



Meet our Staff:

Andrea Valdez, B.S., M.P.H : County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences, Hidalgo County Coordinator
 Brad Cowan, B.S., M.A.: County Extension Agent- Agricultural & Natural Resources
 Vidal Saenz, B.S., M.S.: Cooperative Extension Agent- Farm Advisor
 Joanne Ureste, B.S.: County Extension Agent- Family Resources
 Ashley Gregory, M.S : County Extension Agent –Horticulture
 Kimberly Guillen, B.S.: County Extension Agent– 4-H & Youth Development
 Melissa De Leon, B.S: Extension Agent- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program
 Frances Flores: Better Living for Texans Program Assistant
 Yolanda Rios: Better Living for Texans Program Assistant
 Nora Linda Cruz: Administrative Assistant III
 Elena Almendarez: Administrative Assistant II
 Mary Luz C. Patlan: Administrative Assistant II



Maroon Mornings

8 oz nonfat milk/vanilla almond milk
 1/2 cup vanilla greek yogurt
 1/2 cup canned beets, rinsed
 1/2 cup frozen strawberries
 1/4 cup frozen cherries
 Put all ingredients in blender
 Blend & Enjoy!



HealthyTexas.tamu.edu

Contact Us
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service Hidalgo County

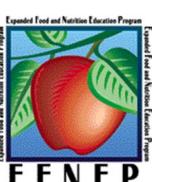
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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION



Andrea's Corner

Howdy! While we were winding down the Summer, the Fall season brought many changes and new and exciting opportunities to the Hidalgo County Extension Office! We welcomed Kimberly Guillen as our new 4-H & Youth Development agent. Our 4-H program is strong with over 500 members from all over the county! September kicked off with a visit from the Centers for Disease Control to Hidalgo County to assess our work on the Working on Wellness (WOW) grant. I had the opportunity to give the CDC program staff a tour of our county and the communities that are included in the grant (Weslaco, South McAllen, San Carlos and Penitas). I would like to thank all the volunteers that donated their time to provide feedback to the CDC about that states of physical activity and access to healthy food in their areas.

It is a great time to be an Aggie these days, with news of a new Texas A&M campus being built in McAllen and the launch of Healthy South Texas! Healthy South Texas is a regional effort to transform health education and outcomes in a 27 county area in South Texas including Hidalgo County. Chancellor John Sharp, Senator Chuy Hinojosa and Senator Eddie Lucio made a splash at the Healthy South Texas launch making a tasty Maroon Smoothie. Please see the back page for the recipe. Our Hidalgo County Extension Agents will be working to form a Healthy South Texas Coalition that will influence and promote educational health programming throughout the county. We will be kicking this off with a Walk Across Texas kickoff in February 2016 so stay tuned!



Thank you to everyone for supporting Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Hidalgo County and our programs! We hope you enjoy reading about what we do in Hidalgo County and please call if we can be of service to you or just stop by to say "Howdy!" and see what Extension is all about!

Sincerely,

Andrea Valdez

Andrea Valdez
 Family & Consumer Sciences
 County Extension Educator
 Hidalgo County Coordinator

Quarter 3 2015
 July-September 2015

Hidalgo County Extension Agents



Andrea Valdez
 Family & Consumer Sciences/County Coordinator



Brad Cowan
 Agriculture & Natural Resources



Vidal Saenz
 Small Farms (CEP)



Joanne Ureste
 Family Resources



Ashley Gregory
 Horticulture



Kimberly Guillen
 4-H & Youth Development



Melissa De Leon
 Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Visit us on the Web:
hidalgo.agrilife.org

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Agriculture & Natural Resources

-Brad Cowan

AgriLife Extension cooperates with local ag producers to conduct research on the performance of varieties of cotton, grain sorghum and sunflowers grown under commercial agricultural production conditions in Hidalgo County. The summer and fall of 2015 has been busy as this is the harvest season and time to collect yield and quality data from these research test fields. No single variety is ideal for all producers. This is due to many variables such as soil types, rainfall patterns, insect pressure, irrigation availability, farmer management, risk management strategies, etc. Private industry and publically supported breeding programs are constantly introducing new varieties into the marketplace. There is a critical need to continue to evaluate varieties in order to insure that local producers are using the top performers available in terms of yield and quality. Use of the most profitable varieties means more profit for the producer and more dollars coming into our local economy. Many thanks to the participating seed companies for providing the seed.

Locally produced crop performance data is posted on the Hidalgo County Extension Office website at <http://hidalgo.agrilife.org/home/agriculture/>

Yield Contests are a way for farmers to claim bragging rights to top yields. They are also an important tool in learning how to maximize crop yields, understand the necessary inputs required to produce excellent yields and bring additional revenue into the farm operation and thus the local economy. The National Grain Sorghum Association sponsors a yield contest that a number of local farmers participated in during this year's harvest. AgriLife Extension assisted by assisting and facilitating entries into the contest. We also investigated the possible yield validation process of locally grown soybeans. This resulted in the independent confirmation of a local producer growing 66 bushel soybeans, an excellent yield!



