

# Making a Difference ....in Fort Bend County

2012—Volume 1, Issue 4—FALL

**Special points of interest: Winter 2012**

- FCS Volunteers Honored
- Pesticide Applicators Training
- Better Living for Texans
- AG'tivity Barn—Ag Literacy
- Feral Hog Management
- Fort Bend Master Gardeners
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## FCS Volunteers Honored at Appreciation Luncheon

Agents Sandra Fry, Dianne Gertson, and Fralonda Anderson hosted a volunteer recognition luncheon on Thursday, December 6, to honor the many volunteers that supported Extension Education relating to Family & Consumer Sciences here in Fort Bend. Volunteers represented the Texas Extension Education Association Council & Clubs, the Diabetes Coalition, Walk Across Texas Coalition, FCS Program Area Committee, Partners for Parenting Task Force, and the Sewing Task Force. Volunteers from these Fort Bend County Extension support groups work to support FCS but also 4-H by providing scholarships, support the Fort Bend County Fair by co-hosting the Creative Arts Division, and provide funding for several external groups and charitable organizations. In 2012, the educational focus and volunteer support related specifically to the following program plans: Walk Across Texas; Fort Bend County Child Care Provider Conferences; Fathers Reading Every Day; Do Well Be Well W/ Diabetes; Food Protection Mgmt.; Sewing Camp; Cooking Camp and Preserving Thy Bounty.

## Pesticide Applicators' Training....Stay Current, Stay Legal

2012 Fort Bend County Pesticide Education - Public concerns about the welfare of our environment have caused the need for training, licensing and re-certification opportunities of pesticide applicators. AgriLife Extension offered several training opportunities designed to help increase the knowledge and skills of applicators relating to pest control, laws & regulations, sprayer calibration, Integrated Pest Mgmt. and drift minimizations. More than 600 applicators attended classes in which CEUs were offered to help applicators stay informed and legal. Some of these classes are pre-scheduled events, offered solely for the purpose of helping private, commercial and non-commercial applicators meet their yearly requirement of CEUs, while other programs consist of subject matter trainings that happen to meet the qualifications of CEU credits. The most offered units include general pest control, integrated pest management, drift minimization, laws & regulations, personal protection equipment and right-of-way. Throughout the year, evaluation results indicated a 90% average gain in knowledge and 88% gain in skills. Great Job, agents.



**Oct. 1—Dec. 31, 2012**

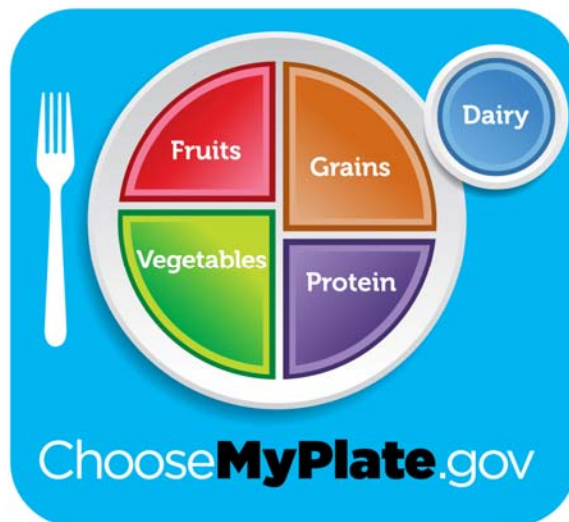
TOTAL CONTACTS

235 ed. sessions
53,410 attendees
390 site visits
689 office visits
760 phone calls
939 emails
237 websites
9086 mailouts
143 volunteers assisted



## Better Living for Texans....Great for Fort Bend

2012 Fort Bend County Better Living for Texans - An estimated 1 in 15 households in Fort Bend lives in poverty resulting in diets that are low in fiber, vitamins A and E, folic acid, zinc, calcium, and iron; and higher in total fat, saturated fat, and sodium – ultimately leading to heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. All BLT lessons were taught to Fort Bend & Lamar Independent School Districts, Head Start, Parent Resource Center and Catholic Charities. The 20 lessons reached 252 participants. The lesson series included “Get the Facts” on Labels - Fats, Sugars, Sodium; and the Three Easy Bites—Breakfast, My Healthy Plate & Snacks. In addition, one-shot BLT programs included “Go Lean on Protein,” “Pantry Pests,” Dining at the Dollar-Store,” Feeding Your Family Without Starving Your Wallet,” “Feeding Your Family When Disaster Strikes,” and others. Participants indicated a >90% increase in knowledge, >95% in skill gain and a saving of \$296/person in medical costs.



## AG 'tivity Barn...an Ag-literacy Event in Fort Bend



2012 Agricultural Literacy in Fort Bend County - It is essential that AgriLife Extension take an active role in educating youth about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Fort Bend is unique in its demographic makeup with the eastern half of the county being urban, while the western half remains rural. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented educational programming for youth to address the relevant issue of Ag Literacy.



*AG 'tivity Barn* was conducted during the 2012 FB County Fair and involved 26 collaborators to reach over 1000 elementary school students and 120 teachers & chaperones. Over 406 youth entered the poster contest for added fun. In addition 60% of the 93,000 fair visitors attended *AG 'tivity Barn*. Twenty-one exhibits were utilized to promote the agriculture industry in FB. Exhibits included beef, swine, sheep, goats, bees, fish & alligators, wildlife, nursery stock, vegetables, herbs, water harvesting, rice, cotton, sorghum, corn, soils, chickens & egg hatching and ducks. Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, 4-H members & leaders, and a host of other volunteers assisted. Fort Bend Farm Bureau, SW Mobile Dairy, N.FB Water Authority, HEB and other agencies donated time, money, and materials. Thanks to everyone for making AG' tivity Barn a success.



