

Making a Difference

2019-2020 Healthy Kleberg-Kenedy County Youth Nutrition Education In-Depth Plan Summary

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RELEVANCE

Excessive weight and inactivity are consistently linked with increased incidence of chronic diseases. With 17.3% of Texas children ages 10 – 17 being obese and Texas ranks 12th as the state with the highest obesity rate in the same age category. Additionally, 16.9% of Texas high school students are obese, resulting in Texas ranking 11th as the state with the highest high school student obesity rates.¹

| Health Factors & Outcomes ² | Kleberg County | Kenedy County | Texas | U.S. |
|--|----------------|---------------|-------|------|
| Children in poverty: percent of children under 18 in poverty | 33% | 20% | 22% | 14% |
| Children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | 68% | 77% | 59% | - |
| Food Environment Index: A scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best), based on the % of the population that is low income and does not live close to a grocery store and the % of the population that did not have access to a reliable source of food in the past year. | 6.8 | 3.5 | 6.0 | - |

RESPONSE

As a response, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has developed educational programs that can address these issues using a science based, evidence-based approach. The ANR Coalition, Healthy South Texas Coalition, program specific Task Force groups, and community adult and youth volunteers, have identified, implemented, and evaluated the following youth program in Kleberg-Kenedy Counties.

| Youth Program | Program participants | # of Participants |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Path to the Plate Youth Expo: Path to the Plate is a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service initiative that seeks to correct misinformation about the production of our food supply and its effect on human health and are specific to the connection between agriculture and health. Youth expos focus on students in a day-long educational event in which agriculture and health experts teach 15- to 20-minute rotating sessions. These sessions and talking points to highlight commodities. | Ricardo Elementary - K-4 th grades + teachers | 382 |
| | Harrel Elementary – 4 th grade + teachers | 66 |
| | Kleberg Elementary – 4 th grade + teachers | 52 |
| Total educated with Path to the Plate Curriculum in 2019 | | 500 |



Collaboration: This event was made possible through a partnership between Kleberg County Farm Bureau and Ricardo ISD. Collaborating organizations who also presented during the event include Natural Resources Conservation Service-USDA, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Coastal Bend Beekeepers Association, Prosperity Bank, Valley Citrus, South Texas Master Naturalists, Celanese, Angela Bull and Ricardo ISD.

Acknowledgements: This event would not be possible without the ongoing support of Ricardo ISD who generously provided a safe and spacious location where we were able to bring in outside educators, animals, learning trailers, and more.

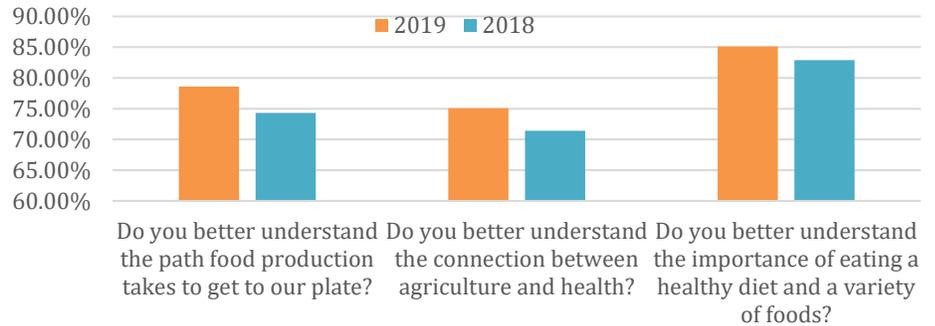
The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

RESULTS

Path to the Plate Youth Expo: An evaluation instrument (post approach) was used to measure learning and overall impact.

- 470 students and 30 teachers attended the event (**Increase of +436 from 2018**).
- 79.4% indicated a better understanding of the importance and nutritional value of various foods.
- 78.6% indicated a better understanding of the way farmers and ranchers produce the foods we eat.
- 76.0% indicated a better understanding of the value of agriculture and how it is important in daily life.

Path to the Plate Youth Expo Results Comparison between 2019 and 2018.



Future plans: The 2020-2021 Healthy Kleberg-Kenedy Youth Nutrition plan includes Learn, Grow, Eat and GO! Garden program to educate and youth on gardening, nutrient-dense foods, physical activity, and school & family engagement. Within the LGEG program, students will receive supplemental Path to the Plate education. COVID-19 has caused program delivery to change, especially face to face delivery methods which add value to the experience.



During this time, we will continue to adapt delivery methods to include virtual and hybrid models to reach youth who are learning both face-to-face and remotely.

¹Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2020). *The State of Childhood Obesity: Helping All Children Grow Up Healthy*. <https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org> (accessed November 2020).

²Source: <https://nccd.cdc.gov/DHDSAtlas/Reports.aspx> and countyhealthrankings.org

VALUE

Science of Agriculture



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension "Science of Agriculture" programs teach youth about the role agriculture plays in the world and in their lives. Through their participation in these programs, youth become better educated voters and consumers.