



Extension Education in Wharton County

Making a Difference

2017

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

Among those served are hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension education for solutions. Extension agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on the public's investment. Extension programs are custom-designed for each region of the state, with residents providing input and help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension impacts on this county and its people.

Wharton County – Summary of 2017 Educational Contacts

4-H Members	355
4-H Volunteers	165
4-H Clubs	18
Curriculum Enrichment Participants	1125

Contacts at Educational Events

Total Contacts 39,738

Educational Events 11,799

Other Contacts 27,939

Other Contacts

All Contacts 27,939

Individual Contacts – Direct 1,718

Individual Contacts – Indirect 9,692

Newsletters 13,444

Editions 724

Educational Resources 1,419

Individual Contacts – Volunteer 942

44 news releases with a distribution reaching 88,000 contacts

Social Media Posts: 192 with Followers: 8,969

Volunteer Involvement

Total Involved: 480

Hours Contributed: 612

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Making a Difference

2017 Commodity Marketing and Precision Agriculture Education

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR
Wharton County

Relevance

Cotton, grain Sorghum, soybean, corn, and rice production continue to be a major economic force in Wharton County. USDA reports **232,913** acres planted in 2017 in these five major crops for Wharton County. The 2015 Texas Community Futures Forum identified that crop producers will need to keep abreast of marketing opportunities, precision agriculture practices, and variety/seed technology developments to remain competitive in the industry. The use of commodity pricing strategies and precision agriculture technology will be important to maintain a crop producers' economic sustainability in the years to come.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee was instrumental in developing, delivering, and evaluating educational programs in 2017 that addressed commodity marketing and use of precision agriculture technology. The following educational conferences and seminars were conducted in 2017:

- Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference – January 26, 2017. Mr. Mac Young, Extension Program Specialist-Risk Management gave a grain market outlook, and discussed marketing plans and opportunities for 2017. A speaker panel composed of Wharton County crop producers, Michael Popp and Keith Bram, and Dr. Ron Schnell discussed current application of precision ag on their farms, and real life application of precision ag in Texas row crops.
- Grain Marketing Meeting in cooperation with United Ag Coop – May 10, 2017. Dr. Mark Welch, Extension Economist and Grain Marketing Specialist presented data on current grain markets and marketing opportunities for the 2017 grain crops. Dr. Tom Isakeit presented on disease management in grain crops and brought awareness to the grain industry of a few new, and emerging fungal diseases.
- Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop – October 19, 2017. This workshop addressed several current topics in the grain markets: Budgeting Decision Tools: Determining Break-Even and Costs of Production, Mr. Mac Young; US Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency Update, Francie Tolle, Regional Office Director, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; 2018 Crop Insurance Choices, Tom Kelly, Wiese Crop Insurance; Crop Insurance Decision Tool, Dr. Steven Klose, AgriLife Extension Economist; Developing a Management Plan - Incorporating Insurance into Production and Farm Plan, Dr. Mark Welch; Cotton Outlook, Dr. John Robinson, AgriLife Extension Cotton Marketing Economist; Grain Outlook, Marketing Tools and Strategies, Dr. Mark Welch.

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Results

Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of Feed Grain and Cotton Conference a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 64 of 114 (56.1%) completed evaluations. 64.1% of participants plan to adopt at least one best management practice presented. Participants report a total anticipated economic benefit of \$736,889, or \$17,544.96 per farm.

% at Good/Excellent, Pct Who Increased Understanding: Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

TOPICS	Pct. at Good or Excellent Before the Program	Pct. at Good or Excellent After the Program	Pct. Point Difference (After vs. Before)	Pct. With Any Increase in Understanding
Application of precision ag techniques under upper gulf coast cropping conditions	20.6%	81%	60.4	76.2%

Grain Marketing Meeting in Cooperation with United Ag Coop

To determine the programmatic results of the Grain Marketing Meeting a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 14 of 20 (70%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 6,086 acres of corn and 5,236 acres of grain sorghum managed. Participants reported a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$45,748, or \$7.52 per acre. 75% of participants intend to adopt the utilization of price risk management tools, such as options, futures, and crop insurance. Participants increased their knowledge of current grain market fundamentals to consider in writing their grain marketing plan by 36%.

Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop

A retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the workshop. 9 of 17 (52.9%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 7,712 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$96,400, or \$12,050 average per farm. 88.8% of the participants were Mostly or Completely Satisfied with the program.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Understanding how to develop a working crop budget How to use risk management tools and confidence in using them	1.89	3	58.73%
How crop insurance choices and marketing strategies work together	2.11	3.22	52.61%

Making a Difference

2017 Wharton County Hurricane Harvey Response by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County
Lori Schindler, County Extension Agent – Family Community Health, Wharton County
Kashara Bell, County Extension Agent - Family Community Health, Wharton County
Kate Harrell, County Extension Agent – Integrated Pest Management, Wharton/Matagorda County

Relevance

On the evening of August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas Coastline at Rockport, Texas. Wharton County was among 39 counties expected to receive an unprecedented amount of rainfall over a course of several days. For the next seven days the Colorado and San Bernard River levels would meet or exceed forecasted levels. The San Bernard River at East Bernard crested at a new record of 31.96' on August 29th. The Colorado River at Wharton crested at 50.51' on August 30th, just shy of the record crest of 51.9'. The San Bernard River at Boling crested at a new record of 43.66' on September 1st.

Floodwater threatened homes, human lives, companion animals, livestock, crops, and water quality. Owners of companion animals and livestock found themselves in urgent need of emergency shelter and pet and livestock feed. Drinking water from private water wells can be contaminated by substances from upstream, such as manure, sewage from flooded septic systems or wastewater treatment plants. A septic system near a well also can cause contamination when the soil is flooded. To ensure that well water is safe after a flood, homeowners are advised to disinfect wells that were submerged during recent floods, and then have the water tested to make sure that the pathogens (disease-causing organisms) have been eliminated.

