

Extension Education — Making a Difference in Fort Bend County 2018 Executive Summary



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Agriculture and Natural Resources

- **Beef & Forage Production** - Fort Bend is a diversified agricultural county with beef cattle as one of the leading Ag commodities. To meet the needs of Fort Bend County beef and forage producers, the following activities were held:
 - ◇ Fort Bend County forage producers submitted 32 soil samples during the spring soil testing campaign for analysis. The results from these analyses will provide producers with a detailed report and recommendation on fertilizer applications to maximize forage yields and minimize costs, excess nutrient application, and negative environmental impacts.
 - ◇ Producers submitted a total of 6 hay samples that were analyzed by the Soil Testing Lab in College Station for nutrient content.
 - ◇ Forage & livestock specific articles covering timely topics for our areas were written by specialists and published in the ANR quarterly newsletter via email to 650 clients.
- **Master Volunteers** - These volunteers are local people with an interest in a particular subject. Extension provides extensive training that increases their knowledge and skills in that area. Volunteers use what they have learned to facilitate Extension educational programming in their communities. Master Volunteers may teach youth or adults, train other volunteers, and work on projects in support of Extension. Master Volunteers in Fort Bend include:
 - ◇ Master Gardeners - 180 certified, 23 interns trained in 2018 for a total of 203
 - ◇ Master Naturalist - 81 certified, 17 interns trained in 2018 for a total of 98
- **Multi-County Pesticide Education** - Fort Bend, Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, and Harris Counties have a combined total of 2,659 pesticide applicators licensed (FBC=551) with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Private pesticide applicators are required to acquire 15 CEUs every five years and both commercial & non-commercial applicators are required to acquire 5 CEUs every year in order to renew their licenses. A total of 41 hours were offered at 13 different events throughout 2018. Programs offered included:
 - ◇ One 5-CEU program designed for 34 Mosquito Control Professionals
 - ◇ One 5-CEU program for 60 Town & Country Pesticide Training attendees
 - ◇ One 5-hour CEU session for 17 Ag/Structural Pest Control applicators
 - ◇ Four quarterly private applicator trainings for licensing - 21 attendees.
 - ◇ One 5-hour CEU event at the Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conf. -132 of 228 attending
 - ◇ Nine specific commodity trainings 420 contacts with 1-5 CEUs offered
 - ◇ Seven commodity newsletters to 1,783 farmers
- **Sustainable Small Acreage Enterprises** - As crop land in Fort Bend County becomes transferred to residential use and increases in large acreage land prices continue, small acreage operators may find their niche in the region. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, working in coordination with the Texas division of Southern SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Extension), has brought forth efforts to assist in identifying and evaluating diversification strategies for risk mitigation and improved economic sustainability using a variety of small acreage crops. Program examples for 2018 include:
 - ◇ Regional Vegetable Conf. - 228 growers gained commercial insight on growing/marketing
 - ◇ Orchard Grafting Clinic - 38 attended to learn valuable grafting/budding skills
 - ◇ Feral Hog Presentation to 50 farmers & ranchers .
 - ◇ 80+ hogs captured in test traps.
 - ◇ Pecan Harvest Festival - 250 of 1,500 attendees visited Extension's Pecan Show displays



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- **Crop Production** - Row crops & rice production continue to play a vital role in Fort Bend with 10,100 acres of corn; 16,980 acres of grain sorghum; 41,230 acres of upland cotton; 2,000 acres of soybeans; and 4,517 acres of rice. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented the following programs to address the relevant issues in crop production: 1) January Row Crops Meeting had 93 producers in attendance; 2) Sixty producers attended the three Summer Turn Row Meetings in June; 3) Result demonstrations and applied research plots addressing hybrid selection in sorghum and corn, pest control in cotton, corn and sorghum as well as fertilizer evaluation of cotton.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- **Dinner Tonight! (DT)** - The goal of DT is to help families learn how to cook quick, nutritious meals and cut down on diet-related illnesses. Weekly video demonstrations are sent via e-mail blasts to approximately 10,000 people/month. In addition, three DT Cooking Schools were conducted - one during the 2018 Commercial Vegetable Conf. that reached 260 individuals and two at the Mamie George Comm. Center for a total of 36 contacts.