Richard Drawe (left), farmer from the Progreso area and Brad Cowan, County Extension Agent, look over an excellent looking cotton field at harvest time. This was the site for the 2015 applied research trial.

Hidalgo County 4-H & Youth Development

-Kimberly Guillen



Hidalgo County 4-H Ambassadors presented at Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court



@Hidalgo County 4-H

The Small Farm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program

This program is provided by the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University. The purpose of this program is to enhance the business management and marketing skills of agricultural producers. Targeted cli-

ente learn how to keep and improve production and financial records and generate personal and farm financial statements for use in financial resource acquisition. The objective of the program is to remove all of the obstacles that impede the farmer's full participation in USDA-Farm Service Agency's loan programs. Our program provides services for the ag producers of Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy and Starr counties. During the third quarter of 2015, the program hosted an **Agricultural Opportunities for Veterans and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers** workshop at the Echo hotel in Edinburg, Texas on August 13, 2015. Participants learned about how they could utilize USDA programs, Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. We have also provided outreach at several producer meetings throughout the Valley to promote USDA-Farm Service Agency loan programs. Our program provided technical assistance to twenty-six farm families throughout the Rio Grande Valley during the third quarter of 2015. The total of their loan requests during this time has amounted to \$3,033,980. Their total savings multiplied by 2% amounts to \$60,680, which is an average of \$2,333.83 saved per family by utilizing our services. A 2% fee is the amount that an independent loan consultant would charge for his services, regardless if the family obtains the loan.



-Vidal Saenz



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Family Resources

-Joanne Ureste

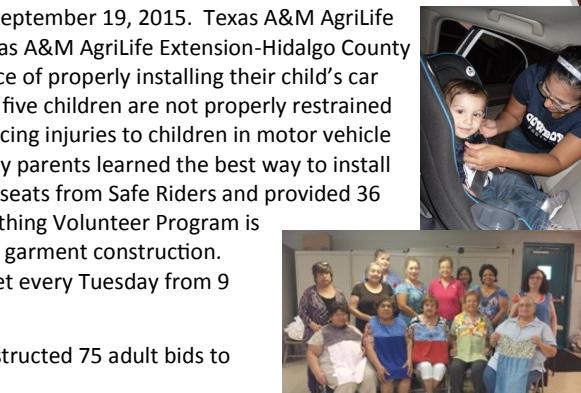
Child Passenger Safety Week was held from September 13, 2015 to September 19, 2015. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Hidalgo County organized two events at the following locations: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Hidalgo County and the Alamo Community Center to educate the community on the importance of properly installing their child's car seats. Child passenger safety seat checkups routinely discover that four out of five children are not properly restrained in an appropriate child safety seat or safety belt system. Saving lives and reducing injuries to children in motor vehicle crashes is the primary goal of child passenger safety technician. Hidalgo County parents learned the best way to install their child car seat in their vehicle. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension received car seats from Safe Riders and provided 36 car seats to participants who did not meet proper inspections. The Master Clothing Volunteer Program is designed to develop leadership and teaching skills using textile techniques and garment construction. These volunteers teach community members how to sew at no cost. They meet every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Hidalgo County Office.

During the month of September, the Master Clothing Volunteers or MCVs constructed 75 adult bids to donate to nursing homes.

-Ashley Gregory

During the months of July through September the Master Gardeners hosted 4 workshops that educated over 130 people. In July they hosted a rain barrel workshop at the Educational Garden at N. San Juan park where participants learned about capturing rain water and had a hands on activity where they constructed their own rain barrel to take home. In August and September they held 3 vegetable gardening workshops, one of which was in Spanish. At these workshops participants learned how to plant and grow fall vegetables, as well as how to set up drip irrigation in their gardens. During this quarter we were also able to develop a new community garden in La Villa through funding from the Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities Grant.

Pictured: (Left) La Villa community residents building their raised garden beds and (right) the start of their new harvest!



Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

-Melissa De Leon

The Expanded Food & 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. Our total EFNEP-Adult enrollment numbers for Hidalgo County is **2300**. From July 1st - September 30th, 2015, we had enrolled **240** and graduated **498**. Currently our total of EFNEP-Youth participation in Hidalgo Co. is **19,481**. From July 1st - September 30th, 2015, we had reached a total of **1475**.

From June 8th - July 17th, 2015, Hidalgo County - EFNEP, Texas Hunger Initiative & Catholic Charities altogether collaborated on efforts to support the nutritional health of surrounding low-income populations in Edinburg, TX. A total of **587** meals were served during the 6 weeks to aid in the decrease of food insecurity and hunger for neighboring community children & families. Aside from our Summer Meals and Class Sessions offered for both Adult/Youth, we have also included other outside presenters that also offered their time, collaboration & organization of this Summer event which were, Superior Health Plan, Southland Dairy Farmers, Palm Valley Animal Centers, HEB & HEB Buddy- Edinburg, RGV Vipers Basketball NBA D-League, Lowe's-Edinburg, TX., The City of Edinburg Fire & Police Departments, Agua Dental and Valley Emergency Medical Ambulatory Services . These educational activities and presenters educated on the importance of maintain good hygiene, eating behaviors of nutrition, safety, and the importance of increase physical education class sessions to both adults & children.



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