Response

Under action of the Wharton County Animal Issues Committee a combined: 58 dogs, 85 horses, 1 cat, 3 goats, 5 donkeys, and 367 head of beef cattle were sheltered at the Wharton County Fairgrounds in Crescent from August 25 through September 11th. Wharton Livestock Auction provided evacuation shelter to 31 horses and 250 head of cattle from August 24th to August 28th after having to evacuate all sheltered livestock after the Auction Barn began to flood from overflow waters from the Colorado River.

Wharton county residents found themselves isolated from the east and west sides of the county due to river flooding. The Wharton County Animal Issues Committee and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension established two Animal Supply Points (ASPs) at the Wharton County Fairgrounds, and at B&S Services in cooperation with Kevin and Kelly Bannert of B&S Services.

Wharton County Extension staff coordinated and facilitated well water testing for Total Coliform and E. Coli in cooperation with The City of Houston Water and Dairy Lab, the Brazoria County Health Department Water Lab, and the the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Texas Well Owner Network.

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Results

At the conclusion of the 15 day ASP operation, 607 animal owners were assisted with donated feed and/or hay. Total hay and feed distributed for the Wharton Fairgrounds and the B&S Services ASP totaled:

Wharton County Animal Supply Point Feed Distribution Totals

1,050 Round Bales of Hay
10 Large Square Bales of Hay
1,638 Small Square Bales of Hay
116.77 Tons of Cattle Feed
28.795 Tons of Horse Feed
13.70 Tons of All-Stock Type Feed
7.06 Tons of Pet Food

Other supplies included:
0.175 Tons of Sheep/Goat Feed
0.5 Tons Molasses Tubs
0.4 Tons of Poultry Feed

The B&S Services ASP scaled down on Sunday, September 10th after operating 12 hours a day. Wharton County Commissioners Court and the Office of Emergency Management informed Texas A&M AgriLife Extension that approximately 500 private water wells could have been inundated by flood waters. While working to scale down the Wharton Fairgrounds ASP on September 15th, Wharton County Extension Staff began their efforts to educate well owners on testing and decontaminating flooded water wells, a daily task that would continue until December 12, 2017!

Over a course of 15 consecutive weeks, the Wharton County Extension staff provided water testing bottles and education on shock chlorination for owners of 616 water wells. Extension staff directed 150 well owners to the Houston Dairy and Water Lab for water testing prior to actually providing free water testing beginning on September 18th for what assisted 466 well owners. Well water testing provided by the Wharton County Extension Office resulted in decreasing a 20% presence of E. Coli in private water wells on September 18th down to 0% on November 14th and November 28th! We also realized a significant drop in the presence of Total Coliform, down from 40% on September 18th to 15% on November 28th.

Well Water Testing Results listed by date of Testing and % Positive Test Results

Lab Name	Date of Testing	# of Samples	% pos. Total Coliform	% pos. E. Coli
Virginia Tech	Sept. 18th	112	40%	20%
TAMU-TWON	Oct. 9th	87	40%	15%
Brazoria Health	Oct. 17th	39	41%	10%
Brazoria Health	Oct. 24th	32	40%	3%
Brazoria Health	Oct. 31st	41	21%	4%
Brazoria Health	Nov. 7	39	30%	7%
Brazoria Health	Nov. 14	39	15%	0%
TAMU-TWON	Nov. 28	59	15%	0%
Brazoria Health	Dec. 5	8	25%	12.5%
Brazoria Health	Dec. 12	10	10%	0%

- **607 Livestock Owners Assisted with Emergency Feed Supplies**
- **606 Well Owners Assisted with Well Water Tests and Consultation**
- **167.4 tons of Livestock Feed and 2,698 Bales of Hay Distributed**

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions

Making a Difference

2017 Pesticide Applicator Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:
Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR
Wharton County

Relevance

For year 2017 Wharton County, Texas has 605 pesticide applicators licensed with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Private Pesticide Applicators are required to obtain fifteen (15) CEUs (continued education credits) every five years in order to renew their license. Commercial and Non-Commercial Applicators are required to obtain 5 CEUs every year in order to renew their license. There is a substantial audience and a need for Extension to provide the educational opportunities for these applicators to obtain their CEU credits. In addition, new applicators seek opportunities throughout the year to take the certification course at the Wharton County Extension Office to obtain their license.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee provided for one (1) individual course in 2016 that offered five (5) CEUs. The committee planned and conducted this event based on client need and evaluation results from the 2016 Conference. This 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference is scheduled each year at the Wharton County Youth Fairgrounds in Crescent. CEUs were also awarded at the following seminars and workshops scheduled throughout the year: January 18, 2017 Western Rice Belt Conference; January 19, 2017 Grain Handlers Conference; January 26, 2017 Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference February 2, 2017 5-CEU Conference; April 18, 2017 Ag Symposium; May 10, 2017 Ag Marketing Meeting; and at seed meetings and/or field days for Matagorda County SWCD, AgriSolutions, Bayer Crop Science®, Monsanto®, DowAgroSciences®, Pioneer Seed®/Kresta Farms, and Krenek Seed Company. CEU credits are also made available to pesticide applicators by viewing a series of Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

The mandatory Certification Training for potential pesticide applicators to obtain their pesticide applicator license was provided by the Wharton County Extension Office throughout the year on an as-needed basis or when requested.