Weight Management - Preventable illnesses make up 80% of the burden of illnesses and 90% of all U.S. healthcare costs. Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates have tripled with nearly 33% of children being overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher among African Americans and Hispanics where nearly 40% of the children are overweight/obese which may lead to diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. Educational programs conducted in conjunction with CEP's Expanded Food and Nutrition Program, Community Health Choice, and Attack Poverty Organization included:

- ◊ **Walk Across Texas** - 96 participants (12 teams) took part in this 8-week exercise event by walking (a total of 22,769 miles) to create a healthy habit of walking everyday. The ultimate result was not only weight loss, but also a delay of the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- ◊ **The Texercise program** - an 8-12 week fitness and educational program that provided education & opportunity for regular physical activity to reduce the risk and minimize the impact of disease. The 164 seniors gained knowledge of portion size, label reading, food groups, and application of physical activity for healthier lifestyles.
- **Childcare Provider Conferences** - Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of childcare on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. There are over 100,000 childcare providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated childcare facilities in the state of Texas. In 2018, a total of 176 providers representing 34 centers caring for 3,248 youth gained valuable knowledge, skills, and tips while earning a total of 704 clock hours offered by AgriLife agents. In addition 86 childcare providers attended programs hosted by CEP agents and received 4 hours of continuing education credits each amounting to over 340 clock hours toward the childcare providers' requirement.
- **Food Protection Management** - Each year, an estimated 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Common symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. Five pathogens alone (Campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli O157:H7, and E. coli non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$7 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. To meet the need for quality food safety education, a Food Handlers Program, Certified Food Managers' Program and several food preservation classes were held in 2018:
 - ◊ **Food Handlers Program (2 hours)** - 35 participants learned the basics of food safety.
 - ◊ **Certified Food Managers Program (2 days)** - 95% of 27 students passed the exam.
 - ◊ **Home Food Preservation (5 classes)** - 38 learned home-food preservation techniques.

- **Financial Literacy Series** - Statistics show 38.1% of the American families have low financial gain, 48.9% are low-income minorities, and 42% have no high school degree/GED. To address the issues of financial literacy several workshops were implemented that focused on bettering the lives of our residents. These workshops addressed several factors including spending, investing, career readiness, and how to communicate about finances within



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- a relationship. The financial literacy curriculums *Marriage Survival*, *the National Education Financial Education*, and *Personal Finance Activities Booklet* were utilized. A total of 227 participants showed an increased knowledge in creating budgets together with their families and an understanding of their partner’s personality style and financial infidelity.
- **Better Living for Texans (BLT) - A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!** - More than 3.7 million individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Studies show that individuals who live in poverty are not aware or adhere to current USDA dietary guidelines. In 2018, 106 adults completed the BLT “A Fresh Start to a Healthier You” series that offered food & nutrition education to help improve planning and preparing nutritious meals, increase physical activity, and safe food storage. Participant characteristics - household size = 2.6; the average age = 71 years. Participation in the selected assistance programs was as follows: SNAP 58%, food pantries or other emergency food assistance 66%, free/reduced school meals 17%, Head Start 8%, TANF 0%, and WIC 0%.

4-H and Youth Development— 2018 Club Statistics

4-H Clubs in Fort Bend County - 32
4-H Adult Leaders - 90
Special Interest/Enrichment - 12,886

4-H Club Members - 523
Youth Leaders - 94
Contests: Co. - 201, Dist. - 103, State - 45

- **2018 Agricultural Literacy** - It is essential that AgriLife Extension takes 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 north & east portions of the county being urban, while the south & west half remain rural. AgriLife Extension developed and implemented educational programming for youth (as well as adults) to address the relevant issue of Ag Literacy. *AG'tivity Barn* was conducted during the FB County Fair and involved nine sponsors/ collaborators to reach over 738 elementary school students, 85 teachers & parents/ chaperones, and 276 youth who entered the coloring contest. A total of 19 exhibits were utilized to promote the agricultural industry in Fort Bend with 85 volunteers & 17 agencies and organizations assisting. In addition, it was estimated that 57,000 fair visitors (60% of 91,200) attended *AG'tivity Barn* during the 10-day run.
- **Hatching in the Classroom** – This project is designed to provide background information and experiential activities in life science for use in the school classroom while meeting TEKS and STAAR objectives. Students have the opportunity to develop skills related to science such as qualitative and quantitative measurement of data, scientific method, and critical thinking. Major partners in 2018 were:
 - Seven Lakes Jr. High with 675 7th graders participating. Teachers used the project as a resource for bio-systems, animal adaptations, and natural selection.
 - Valasquez Elementary had 105 1st graders participating. Incubators were setup in the school’s science lab. Once hatched, the chicks were kept and raised by the students. Over 400 students viewed the hatching process through the school’s live stream online.
- **ROBOTICS** - The nation is facing declining proficiencies in science, engineering, & technology, as well as workforce shortages in these critical fields. In an attempt to address these deficits, Fort Bend 4-H Robotics Program is focused on 4-H project growth, community outreach, and school enrichment throughout Fort Bend County. Several planning meetings have taken place with Robotics project leaders, community partners, and interested parents to discuss programming and activities to increase awareness of STEM related careers.