## Feral Hog Management ...A Major County Issue

**Managing Feral Hogs in Fort Bend County** - Fort Bend County AG/NR Agents collaborated with USDA Wildlife Services and Vertex Tactical Aviation to educate Texas residents about learning the legalities of feral hog trapping and aerial feral hog hunting. Topics of discussion: how to recognize signs of feral hogs, gate methods, snaring, building a snare, and hands- on demonstrations on feral hog trapping. Additionally, basics on aerial hog hunting and it ' s laws and regulations. There were a total of two and a half hours of Continuing Educational Units offered at the program. One hour Integrated Pest Management, one hour General, and a half hour of Laws and Regulations were offered for the clients of Fort Bend County. On November 10, 2012, a feral hog program was conducted in Fort Bend County. There were forty- two surveys submitted from the 45 in attendance. Results from the surveys were amazing. Surveys indicated there were 28,243 acres impacted. Last year, landowners indicated losing \$197,900 due to feral hog damage. As a result of the programs and stated future adoption of learned management practices will save/earn them \$107,850. This is due to respondents indicating losses to feral hog damage of \$63,260. As a result of implementing what they learned during the program, they hope to have a greater profit margin.



## Master Gardeners Recognized for Service....We are proud of you!

The Master Gardener program educates participants on sound horticultural practices, with the intent of creating good environmental stewards. This program requires participants attend fifty hours of classroom instruction. Classroom instruction introduces the participants to the basics of horticulture including trees, perennials, landscape design, propagation, turf, entomology and pathology, and the Earth -Kind® approach. The Master Gardener training course is an intense one-month course, with classes held two days each week. Twenty -six individuals enrolled in the Fort Bend County Fall 2012 Master Gardener class. Class members receive a tremendous amount of education and in return are expected to give fifty hours of volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to become a certified Master Gardener. These “interns” will contribute a minimum of 1300 cumulative hours of volunteer service in the coming year. For each consecutive year they remain certified, they also contribute a minimum of 36 hours of additional education and support. The associate class of 2012, if all remain active, would contribute an additional minimum of 936 hours of volunteer service. The knowledge they each gain will help them serve as localized stewards in their neighborhoods and other ranges of influence. This exponentially helps Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in fulfilling its goal of reaching and educating the diverse population of Fort Bend County. Due to the success of the MG program, the class will continue to be offered in the Fall of the year. Further emphasis will be taken to offer more specialized training to those volunteers who wish to attain higher certifications. Fort Bend County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will utilize these volunteers to assist in the planning and implementation of additional educational programs within our community.

In addition, on December over 130 master gardeners were recognized for outstanding service and dedication to horticulture-related programming efforts. Go...FBMGs!



## 2013 Leadership Advisory Board Membership Drive ....Underway Now

Within the last couple of months we have been working to assemble a list of key individual to serve on the Leadership Advisory Board (LAB). Some members are returning for another year and some members are new to our program.

What are LABS? LABs are diverse groups of volunteers who are representatives of our clientele (the citizens of Fort Bend) and ultimately are "responsible" in a way for the direction of the overall Extension program in our county.

The Leadership Advisory Boards (LABs) are found in most all counties through the state. LABs are simple in concept and stellar in importance. LAB members come from all walks of life and have a wide range of interest and expertise. Some LAB members have a deep understanding of Extension outreach education, some have a small bit of knowledge, and some members have absolutely no knowledge of Extension. The wide range of interest each member brings to the table is by design - for open discussions and honest opinions.

The LAB members provide the vision, and both short-term and long-term planning for Extension activities. In direct terms, the educational activities of our County Extension Agents are based on recommendations of the LAB members. LAB members serve as advocates for the county Extension program. In addition, LAB members as a group, and the agencies and entities they represent, help interpret the outreach programming efforts and outcomes throughout the county.

The 2013 LAB roster is made up of 18 members. They represent homemakers, farmers/ranchers, salesmen, ISDs, Law Enforcement, Farm Bureau, Senior Citizens, YMCA, charities, Service Clubs, city government and Fort Bend County. Our first meeting of 2013 is set for March 26, 2013 starting at 3:00 p.m. here at the Texas A&M AgriLife office. Please feel free to join us.

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## Winter 2013 Calendar of upcoming events.

For a complete & current listing of upcoming events go to: <http://fortbend.agrilife.org/>

### February 2013

- 2 - Saturday with the Master Gardeners
- 4 & 6 - Food Protection Management Training
- 7 - Annual Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference (Earn 5 CEUs)
- 15 - Information Fair/Consumer Fraud Expo
- 21 - Rainwater Harvesting & DIY Installation (Master Gardener Program)
- 22 - Master Wellness Volunteer Training Series Begins
- 23 - Master Gardener Vegetable-Herb Sale
- 25 - Food Handlers Class

### March 2013

- 2 - "What's On Your Wish List for Retirement?" Seminar
- 13 - Microloan Program for New Farmers

### April 2013

- 6—Fort Bend County Feral Hog Program
- 12 Preserving the Bounty (Canning/Pickling) Workshop

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### **Our Vision**

*To be the premier 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century outreach and  
continuing education  
organization in Texas  
responding to the  
needs of the people.*