Ag Science Teachers located throughout Texas is another audience of Pesticide License holders that County Extension Agent, Corrie Bowen assists during the year at the annual Vocational Ag Teachers Association of Texas (VATAT) Annual Conference. Since 2005 Agent Bowen has facilitated a Pesticide Applicator Certification Workshop and a Pesticide Applicator Recertification Workshop at the VATAT annual conference. Ag Science teachers must also acquire their required recertification credits, but they often have difficulty attending the recertification course while they are teaching in the classroom. Offering CEUs at

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their annual conference helps teachers acquire their needed recertification credits. 2017 marked Agent Bowen's 13th consecutive year cooperating with the VATAT, providing and facilitating their annual pesticide workshops.

Results

February 2, 2017 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

Twenty (20) new applicators attended the Private Pesticide Applicator training and testing sessions offered at the Wharton County Extension Office in the year 2017.

For year 2017 Wharton County awarded a total of **35.0 CEUs** at group meetings to a total of **963** individuals. In addition to CEUs obtained at group meetings, a total of thirty (**30**) licensed Pesticide Applicators obtained a total of **30** hours of CEU credits by viewing our Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was conducted on the day of the 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference. **67 of 127 (52.8%)** completed the evaluation instrument. Participants reported 99,503 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$578,107, or \$5.81 per acre.

Client Change Level of Understanding: February 2, 2017 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Recent changes by the EPA to pesticide certification and training regulations	1.86	3.44	52.7%
Soil temperature requirements for effective control of macartney rose	1.95	3.25	43.3%

July 24, 2017 VATAT Pesticide Workshops at Arlington, Texas

Thirty-four (34) Ag Science Teachers attended the TDA Pesticide Applicator Certification Workshop in Arlington, Texas. These 34 Ag Teachers left the workshop prepared to take their Private Pesticide Applicator Exam. Another Forty-two (42) Ag Science Teachers attended the TDA Pesticide Recertification Workshop in Arlington, Texas. **38 of 42 (90.5%)** completed evaluations for the Pesticide Recertification Workshop. Participants reported 1,315 acres, or 315 head of cattle managed. Participants report a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$11.64 per head of cattle.

Client Change Level of Understanding: July 24, 2017 VATAT Pesticide Workshops

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Recent changes to texas pesticide laws and regulations and EPA worker protection standards (WPS)	1.94	3.14	40%
Recent research from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension regarding the control of invasive weed and brush.	2.11	3.25	38%
The school IPM program in Texas	2.31	3.33	34%

Making a Difference

2017 Wharton County Youth Market Broiler and Roaster Workshop

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County

Relevance

In the year 2000 there were over 75,000 county livestock show entries for cattle, swine, meat goats and sheep (Coufal, 2006) One half of those entries were 4-H youth. There have been six major benefits identified as a result of exhibiting livestock: 1. social relations; 2) character; 3) family; 4) competition; 5) learning new cultures and environments; and 6) helping finance the youth's higher education. Parents of youth suggest that life skills are enhanced by raising a 4-H livestock project. The longer youth are engaged in the project they are more likely to develop life skills (Boleman, 2003).

Response

The Wharton County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Wharton County 4-H provided an opportunity for youth to be involved in 4-H Market Broiler Project. Exploring a new project allows youth to exhibit personal character attributes and acceptable livestock management practice. On January 14, 2017 County Extension Agent Corrie Bowen cooperated with the Wharton County Youth Fair Poultry Committee to provide a Market Broiler Workshop. Guest speaker, Mr, Curtis Vader, Poultry Judge presented on raising and showing Jr. Market Broilers and Roasters.

Results

A total of 27 adults and 15 youth (42 total participants) attended the January 14, 2017 Broiler and Roaster Workshop. 14 of 27 adults (52%) completed evaluations. 13 of 14 indicated that the information presented will help them to make better decisions raising market poultry.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Broiler and Roaster Workshop

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Understanding that we begin broilers on day #1 of the feeding program with 2 square feet per bird. We increase the square footage per bird at week 4 by culling undesirable birds.	1.85	3.64	96.7%
Add electrolytes to the water the first five days; Each time birds are handled use electrolytes for 12 hours; add electrolytes two days before selecting show birds	1.57	3.78	140.7%
Dump the old feed each evening and start fresh. Save the old feed for the culls. Keep the water clean enough that you would drink from it yourself. That means change it twice daily	2.14	3.85	79.9%
Understanding of ideal housing temps are: Week 1, 92-95 degrees; week 2, 85 degrees; week 3, 80 degrees; week 4, 75 degrees; week 5, 70 degrees; week 6, 65 degrees.	2.14	3.64	70.0%
Drinking water temperature should be 85° F for the first 7 days.	1.64	3.64	121.9%

When asked, “What is the most significant thing you learned from the poultry workshop?”, respondents commented:

- Lighting and rest for 2 hours per day.
- The 2 hours of darkness per day.
- A clean pen. Stirring birds, stirring feed, and stirring shavings.
- Feeding programs. Timing is very important.
- Water and food are the most important things when raising chickens.
- The daily feeding schedule that you provided is most helpful to us.
- Essential ventilation. Importance of fresh water/fresh feed.
- Fresh water.
- How to properly hold show birds, and when to feed electrolytes.
- Air and water temperature.
- Placing wood between the water and concrete used to place the waterers and keep them level.

Making a Difference

2017 Western Rice Belt Conference

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County
Stephen Janak, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Colorado County

Relevance

Rice has been a mainstay of the Colorado, Matagorda, Jackson, and Wharton County's economies since the early 1900's. Rice income accounts for \$135 million in the tri-county area. However, lack of profitability is placing financial stress on both the infrastructure and the farming community. Acreage has declined approximately in recent years creating negative impacts on the local economy in general. In response to challenging economic conditions, changes in land ownership patterns, and changes in water availability, Rice farmers are diversifying their operations through entrepreneurial pursuits - new enterprises, value added, niche marketing, seeking new water sources, etc. To achieve and maintain the economic viability of rice producers, we must provide business profitability and risk management-based programs in response to the educational needs of those in the county/region. The county program area committees in Matagorda, Wharton, and Colorado Counties reflect this educational need.