Robotics Curriculum Enrichment

- George Jr. HS & Univ. Library with 39 & 10 youth resp. - coding & building Jimu Robots
- Cinco Ranch Library with 14 youth - Created prototype hydraulic robots
- M. Austin-Holley Elem. w/48 youth - Constructed ecobot for toxic waste cleanup sim.
- Cinco Ranch Library with 16 youth - Coding, reverse engineering and drone flying
- Fort Bend Co. Robotics Camp w/23 youth—Lego EV3 Mindstorms, Coder Kids & drones

4-H Robotics Project Club - A total of 41 youth and 19 adults were enrolled in our Robotics program in 2018. All youth completed the Robotics 1: EV3 curriculum and we were able to provide EV3 LEGO Mindstorm kits to all clubs due to the grants received.



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- **4-H Veterinary Science Project/Certification Program** - This project deals with techniques and procedures involved in caring for animal, and consists of 100 lessons, 50 activities, and 500 clinical hours of on-the-job training in which participants have five years to complete. Since the establishment of the Vet. Science Certificate Program in Fort Bend in 2012 we've created ten 4-H clubs. Highlights for 2018 include:
 - ◇ Two youth completed the 5-year curriculum for a total of 8 in the past 4 years and received a Texas 4-H Vet. Project Completion Certificate at the FB Annual Awards Banquet.
 - ◇ Three Vet Science 4-H members took part in the Vet Science Skillathon at the 2018 State 4-H Roundup - a competitive event designed to test knowledge and skills.
 - ◇ FBC hosted a genetics workshop with 50 in attendance—20 adult leaders and 30 youth.
 - ◇ FBC has a total of 10 Vet Science Clubs, 74 dedicated youth and 22 adult volunteers.
- **Fashion, Art & Beauty (FAB) 4-H Club** - High quality youth programs help to generate positive outcomes for youth including improved academic performance, social skills, classroom behavior improvement, and self-love as well as improvement in general health. The FAB 4-H Club, with nine members, was created as a safe and productive way to spend their time learning new skills. Our mission is to inspire fashion creativity, explore new interests, and make new friends. Our goals are to share, explore, and expand ideas about the fashion industry, beauty industry, and art industry as it relates to fashion through field trips, fundraisers, workshops, competitions, and events. Our objectives are:
 - ◇ Learn responsibility, teamwork, and set and achieve goals
 - ◇ Learn about the different aspects of fashion, art, and beauty, and related careers
 - ◇ Learn the basics of sewing, craft making, and product creation.
 - ◇ To develop the ability to prepare an educational presentation and speak in public
 - ◇ Increase poise, self-assurance, and confidence

Community Economic Development

- **Rebuild Texas (RT) Commission**- Major flooding occurred twice in 2016; however, nothing can compare to the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey in August 2017 with an average of 48" of rainfall within the coastal bend counties. The National Hurricane Center now reports that Hurricane Harvey was "the most significant tropical cyclone rainfall event in U.S. history, both in scope and peak rainfall amounts, since reliable rainfall records began around the 1880s." As a result, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott appointed TAMUS Chancellor John Sharp Commissioner of the RT Commission with AgriLife serving as his lead liaison in each of the 40 affected counties. Fort Bend County AgriLife Extension's response included:
 - ◇ Clientele Inquiries - Responded to incoming calls regarding crop loss, cattle loss, mold/mildew issues, invasive weed contamination, cattle diseases and elevating homes.
 - ◇ Rebuild Texas Commission -Relayed valuable information from Gov. Abbott, Chancellor Sharp and Rebuild Texas AgriLife team to over 70 key leaders in Fort Bend County as needed and responded to the needs of our 19 jurisdictions.

Total Educational Contacts

Educational Sessions Conducted - 1,847
 Contact Hours via Ed. Programs - 205,409
 Extension Education Club Members - 39
 Total Volunteer Hours - 77,634
 Direct Contacts (office/site/phone) - 9,598
 Newsletter/Email/Mail Contacts - 135,171
 Social Media Followers - 181,801

Ed. Contacts - 95,148 adults , 138,093 youth
 Master Volunteers - 281
 Total of Volunteers - 970
 Volunteer Value - \$1,916,783.40
 Indirect Contacts (mass media) - 71,911
 Social Media Posts - 5,710
 eXtension - Ask the Experts - 847

Contact Information

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Dr. Parr Rosson, Interim Director, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.