



# Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...

4th Quarter Newsletter

October - December 2019

## Special Topics for Fall 2019

- Director's Message
- Master Naturalist's Nature Fest at Seabourne Park
- Congrats Agent Gertson!
- 83rd Annual FBC Fair & AG'tivity Barn Highlights
- Markets Open for Feral Hog Meat
- Welcome 4-H Admin. Asst. Jennifer Evanicky
- Diabetes Conf. at Catholic Charities
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- Fort Bend County Feral Hog Workshop
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## Sept.-Dec. 2019 TOTAL CONTACTS

261 Educational Sessions  
 78,793 Contacts  
 713 Social Media Posts  
 13,194 Soc. Media Followers  
 37 Newsletter Editions  
 45,179 Newsletter Contacts  
 766 Volunteers Assisted  
 2,293 Volunteer Hours  
 1,097 Edu. Resources Used

Clientele Reached:  
 50.3% Youth  
 49.7% Adults

## Telling Our Story—Highlighting Horticulture

Accountability of our Extension programs is a priority for everyone, from the county level to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service headquarters in College Station. It allows us to *tell our story* as well as make corrections in educational programs as we attempt to address the issues we face. Interpreting evaluation results and marketing those results to stakeholders is very important. If the Extension educator does not interpret and market these results, how will the community and stakeholders know the results of our programming efforts? Anytime we conduct an interpretation event we attempt to address the “3 R’s” - Relevance, Response, and Results. Our Oct. 17 **Brunch with Extension** did just that. This fall event highlighted the horticulture program and the work of the Fort Bend Master Gardeners. Our own Co. Ext. Agent for Horticulture, Boone Holladay, hosted the event with the help of the Fort Bend Master Gardener Board members President Mary Parkhouse, and President-Elect Steve Schmerbeck. Together they covered the results of our gardening related programs—large and small. These included one-shot lectures, tours, annual events, program series, master gardener intern courses, test garden results, result demonstration results and much more. Those in attendance included two legislator staffers, one federal staffer, Co. Judge KP George, representatives from NAACP, Farm Bureau and two local foundations. A special “thank you” goes out to Boone and the FBMG team for all their hard work throughout the year.



## Seabourne Park Nature Fest—A success!



Our own Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists (CPMN) and Texas Parks & Wildlife hosted their 8th Annual Seabourne Nature Fest at Rosenberg's Seabourne Park on Nov. 2 with an amazing turnout of 1,200+ participants. This day-long, fun-filled series of educational presentations and quality exhibits kept families entertained and focused on a variety of topic areas. Presentations included “Wild About Raptors,” “How to Attract Bees, Butterflies & Hummingbirds,” “How to Help Wildlife in Need,” “Amazing Birds,” and “Texas Reptiles.” Exhibits included a petting zoo, beekeeping demos, hawks & owls, face

painting, informative hayrides through the prairie, arts & crafts, native plant talks & sale, guided tours, edible plant displays, live alligators & snakes, prairie dogs & ferrets, cowboy roping demos, guns of the old west, beneficial insects, and much more! Fabulous speakers talked on topics ranging from birds to reptiles to gardening for pollinators. Nearly 30 organizations took part with exhibits, and a host of volunteers educated each and every attendee. The nature walk included trails and teaching spots that covered 164 acres. Not to mention food & snack vendors were serving some of Rosenberg's delicious delicacies.

Without a doubt, the CPMN met their goals: 1) To introduce many first time visitors to Rosenberg's beautiful Seabourne Creek Nature Park; 2) To inform the public about the park's history, beauty, importance, and ecological diversity; 3) To talk about the history of the CPMN and their connection to Seabourne Park; 4) To educate the public – especially children – about nature and our role within it; 5) To facilitate partner organizations sharing their mission & knowledge; and 6) To HAVE FUN with the family!