Response

County Extension Agents with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Wharton, Matagorda, Jackson, and Colorado come together each year to provide the Western Rice Belt Conference. This has been an ongoing multiyear, multi-county educational effort since 2005, at which time the combined rice production acres for the Texas Western Rice Belt totaled 116,157 acres. The conference is comprised of a Producers Seminar, along with a Consumers Seminar, held each year on the third Wednesday of January. All stages of the event from planning to evaluation are directed by two, multi-county Western Rice Belt Conference planning committees – one for the producers section and one for the consumer section. Committees are made up of County Extension Agents, equipment dealers, rice warehouse managers, rice producers, rice producers, U.S. Rice Producers Association, USA Rice, Inc., wives of rice farmers, and Extension Education Association (EEA) members. The committee builds the agenda each year to address current production and consumer issues in the rice industry with guest speakers from Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, and more.

Results

The 13th Annual Western Rice Belt Conference was held on January 18, 2017 at the El Campo Civic Center. 257 rice producers and 101 rice consumers attended the conference. To determine the programmatic results of the Western Rice Belt Producers Seminar a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. **159 of 257 (61.9%)** completed evaluations.

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76.3% of the participants plan to adopt the practice of using mixtures or sequences of herbicides with differing modes of action. Rice producers report a total anticipated economic benefit for their farm operations of \$1,178,327, or an economic benefit of \$4.45 per acre.

Client Change Level of Understanding: 2017 Western Rice Belt Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Herbicide resistance in weed populations	2.65	3.30	21.7%
Disease management in rice	2.61	3.27	22.0%
Recent changes to EPA pesticide certification and training regulations	2.21	3.28	35.7%
Management of insects in Texas rice	2.59	3.20	20.3%
Tools and resources available to Texas rice producers to manage financial and commodity price risk	2.16	2.96	26.7%

V A L U E

Crop and Forage Production Education



Extension programs in crop production promote best practices that lead to reduced irrigation, safer pest management, and improved profitability of agricultural enterprises. This benefits Texas as a whole by contributing to the quality and quantity of water resources and enhancing both agricultural competitiveness and rural economies.

Making a Difference

Wharton County Food Safety Education 2017 In-Depth Program

Lori Schindler, County Extension Agent – Family and Community Health, Wharton County
Hannah Krebs, County Extension Agent – Family and Community Health, Colorado County

Relevance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1 in 6 individuals will become sick from a foodborne illness each year. More than half of all foodborne diseases is attributed to improper food handling in restaurants. Because nearly half of all food dollars are spent on food prepared outside the home, food safety is a top concern among consumers. Therefore, food safety education is a critical prevention component for reducing the risk of foodborne diseases. The Wharton County FCH Committee has identified this as a major concern in Wharton County due to the fact, that adequate training is not provided within the county by any other means. This program targeted the Food Service Industry in Wharton County.

Response

The Food Handler's Safety Program was presented to Food Service Employees and Culinary Arts Students in Wharton County in an attempt, to increase the number of Food Service Employees in Wharton County who have received their Food Handler's Safety Certification. Texas State Department of Health and Human Services requires that food service employees receive food safety handler's certification every 2 years and every food service employee is required to have this certification within 60 days of employment with a food establishment. Food Handler's Safety Certification classes are held every other month, or an establishment may call and set up a date for me to come into their establishment and teach the course to all employees.

The Food Protection Manager's Program was presented to Food Service Employees to certify the Managers who would then be responsible for Food Safety training of employees in their establishments. By Texas State Department of Health and Human services regulations, it is required that every food service establishment have at least one certified Food Protection Manager employed by the establishment. The Food Protection Manager's Certification is good for 5 years. The Food Protection Manager's Course is a two day course taught every 3 months and alternates between Wharton and Colorado Counties.

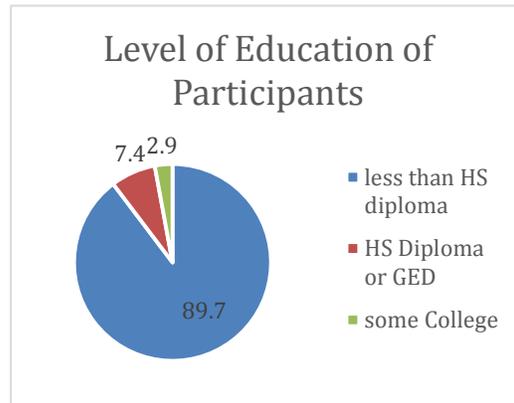
Results

The Food Handler's Safety and Food Protection Manager's programs were presented to 314 participants, including 151 Culinary Arts students at El Campo High School and 146 Culinary Arts students at Wharton High School. The Wharton High School data is not included in this summary due to information still being processed at the time of this writing.

89% of participants in these training had less than a High School degree and 7.4% had a High School Diploma or GED. Only 2.9% had any College training. Of those attending these trainings only 18.2% have

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worked in the food industry prior to this training and 81.6% have never worked in the food industry. Only 30% of participants had ever had prior food safety training despite the fact, that training is required for re-certification every 2 years for food handler's safety and every 5 years for Food Protection Manager's. Better training of our food service employees will lead to a work force that is more confident and knowledgeable in their job, increased job satisfaction, less employee turn-over, and a safer food service industry.



Percentage of participants that worked in the food industry prior to training	18.2%
Percentage of participants who did not work in the food industry prior to training	81.6%
Percentage of participants who have never had food safety training	30%

The mean pre-test score was 64.85 and the mean post-test score was 80.74. There was a 24.5% increase in food safety knowledge from the pre-test to the post-test. This shows an increase in the participants food safety knowledge.

