

Reflections of 2012

It seems only like the blink of an eye since we were ringing in the new year of 2012 at the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service office. I began the year with big goals and detailed lists of how to accomplish what I had planned. Diligently each month I crossed off each program, meeting, activity, and event. Now through the blur of 4-H events and Family & Consumer Sciences Programs, it is time to pause and reflect on the past year.

Some very exciting programs were started here this year in Rains County, one being the Fuel up to Play 60 Program on all four of the Rains I.S.D. campuses. This collaboration between the National Football League, Dairy MAX, and our agency has brought some life-changing nutrition and physical education lessons to our students. We will continue with this program into 2013 and I can't wait to see the creative and innovative ways our teachers bring this into their classrooms. As an Extension Agent, I am very fortunate to have such a cooperative and supportive administration staff that welcome me into the school to bring curriculum enrichment programs.

The Rains County Texas Extension Educators Association in Rains County, which started the year with the Crafty Ladies and Piecemakers Clubs, welcomed the Rains Garden Club into our group. Now our county has over 50 women working with me to bring Extension Education to our citizens, as well as, working with the Rains 4-H Club through sewing, food & nutrition, and community service activities. All of these women are an inspiration to me!

Now let me take a moment to brag on our Rains 4-H Club members. This year they competed at the County and District levels in the Food Show, Fashion Show, Educational Presentations, and Photography contests. We even had 3 members advance on to the State 4-H Roundup in Lubbock to compete in their respective contests. If you attended the Rains County Fair you hopefully saw their livestock projects and Creative Arts contest entries. We have approximately 95 youth in our program and they continually amaze me at their willingness to serve our county through their community service projects. I am extremely proud to have the honor of helping lead them in our program, along with the other 4-H Agent, Stephen Gowin.

The leadership of our 4-H parents and community supporters have made this year a huge success in Rains County. Whether it was through project leadership, monetary donations, or simply a word of encouragement, they are the backbone of the Rains 4-H Club. It is with great anticipation that I look forward to the accomplishments they will help us achieve this upcoming year.

The Rains County Fair is one of the most anticipated events of the year. We just celebrated our 82nd one! Most people don't realize that the Extension Office literally works on this event 12

months out of the year, but it is well worth all the effort. It is a huge job that can only be accomplished by the hard work of our Rains County Fair Officers, Contest Chairmen, countless volunteers, and our Administrative Assistant Sue Caruana. Each year it gets bigger and better!

My Extension Programming this year covered areas of diabetes education, Dinner Tonight Cooking Schools, holiday programs, sports nutrition, Better Living for Texans, healthy lifestyles, food safety and etiquette classes, just to name a few, in the community and our schools. These programs have given me the opportunity to meet and serve the great citizens of our county and I look forward to even more great programs in 2013. Visit our website at rains.agrilife.org, call our office to be put on our mailing list, or watch the *Rains County Leader* for our program announcements.

So as I get ready to open that new calendar and start off the year with the same eagerness and optimism as I do each January, I invite you to join me on my journey through the new year. You can do that by joining one of our TEEA Clubs, enrolling your child in the Rains 4-H Club, becoming an Extension or 4-H volunteer or attending one of my programs. Texas A & M Extension is only as strong as its supporters and volunteers in the community and I look forward to partnering with you in 2013!

For more information contact the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension office at 903-473-4580 or visit our website at rains.agrilife.org.