## Congrats to Agent Dianne Gertson, NEAFCS President-Elect!

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) educates and recognizes Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. The Association provide education in: •Food preparation, food safety and nutrition; •Financial Management; •Healthy Lifestyles; •Home & work environment and safety; •Relationship and parenting skills and much more! From the Home Demonstration Agents' National Association (HDANA) of 1933 to National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) of today, you will find a wealth of information in the NEAFCS Historical Archives. Resources include information about NEAFCS' 75th Anniversary, board photos and various histories - affiliate, chronological, and narrative.



The National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) recently held their 2019 Annual Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania, Sept. 30 – Oct. 3, 2019. Over four days, this comprehensive program included keynote speakers, in-depth programming, and networking with other professionals. But perhaps more importantly, NEAFCS holds their election of national officers and our very own Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCH was elected by the voting body as President-Elect for 2020, then will proceed to the President in 2021 followed by Past-President in 2022. Therefore, for the next three years the NEAFCS will be entrusted to our own AgriLife/Fort Bend County educator. Way to go, Dianne!

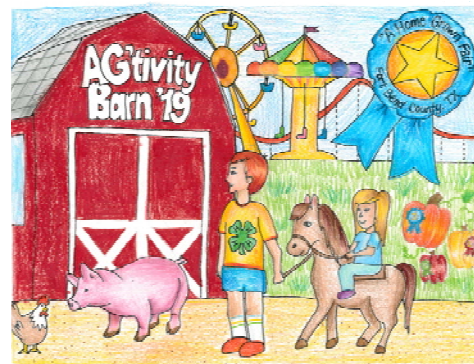
## 83rd Annual Ft. Bend Co. Fair & AG'tivity Barn a Success!



The fair's 10-day run came to an end, but not until over an estimated nearly 87,500 people attended the Fair. This is the 83rd Annual Fort Bend County Fair & Rodeo since the original Fair held in October of 1933. It was quite a celebration in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's AG'tivity Barn. And, it was especially nice since we were housed in the new George Arena. AgriLife Extension collaborated with several local partners to form the Fort Bend Co. Fair AG'tivity Barn Committee. Members consist of Extension staff as well as representatives from Fort Bend Farm Bureau, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and the Southern Cotton Oil Company.



Most impressive was the variety of events going on daily to entertain the crowd. One of which was the AG'tivity Barn in which local youth were exposed to various agriculturally-oriented educational activities during the annual Fort Bend County Fair. Approximately 967 students and 85 teachers and chaperones participated in the hands-on activities during guided school tours such as Crop Production (Corn, Cotton, Soybeans, and Rice), live animal exhibits (Beef Cattle, Chickens, Sheep, Goats, and Swine), Natural Resources (Rainwater Harvesting), Horticultural Production (Earth Kind Gardening), Bees, Fish and much more. Also, during the 10-day event the AG'tivity barn is opened to the general public that comes through the gates. We estimate that 60% of the total people that came to the fair actually visited the tent, and in 2019 that equated to 52,500 visitors who came and learned something in the AG'tivity Barn. To get more youth involved in Agriculture during the county fair we also offered a coloring contest to youth in grades K-5. Each year we design an Agricultural themed coloring sheet (in line with the Fair theme) and distribute them in all FBC libraries as well as all Fort Bend County Tax office locations. We had 274 coloring sheets submitted for judging (179 girls and 95 boys) in the contest. First & Second Place Winners are selected in each grade receiving cash a cash prize and framed poster of their entry.