Prior to training, only 47% of participants could identify the foods that could potentially make you sick. After training the number of participants who answered this question correctly was 66%. Prior to training, only 21% of participants were able to identify the illnesses that they were required to report to their supervisors. After training, 75% were able to identify the illnesses they were required to report. Prior to training, only 14% understood that a foodborne outbreak involves 2 or more people. After training, 69% were able to identify what makes a foodborne outbreak.

Question	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Which of the following foods would not be considered potentially hazardous	47%	66%
A person working with food should immediately tell their supervisor if they have...	21%	75%
Generally speaking, a foodborne illness involves how many people	14%	69%

- **308 Participants have received their Food Handler's Certification**
- **297 High School Students have received valuable training that will allow them to enter the workforce with necessary training.**
- **The program increased food safety knowledge of participants by 24.5%**

Making a Difference

Wharton County EEA Program

Developed by:

Lori Schindler – County Extension Agent – Family and Community Health, Wharton County

Relevance:

The Texas Extension Education Association was organized in 1926. This association works with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development and community service. Their objectives include: strengthen, develop, coordinate, and extend adult researched-based education, to improve the quality of life for families and communities in cooperation with the Texas A&M University System; promote family strengths and leadership development, serve as a medium for the expression of charitable and educational interests, and award 4-H and TEEA adult scholarships on a nondiscriminatory basis to worthy applicants; offer a means by which members in cooperation with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension may interpret and provide programs of local, county, district, regional, state, national and international importance in preservation of the American home and the promotion of better international understanding; function exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes.

Response:

TEEA members will improve their quality of life through participation in research-based educational programs and develop leadership skills. The Wharton County Extension Education Association has two clubs, with seventy members. WCEEA plans to increase membership in 2017, by promoting the organization through networking and targeting various individuals in the community.

Results:

Our Wharton County TEEA ladies donated 2,219 total hours of volunteer service. The donated time can be broken down into;

- 1,577.5 hours to TEEA Activities, including assisting District II host the TEEA State Conference in Marble Falls in September.
- 232 hours to 4-H activities including judging 4-H events
- 409.5 to community organizations such as the Wharton County Youth Fair, Volunteer Fire Departments, Hospice, Boys and Girls Clubs and the Women's Crisis Center and many more.

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These amazing ladies also presented 4 state programs:

- Adult Bullies
- Navigating Pintrest
- Dementia and Caregiving
- Nutrition Fact or Myth

They reached a total of 497 people with these programs. These ladies also raise money that goes to the 4-H center at Brownwood to help maintain a nice facility for future 4-Hers. These ladies are always ready and able when called upon to help with anything and have been a tremendous asset to Wharton County Extension.



2017-2018 TEEA State Board of Directors. (Grace Glaze – Wharton County EEA – Alumnae Committee Chair)



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Making a Difference

Wharton County FCH Program

Developed by:

Lori Schindler – County Extension Agent – Family and Community Health, Wharton County

Relevance:

This Program is used for programming efforts that may not fit in with other program plan areas that I have. One of the benefits of being an Extension Agent is that we are able to constantly adjust and continue to find ways to assist our clients. Quite often we have clients come to us and request specific program needs that we are more than happy to supply even though they are not pre-planned activities that are present in our program plans. Many of these opportunities are such that we come in once or twice to assist and will not have a continual role past the one or two visits.

Response:

As Extension agents we continue to be open to new opportunities for partnering with new clients. We will meet the request of new clients in the hope that we can forge an ongoing relationship with these new clients. Through these types of programming efforts, we have the opportunity to look at potential new areas of need within our County and can then take this information back to our Committees to look at potential ways of addressing these new needs. It is this type of opportunity that enables us to identify new and changing needs within our Counties.

Results:

Rice Consumer's Conference – The Rice Consumer's Conference is held each year in El Campo at the Civic Center. This year's conference we had 107 attendees with 15 volunteers who were used to set up and present the Rice Conference Program. These volunteers contributed 60 hours of volunteer service

- 84 participants agreed they would attend a similar program next year.
- 76 participants agreed they would prepare more rice dishes in the upcoming year.

Memory and Movement program at Elmcroft Assisted Living Facility – A program was presented once a month for 6 months to residents at the Elmcroft Assisted Living Facility. About 9 residents would attend each month. The residents enjoyed many different activities which highlighted either memory or movement. Some example activities include:

- Music memory – the residents had to remember the name and artist of songs from their generation.
- Residents used play dough to fill in the pictures printed on paper.
- Residents had to use their body to shake eggs out of a tissue box that was strapped to them.

El Campo Summer Reading Library Program and Louise Summer Reading Library Program – I partnered with the El Campo Library branch and Louise Library Branch to provide several programs during their summer reading programs. Over the course of the summer, I reached 125 summer program participants in El Campo and 51 participants in Louise with programs such as:

- Welcome to the Real World Curriculum – students had to choose a career and were given a salary based on their career choice and then had to make life choices such as type of house to rent, car to buy, and food and clothing to purchase and then see if they were able to stay within their salary. The students seemed very surprised at what items actually cost.
- Gardening – Participants were able to color a paper insert that went inside a clear portion of a small planter and then they planted a wildflower which they were able to take home and watch grow. Kate Harrell, our IPM Agent presented a power point presentation on how to identify beneficial and pest insects in a garden.
- Internet Safety – I partnered with El Campo Police Department K-9 officer Mark Biskup to provide an internet safety course for participants. Participants received important and current internet safety tips and learned how to keep themselves safe while using the internet and social media
- Healthy Smoothies – participants were chosen to help create healthy smoothies. They were encouraged to use any ingredients they wanted to put in their smoothies and to try ingredients that they didn't typically like such as spinach. Many participants found that they enjoyed the smoothies even when they contained some ingredients that they didn't like very much. They were given recipes for smoothies, but were also allowed to experiment with what they thought they might like.

