishment of Cotton and Grain Sorghum variety tests at local farms. Two agriculture producers volunteered 40 acres of farm land to establish a cotton and grain sorghum test in their farm. Nine hybrid/varieties were replicated three times on each farm site.

The purpose in the establishment of the Cotton and Grain Sorghum Research test is to provide an opportunity for local producers to self evaluate each hybrid/variety performance and plant development. At times agriculture producers are not aware on the hybrid/varieties introduced to them by ag industry. These tests/research serve as a non bias research test under growers crop management practices.

2015 Sugarcane Aphid Workshop for Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers participated in a Valley Wide Sugarcane Aphid Workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to prepare agriculture producers on the importance of scouting agriculture grain sorghum fields and management of the Sugarcane Aphid. Up to date pesticides for the control of the Sugarcane Aphid were outline and opened for discussion on spraying methods. Last year agriculture producers were not aware of the infestation of the Sugarcane Aphid and 30% of the grain sorghum crop had a reduction of yield at harvest time. Cotton and Grain Producers of the Lower Rio Grande Valley **estimated the economic impact of the research and extension work in the valley alone was \$66 million.** LRGV sorghum growers were saved from a devastating yield loss of \$74 million. Actual control costs and minor yields losses are estimated at \$8 million, resulting in an estimated net savings to LRGV sorghum growers of \$66 million.

2015 Agriculture USDA Program Awareness Workshop for Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers from Cameron County participated in a May meeting at the San Benito Annex to learn about USDA funding availability for agriculture production. Representatives from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, USDA Rural Development and USDA Farm Home Administration provided current information about cost share programming, loans and Crop Reserve Program availability. This workshop was a one to one group type of educational activity in which agriculture producers had the opportunity to discuss own situations which served well as a question and answer workshop.

2015 Pesticide Safety Continuing Education for Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers participated in a three series continuing education units program. This program provided agriculture producers with restricted Texas Department of Agriculture License for the purchase of State Restricted Pesticides secure continuing education credit. Agriculture producers increased their knowledge on pesticide calibration. Integrated Pest Management, Pesticide Safety, Use of Pesticide Handling and equipment. More than 130 agriculture producers participated in the two days.

Upcoming Activities 2015

Extension Educational Programs

Tip of Texas Meeting	June 1, 2015	District Marketing Meeting	August 12, 2015
Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	June 2, 2015	Master Gardener Association Meeting	August 13, 2015
4-H Record Book Training	June 2, 2015	Texas Association of Extension 4-H Agents	August 12-14, 2015
4-H Youth Advisory Board Meeting	June 3, 2015	Parenting Classes	August 17, 24, 31, 2015
Backyard Basic Series	June 4, 2015	Small Acreage Horticulture Crop Webinar	August 20, 2015
D12 4-H Archery Match	June 6, 2015	Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	September 1, 2015
Texas 4-H Roundup	June 8-12, 2015	Master Naturalist Board Meeting	September 1, 2015
Parenting Classes	June 8, 15, 22, 2015	Private Applicator Training	September 2, 2015
Grain Sorghum and Corn Field Day	June 9, 2015	Master Naturalist General Meeting	September 8, 2015
Master Naturalist General Meeting	June 9, 2015	Master Gardener Association Meeting	September 10, 2015
Master Gardener Association Meeting	June 11, 2015	Program Planning Retreat	September 10-11, 2015
Cotton & Grain Association Meeting	June 11, 2015	Parenting Classes	September 14, 21, 28, 2015
4-H Record book Judging	June 16, 2015	Anger Management Classes	September 14, 21, 28, 2015
D12 4-H Horse Show	June 19, 2015	Small Acreage Horticulture Crop Webinar	September 17, 2015
D12 4-H Leadership Lab & Election Convention	June 23-27, 2015	FCS/BLT Meeting	September 21, 2015
Sugarcane Aphid Field Day	June 25, 2015	Leadership Advisory Board Meeting	September 23, 2015
Vineyard & Home Winemaking Workshop	June 25, 2015	Winterized Improved Pastures for Ranchers	September 29, 2015
Tip of Texas Meeting	July 6, 2015	Parenting Classes	October 5, 12, 19, 2015
Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	July 7, 2015	Tip of Texas Meeting	October 5, 2015
Master Naturalist Board Meeting	July 7, 2015	Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	October 6, 2015
D12 4-H Record book Judging	July 9, 2015	Master Naturalist Board Meeting	October 6, 2015
Master Gardener Association Meeting	July 9, 2015	Master Gardener Association Meeting	October 8, 2015
Master Naturalist General Meeting	July 14, 2015	Master Naturalist General Meeting	October 13, 2015
Small Acreage Horticulture Crop Webinar	July 16, 2015	Financial Management Training	October 21, 2015
Texas County Agents Association Conference	July 19-22, 2015	Small Acreage Horticulture Crop Webinar	October 22, 2015
Texas Extension Agent Family Consumer Sciences	July 28-31, 2015	FCS/BLT Meeting	October 23, 2015
Tip of Texas Meeting	August 3, 2015	Soil Campaign Kickoff for AG Producers	October 29, 2015
Beef Cattle Short Course	August 3-5, 2015		
Master Gardener Exec. Meeting	August 4, 2015		
Master Naturalist Board Meeting	August 4, 2015		

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

Facebook : **TX A&M Agrilife in Cameron County** for upcoming programs and activities.