

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

Greetings to all of you and a very happy thanksgiving to each of you. Thank you for reading this week.

Major Show Entry Reminder

If you validated a pig, lamb, goat or steer through the TEXAS STATE VALIDATION Program is NOW time to COMPLETE your entries for the major shows you plan on showing in. Please complete ALL forms with signatures, social security numbers, new Quality Counts numbers and include the payment for your fees. Make checks payable to the Zavala Extension Education Fund, NOT TO THE STOCKSHOW you are entering, they will NOT take a personal check from individuals it must be paid from a 4-H or Extension Account. TURN IN ALL FORMS AND PAYMENTS NO LATER THAN 5:00 P.M. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2018 (EARLIER IS EVEN BETTER). If you need HELP completing these forms contact the Zavala county office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 BEFORE November 26, 2018.

Texas 4-H Scholarship Application Process is now Open

The 2018 Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation Opportunity Scholarship applications are open! Make sure you're aware of all changes in the process like the application being on 4-H Connect now. Learn more and apply today at <https://texas4hfoundation.org>. You must complete the FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) before submitting your application. You must complete the FAFSA before mid-December!! If you wait, you may not have in time to get the FAFSA paperwork submitted and receive the SAR report before the Texas 4-H Opportunity Scholarship application deadline! Without this you will not be able to apply! This is a required document to be attached to the application. In order to make sure that they get the FAFSA SAR Report back in time, IT IS IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA BEFORE December 1st using your last filed tax return information. For complete instructions on the 4-H scholarship program go to <https://texas4hfoundation.org> contact the Zavala county office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 for more information

Tip of the Week: Keep your Thanksgiving Feast a Happy and Safe One

Thanksgiving brings together friends and family as well as plenty of raw meat and eggs, and this creates an opportunity for food safety to go out the window. During the year I provide food safety training to spinach shed workers, harvesters and shippers and that training has several good tips to use during the holiday feasting season. Here are a few suggestions to ward off the not-so-festive foodborne illnesses that can occur after your meal. Not following good food safety practices can change to misery if food makes you or others ill. Typical symptoms of foodborne illness are vomiting, diarrhea, and flu-like symptoms, which can start anywhere from hours to days after contaminated food or drinks are consumed. The symptoms usually are not long-lasting in healthy people—a few hours or a few days—and usually go away without medical treatment. But foodborne illness can be severe and even life-threatening to anyone, especially those most at risk which include older adults and infants or people with weak immune systems. As consumers we have a role to play,

too, especially when it comes to safe food-handling practices in the home. The good news is that practicing four basic food safety measures can help prevent foodborne illness and make your Thanksgiving meal a huge success and most importantly a safe one. Here are these four basic food safety measures.

1. Clean: The first rule of safe food preparation in the home is to keep everything clean.

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food. "For children, this means the time it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice," says Davidson.
- Wash food-contact surfaces (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops) with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking. "Washing these foods makes it more likely for bacteria to spread to areas around the sink and countertops," says Davidson.

2. Separate: Don't give bacteria the opportunity to spread from one food to another (cross-contamination).

- Keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from foods that won't be cooked. Take this precaution while shopping in the store, when storing in the refrigerator at home, and while preparing meals.
- Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked (such as raw meat, poultry, and seafood) and another one for those that will not (such as raw fruits and vegetables).
- Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood—and from kitchen utensils used for those products.
- Do not put cooked meat or other food that is ready to eat on an unwashed plate that has held any raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices.

3. Cook: Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria.

- Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are cooked to a safe internal temperature. To check a turkey for safety, insert a food thermometer into the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. The turkey is safe when the temperature reaches 165°F. If the turkey is stuffed, the temperature of the stuffing should be 165°F. (Please read on for more pointers on stuffing.)
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. When making your own eggnog or other recipe calling for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products or powdered egg whites.

- Don't eat uncooked cookie dough, which may contain raw eggs.

4. Chill: Refrigerate foods quickly because harmful bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature.

- Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods—and *any* type of food that should be refrigerated - within two hours. That includes pumpkin pie!

- Set your refrigerator at or below 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Check both periodically with an appliance thermometer.

- Never defrost food at room temperature. Food can be defrosted safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

- Allow the correct amount of time to properly thaw food. For example, a 20-pound turkey needs four to five days to thaw completely when thawed in the refrigerator.

- Don't taste food that looks or smells questionable. Davidson says, "A good rule to follow is, when in doubt, throw it out."

- Leftovers should be used within three to four days.

Please follow these four food safety rules and you will enjoy a great safe holiday season. Happy thanksgiving. M.V.

November 19-23, 2018

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.