Welcome to the Real World was presented to the East Bernard High School work Study class. There were 7 participants in this class. Students were taught many aspects of fiscal management. They were given the opportunity to look at many careers and many students reported that they would most likely rethink their choice of a career after high school based on information presented during this class.

2017 All Babies and Children Child Care Conference

Developed by:

Lori Schindler

County Extension Agent – Family & Community Health
Wharton County

Relevance

Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is the 16th largest industry in the state, generating over 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans.

Findings from longitudinal research have clearly established the fact that quality does matter when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care (e.g., warm sensitive caregiving, well-educated child care staff, low child-to-adult ratios, small group size) develop better language, math and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school. Having a well-trained child care workforce is essential to providing the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively.

Response

On September 30, 2017, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Wharton, Texas for 87 child care providers and directors who provide care for 1,557 children enrolled in 15 child care centers or family day homes. Eighty-seven participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of 609 clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Results

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (n=75)*

Variable	Percentage*	Mean
Age (in years)		43.9
Number of years in Child Care Profession		12.0
Gender		
Female	97.3	
Male	2.7	
Ethnicity		
African American	29.3	
Caucasian	40.0	
Hispanic/Latino	28.0	
Other	1.3	
Educations		
Less than High School Diploma	0.0	
High School Diploma	76.0	
Associate Degree	12.0	
College Graduate	10.7	
Program Type		
Home Day Care	8.0	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	90.6	
Other (e.g., Montessori)	1.3	
Program Licensed and/or Registered		
Yes	98.7	
No	0.0	
*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.		

Participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the training (See Table 2 for participant responses).

Table 2. Participant Satisfaction with the Training (N=75)*

Not at all = 1 Slightly = 2 Somewhat = 3 Mostly = 4 Completely = 5

Item	Average
Overall, how <u>satisfied</u> are you with this training?	4.5
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the training?	
Information being <u>what you expected</u> to receive	4.6
<u>Accuracy</u> of Information	4.7
Information being <u>easy</u> to understand	4.6
<u>Completeness</u> of information being given	4.6
<u>Helpfulness</u> of the information	4.7
<u>Relevance</u> of the information presented to the work that I do in the child care profession	4.6
<u>Quality</u> of training materials	4.6
Instructor's <u>knowledge level</u> of subject matter	4.7
Instructor's <u>speaking/presentation abilities</u>	4.7
Instructor's <u>organization/preparedness</u>	4.7
Instructor's <u>response to questions</u>	4.7

Participants were asked to rate the quality of the conference compared to other child care trainings they have attended in the past by non-Extension organizations/agencies. Table 3 below contains the results.

Table 3. Perceptions of Quality Compared to Other Non-Extension Trainings (N=75)*

Item*	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended (not provided by Extension), how would you rate the quality of today's training?	0.0%	1.3%	14.7%	29.3%	41.3%
Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases					

In addition to the above items, participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements related to the training. Table 4 below contains the results.

Table 4. Additional Survey Items (N=75)*

Question	% Yes	% No
Did you learn new information from this training?	97%	3%
Do you plan to take any actions or make any changes based on this training?	97%	3%
Do you consider yourself better equipped to work with children in their care?	97%	3%
Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

As can be seen in the tables above, child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. The vast majority of participants were highly satisfied with the training, rating it a 4.5 on a 5-point scale. Moreover, 56% of providers rated the training "Better" or "Much Better" compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

Report prepared by Jodi Nerren on November 22, 2017. For more information, please call 979-845-6468.

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Making a Difference

2017 Wharton County Fostering Strong Families Kashara Bell- Family and Consumer Science Agent- Cooperative Extension Program

Relevance

What happens to children in their early years set the foundation of a lifetime. It's key that families have the tools and resources that they need to provide a stable and nurturing environment for their children. In order to reach that goal Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program must partner with communities in Wharton County to strengthen families and empower parents in their role as their child's first teacher. We all have a shared responsibility for making our communities strong. According to the Wharton County Family plan the solution to prevent abuse and under-resourced parenting is to offer educational programming.

Wharton County Criminal Justice Community Plan Solutions 2016-2017

- Secure basic resources and emergency services for families
- Reinforce and expand after school programming
- Provide educational, vocational, and economic services to families to encourage emotional maturity and financial independence.

Response

Knowing how to solve family issues and conflict management is important for family resilience. Being educated on how to be resourceful and creative will expose possibilities when overcoming adversity. To strengthen families we must: 1) engage youth and their families in an educational pilot program that promotes learning and behavior change in the areas of prevention, nutrition, and physical activity, 2) implement healthy living programs, 3) develop and begin implementing curriculums.

- Reaching 295 youth and adults
- 23 Presentations

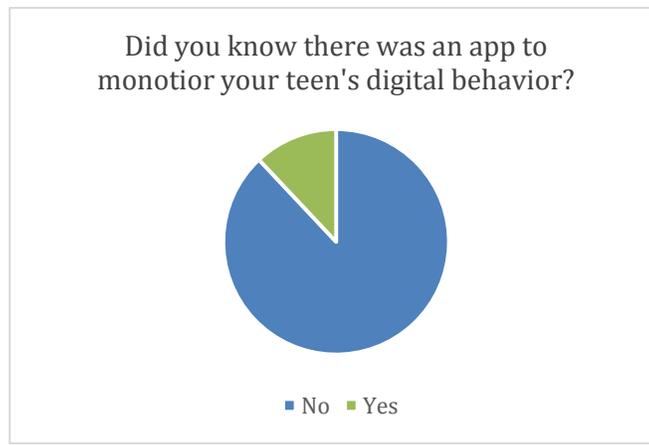
Education Efforts:

Parenting 101- 5 session course of classes that provides parents with helpful tips and strategies on dealing with common parenting challenges. This course covers a range of parenting topics including: parenting styles, child development, communication, positive discipline and stress management.