- 1st Place Coloring Contest Winner -

## Markets Open for Feral Hog Meat!



It is a known fact the war with feral hogs rages on in Texas, and they are winning. Wildlife biologists in Texas and across the nation are searching desperately for any and all tools to control the ever-growing numbers. There is no magic bullet. In Texas and many other states, markets for feral hog meat is growing. Many times hog stations will buy live hogs captured in traps to feed them out before slaughter. The process plants are similar to domestic port plants, but with extra precautions in testing and handling the meat. Processing plants utilize USDA-approved handling methods including testing, sanitation, personal protection clothing & glasses and off-limits/restricted zones. Those animals that are deemed safe from parasites (mainly Brucellosis) are processed fully, meaning every part of the animal is used—meat for

human consumption, by-products for pet food & pet chews, and heart tissue for medical research & human heart valves. As it stands now, the biggest threat today is from Brucellosis-contaminated meat. Those that are tested positive are euthanized. Our own AgriLife Extension Wildlife Specialist Billy Higginbotham said recently, "People shouldn't be afraid to eat wild pigs. They are very lean, and the meat is very good; but, you have to take precautions just to be safe". *Good advice!*

## Welcome Jennifer Evanicky, Adm. Assistant –4H/YD



A big WELCOME to Jennifer Evanicky or “Jen” for short, as our new 4-H & Youth Development Administrative Assistant for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service here in Fort Bend County. Jennifer’s start date was October 28. If she looks familiar that’s because she is. Jennifer served as our part-time receptionist for the past two years, mainly during the Fort Bend County Fair season when things get a little hectic for all of us—agents and staff alike. Jennifer grew up in the Fort Bend area and graduated from B.F. Terry High School in Rosenberg. Growing up she was a member of 4-H where she participated in numerous activities on the county level. As she got older, she transitioned from 4-H to B.F. Terry FFA. Now, she has evolved back to Extension as our Admin. Assistant—4H/YD where she is reminded just what 4-H and FFA are all about. Jennifer says, “I am excited to be in this role and look forward to working with you all going forward.”



## Diabetes Conference Conducted at Mamie George Community Center



Dianne Gertson, County Extension Agent—Family & Community Health coordinated our annual Diabetes Conference with the help of Catholic Charities and UT Physicians on Nov. 5. Over 40 people attended and participated in several activities including free health screenings by UT Physicians Wellness Team; food demonstrations, healthy snacks & refreshments offered by AgriLife Extension; and several lectures including Diabetes 101, Diabetes Medications, and Diagnosing Diabetes. Several guest speakers shared a wealth of information on signs & symptoms of the various types of diabetes, managing diabetes, the differences between early stages and progressive stages, understanding foods (mainly carbohydrates, fats and proteins), portion control, and the benefits of exercise. Guest speakers included Pio Jaun Lansangan, PharmD, APH Clinical Pharmacist Supervisor (Diabetes Medications), Dr. Vijaiganesh Nagarajan (Dr. VJ), MD—Interventional Cardiology & Cardiovascular Disease with UT Physicians (Diabetes & Heart Disease); Ms. Danielle Hammond-Krueger, MPH, RD, LD, Ext. Program Specialist—Nutrition & Food Science with AgriLife Extension at TAMU (Diabetes 101); and our own Dianne Gertson (Cooking Well with Diabetes). Attendees enjoyed the open discussion and asked a variety of questions throughout the 3+ hour event.



## Healthy Eating @ Extension Meetings!....What?



AgriLife Extension is nearly 106 years old, aside from four name changes. One thing we are known for statewide is meetings, meetings & more meetings,—and we eat at mostly all of these meetings we eat. Often times we do not necessarily follow our own teachings with regards to foods and nutrition. We all know that great educational programs geared towards healthy eating include MyPlate, Dinner Tonight, Cooking Well With Diabetes, Better Living for Texans, Plugged-In to Nutrition and many more. Yet when we conduct meetings and educational lectures we often include food such as kolaches, donuts and the like. Perhaps our New Year’s resolution should be “healthy eating” at all Extension events. *What?*

According to USDA recommendations we should do the following:

- **Healthy beverages:** cold water, low-fat or fat-free milk, coffee/tea (with simple cream & sugar) and 100% fruit juices.
- **Healthy snacks:** Trail mix, pretzels, baked chips, veggie platter, fruit (whole or cut), peanut butter, whole grain crackers, popcorn
- **Healthy desserts:** yogurt, granola bars (assorted), protein bars, fruit tray w/yogurt-based dip.
- **Healthy breakfast:** Fruit, whole grain bagels/muffins, granola, oatmeal. For protein: hard boil eggs, yogurt smoothies, protein bars
- **Healthy lunch:** Fruit,/veggie tray, veg. soup, whole-grain breads/crackers. Sandwiches: turkey, chicken, hummus, low-fat cheese; Salads w/ side dressings



**Tips:** 1) Two of five items served should be fresh fruit or veggies; 2) Follow MyPlate recommendations; and 3) Pay attention to allergies.



## Fort Bend County Feral Hog Workshop

Fort Bend Co. feral swine damage is an ongoing and increasing issue among our producers, and land-owners. On average, the Fort Bend Extension Office conducts at least 15 site visits per month in rural development communities to meet with farmers and ranchers about feral swine damage prevention. Often times the hogs are living along the river system in heavily wooded or overgrown areas where they multiply freely through prolific reproduction rates, while causing serious damage to agriculture crops in the area, and causing serious accidents with motor vehicles on the roadway. Feral swine have been seen sharing water sheds with domestic livestock midafternoon, when these animals are typically nocturnal. Among their many superior traits adaptability has proven to be one of their strongest. Fort Bend County has approximately 567,000 acres of land, and of this amount there is a considerable amount of undeveloped acreage which allows feral hogs to reproduce at an uncontrollable rate. On Saturday, Nov. 16 a Controlling Feral Hog Workshop was conducted by Derrick Bank, Extension Agent—ANR with Coop. Ext. Program of PVAMU with 34 in attendance. Topics included Feral Hog Biology, Demonstration of Trapping Systems, Feral Processing & Field Dressing, and New Advancements in Trapping Technology. Evaluations were conducted and results will be announced soon.

## Fort Bend County's List of Accolades

- No 9 in job growth to population growth ratio; 26.8 % population growth 2010-16, (StatsAmerica, 2019)
- Fastest-growing large county in the US 2013-2016, current pop. 787,858 (US Census Bureau, 2019)
- 4 public high schools ranked top in the Houston area, 2 in the top 3, & 5 in the top 25 (Niche, 2016)
- No. 4 In US, No. 2 in Texas for net domestic migration over last five years. (RENTCafe, 2018)
- No. 4 in US, No. 2 in Texas, No. 1 in Greater Houston for incoming investment. (Smart Asset, 2018)
- Major industries include: food manufacturing, energy, engineering, education, health care, & technology
- Most ethnically diverse county in the Houston metro area (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014 -18)
- \$119,536 average household income (American Community Survey, 2016)
- 90.8 % high school graduate or higher, 45 % bachelor's degree or higher (American Community Survey, 2016)
- No. 18 in US, No. 5 in Texas in Business Growth. (Smart Asset, 2018)
- No. 1 in US, richest counties in Texas. (24/7 Wall St., 2018)
- Highest percentage of college graduates in Houston MSA (US Census, 2018)
- No. 23 in "innovation capacity" among 3110 US counties (StatsAmerica, 2019)
- No. 5 in US, No. 2 in Texas for purchasing power. (Smart Asset 2019)
- Home to 5 of the top 10 master planned communities in Houston (Metro Study 2017)
- Home to 6 of the nation's top 30 master planned communities (RCLCO Real Estate, 2014)



For more information, you may visit: [www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/](http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/).

## List of Upcoming Events:

For a list of upcoming programs visit us online at [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org); or call 281-342-3034 or email us at [fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu).

**Vincent J. Mannino, County Extension Director**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Fort Bend County**  
 1402 Band Rd. Suite 100, Rosenberg, TX 77471  
 Phone: (281)342-3034; Fax: (832)471-2400  
<http://fortbend.agrilife.org/>  
[www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension](http://www.facebook.com/FortBendCountyExtension)

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