

# Making a Difference

## 2016 Jim Wells County – Ag Literacy In-Depth Plan Summary Barbie Wymore, County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development

### Relevance:

Today's youth are further removed from farming and ranching, and rural life as a whole. Consequently, their knowledge of food and fiber production, wildlife management, and environmental stewardship is minimal. Their perception and knowledge is that the grocery store, like HEB, is their food source and chocolate milk comes from chocolate cows. They believe that zoos are a wildlife habitat and their backyard as a natural environment. This is how many young people relate to the world around them.

It is important to educate young people about food and fiber production, wildlife management, and environmental stewardship to ensure a better understanding of these industries and how they impact their everyday lives. These young people need to be exposed to these industries in order to develop interest in careers and help them make informed decisions that may impact each area in the future.

### Response:

Jim Wells County Extension faculty formed an Ag Literacy Task Force with Jim Wells County Farm Bureau Directors and staff from Natural Resource Conservation Service to host an agriculture awareness field day for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and their teachers, Jim Wells County "Ag Fair." This was the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual and was the most attended "Ag Fair" to date.

981 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Premont, Ben Bolt, Alice, Orange Grove, San Diego, Falfurrias, Freer, La Gloria, St. Elizabeth, and St. Joseph, all participated. 200-275 students attended either a morning or afternoon session on Wednesday or Thursday, May 16-17, 2016. The 30 minute general session covered Texas Agriculture commodities. The students then attended 5 breakout sessions for approximately 25 minutes each. The sessions included: small animal production, large animal production, environment and natural resources, wildlife, and cotton and feed grains. Teachers also received the curriculum "Food and Fiber for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" before "Ag Fair."

15 Jim Wells County 4-H members were recruited and trained to serve as group leaders. As group leaders, 4-H'ers met their classes as they got to the fairgrounds, directed the classes to their sessions, gave them a brief explanation of the 4-H program, and answered any questions the classes had about "Ag Fair" and presented teachers with follow up goodies and packets

### Results:

In 2016, the standard Science of Agriculture pre and post test plus additional multiple choice questions customized to the Jim Wells County Ag Fair sessions was used. Customer satisfaction surveys were used with the teachers. 52 teachers were surveyed with 27 teachers returning the surveys. 250 students were targeted with completing pre and post test evaluations with 198 returning the pre-tests and 142 returning the post tests. 5 random students from each classroom were selected by the teacher to take the pre and post tests.

Knowledge Change Question	Pre-Test% Correct	Post-Test% Correct	Percent Increase
Agriculture changes my life every day.	52.0%	83.1%	59.81%
Agriculture is more than food.	53.5%	74.6%	39.44%
Many of our clothes like blue jeans are made of cotton	81.8%	96.5%	17.97%
Male white tailed deer grown new antlers every year.	89.9%	95.8%	6.57%
An animal that gets food from killing and eating other animals is a carnivore.	75.3%	81.7%	8.5%
Grains (like wheat, corn, and rice) provide my body with carbohydrates which gives me energy.	72.7%	89.4%	22.98%
I am going home to tell my parents about the importance of agriculture.	64.6%	78.2%	21.06%

**Teacher Comments about the Event revealed:**

“This year, the CD with power points and lessons was a big plus! My students really loved it!”

“Animal Stations were among the favorites for our students.”

“Great information on predator facts and how to spot venomous snakes. Students loved the animal show.”

“The students loved discussing where hamburgers came from.”

“Students really enjoyed the mini cotton gin and the hand-on approach of touching the cotton.”

“Learned about cotton and facts I never knew.”

“Great information covered. Made my students aware of water needs and what they could do to help.”

“Students really enjoyed seeing the sheep get sheared.”

“The majority liked small animals production the best, they were really excited about the sheep being sheared.”

“I really enjoyed this year’s stations. The kids really had a good time.”

**Acknowledgements:**

15 community volunteers assisted in teaching the learning sessions, as well as assisted with set-up, lunch, and marketing. Sponsors thru donations of monetary amount, equipment, animals, and time included:

- Jim Wells County Farm Bureau
- NRCS
- Nueces River Authority
- Tomas Ranch, Freer
- Boggan Family, Alice
- Edelen Family, Alice
- Nesloney Farms, Orange Grove
- Tymrak Farms, Alice
- Cadena Farms, Alice
- WB Cattle Company, Alice
- Texas Department of Agriculture