- Parenting class were held at the Wharton County Extension Office
- Child Protective Services highly recommend this program for their cases
- 30 participants and 7 graduates (July 2017-December 2017)
- \$100 Grant donation received from HEB

Media Safety- The internet can be a helpful tool as well as a hurtful tool. This media safety course is used to help educate parents and children avoid any digital mishaps. 96% of teens use social networking applications such as Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat .Only 15% of parents are “in the know” about their children social networking habits, and how these behaviors can lead to cyberbullying or other dangerous activities. 69% of teens regularly receive online communications from strangers and don’t tell a parent or caretaker. El Campo officers partnered with Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension to encourage media safety awareness.

- Program implemented at El Campo Library, Louise Library, and Just Do It Now
- Partnered with El Campo Police Department
- 103 program attendance (adults and ages 8+)
- Worked with 2 programs with Texas A&M Agrilife Family and Community Health Agent Lori Schindler



Fall Safety Event- Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program in conjunction with The Wharton County Library hosted an annual family. There was fall time safety/parenting education, physical activity games, and healthy snack demonstrations.

- Partnered with Wharton County Library
- HEB sponsored the event
- 115 participants
- October 11, 2017

Results

-Parenting 101- 4 out of 30 participants were able to be reunited with their child/children.

-Media Safety- Parents were able to learn more about the internet as well as understand the importance of monitoring their family digital behavior. 12 parents downloaded the free app on their cellular device to monitor their family cell phones, and tablets.

-Fall Safety Event- The parents in attendance was able to leave educated on how to inspect Halloween candy and guidance tips for going trick or treating.

Making a Difference

2017 Wharton County Health and Wellness Kashara Bell- Family and Consumer Science Agent- Cooperative Extension Program

Relevance

Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program strives to address the health and wellness needs of Wharton County by offering programs that help prevent chronic illnesses (diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer, and heart disease), eliminate of health disparities, poor dieting, and unhealthy lifestyle habits. Wharton County profile states that 19% of the population is impacted by diabetes or cancer. Chronic health conditions have serious consequences for disease, premature death, and health care costs.

Response

The goal of our programming is to positively impact participant's health and wellbeing through improvements in self-efficacy, self-care behaviors, nutrition and physical activity. Wharton County Cooperative Extension Program strive to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness.

- 380 participants
- 25 education presentations

Education efforts:

Cooking for a Lifetime Cancer Prevention Cooking School- is an interactive class where participants learn how to choose and prepare food to reduce cancer risk along with discussing the screenings recommended for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer.

- 75 participants
- \$250 grant funded by the University of Georgia
- Partner with El Campo Wharton County Library Branch

Blender Bike Program- encouraged MyPlate, physical activity, and the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. Wharton County Cooperative Extension program partnered with El Campo Library, Louise Library Just Do It Now, and The Boys and Girls Club summer program.

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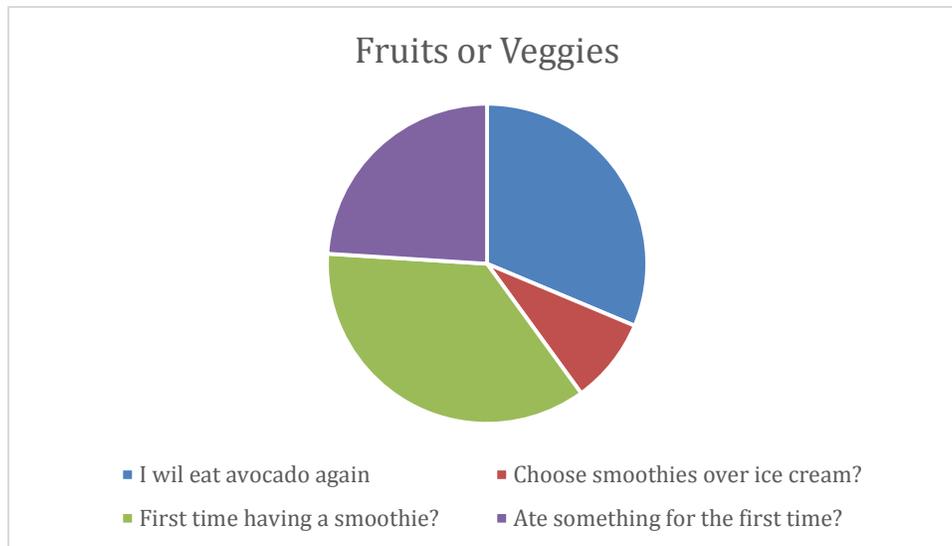
- 53 program total attendance
- \$100 donations from El Campo and Louise Wharton County Library to purchase programing supplies
- Ages 7-18 attended education presentations
- June 2017- July 2017

Results

Cooking For a Lifetime Cancer Prevention School program utilized 75 pre and post paper evaluations tool to show behavior change and knowledge gained.

Question Number	Question	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4
1	Have you been physically active for at least 30 minutes 5 days or more a week?	"Yes"- 22	"No"- 53		
2	Do you want to achieve a healthy weight?	"Yes"- 40	"No"- 35		
3	Do you fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables?	"Yes"- 13	"No"- 62		
4	Do you choose whole grains more at least half of the time?	"Yes"-18	"No"-23	"Sometimes"-34	
5	Do you eat at least 18 ounces or less of red meat per week?	"Yes"-39	"No"-18	"Sometimes"-18	
6	Do you avoid processed meat like lunch meat, sausages, bologna, or bacon?	"Yes"-5	"No"-45	"Sometimes"-10	"Never"10
7	When was your last pap exam?	"This year"-52	"Over 3 years ago"-4	"Never had one"-1	"I don't know"-18
8	When was your last mammogram?	"This year"-35	"Over 3 years ago"-22	"Never had one"-10	"I don't know"-8
9	Had a colonoscopy?	"This year"-28	"Over 3 years ago"-26	"Never had one"-18	"I don't know"3
10	How likely are you to go and get a pap, mammogram, or colonoscopy after attending this class?	"Not at all."3	"I may do it."-31	"I'm 100% going to get screened."-25	"I don't know."-16
11	What keeps you from getting screened for cancer?	"Nothing. I always get screened"-32	"Cost/Insurance"25	"The fear of knowing"-12	"Transportation or time"-6

Blender Bike Program used an interactive evaluation questionnaire called Kahoot It to evaluate the audience satisfaction on the fruits and vegetables used in the smoothies.



Making a Difference

IPM Programming: Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties 2017

Developed by Kate Harrell, EA- IPM, Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties

Relevance:

Agricultural operating costs continue to rise nationwide while commodity prices remain low. For area producers to continue farming, they must find ways to cut inputs at the same time increasing production. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a tool that can aid producers in the reduction of input costs. IPM considers multiple tactics for the control of pests, maintaining pest populations below a damaging level and conservation of the environment. Agriculture is one of the primary occupations in the county.

Response:

- Summer Field Scouting Program
- Wharton County CEU Workshop
- Sugarcane Aphid Workshop
- Harvest Retrospective
- Feed Grain and Cotton Conference
- Several field meetings
- Upper Coast IPM Blog - 26 issues
- Household pests with Kids in the Kitchen
- Library outreach program
- Library garden program

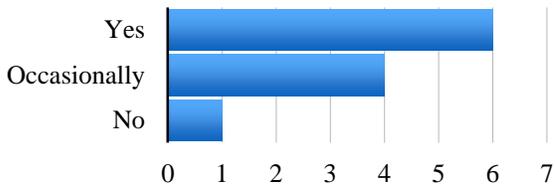
Results:

12 people responded to a 7 question survey evaluating the Upper Coast IPM blog at uppercoastipm.blogger.com. 5 questions pertained to information found in the blogs and how useful the information was to the constituents, and 2 questions on how they accessed the blog. 6 responded that they do apply information from the blog, 4 occasionally, and 1 no. When asked if they used the blog as a reference for economic thresholds, 8 responded yes and 3 responded occasionally. 7 responses showed that information in the blog helped them to reduce their pesticide use, and 2 said it did not. Of the 7 that said the information helped them reduce pesticide use, their usage decreased by 0-25% for 4 of them, 26-50% for 2 of them, and 50- 75% for 1. When asked if they learned about a pest they had not heard of before reading the blog, 5 had learned of at least 1 new pest, 2 at least 2, 1 at least 3, and 2 did not learned of a new pest. When evaluating how the blog was accessed, 11 primarily use the link in the email as a source. 7 tend to read the blog on their phones, and 4 on their computer.

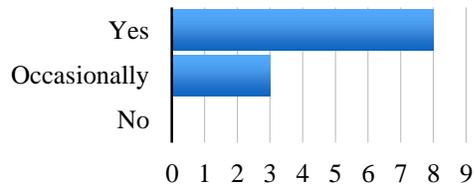
Future Plans:

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Did you apply information from the blog to your farming or consulting operation?



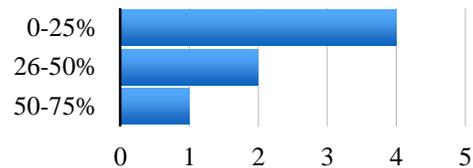
Did you reference the economic thresholds in the blog?



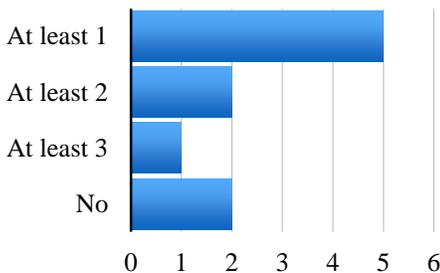
Did the information in the blog help you reduce pesticide use?



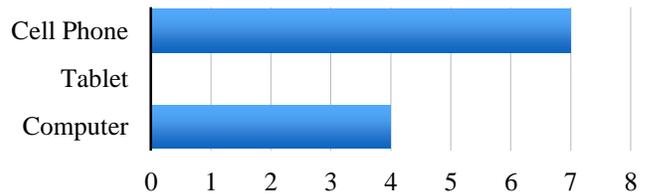
What percentage did your usage decrease by?



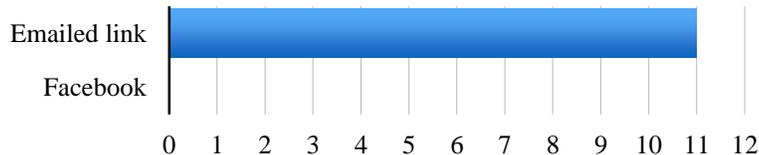
Did you learn about a pest species you had not heard of before?



On what device do you usually access the blog?



How do you usually access the blog?



Several conclusions can be drawn in evaluating the Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties IPM program in 2017. A majority of the agricultural producers recognize the essential components of IPM and the actual decision of when to apply a pesticide is based on either by an external influence (private consultant or IPM program) or scouting their own fields. The source of information about specific pesticide use can be acquired from the private sector, as well as the IPM program. The source can play a significant role in influencing the pesticide use patterns in this three county area. Therefore, via the IPM steering committee, a relationship has been forged between local private consultants and the IPM program, which reflects an ongoing effort by all parties concerned. Future plans include a continuation of the IPM scouting program, garden program, and involvement with youth.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Wharton County

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