

Thank You on behalf of the Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Office of Atascosa County



January 13, 2025

Please find enclosed a year-end summary for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office of Atascosa County. It is a pleasure serving the citizens of Atascosa County. We greatly appreciate our working relationship and your support.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Dale Rankin in black ink.

Dale Rankin
County Extension Agent Ag/Nr and 4-H
Atascosa County

Handwritten signature of Ashlie Stayton in black ink.

Ashlie Stayton

Atascosa County Staff Introduction



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Assistant

- 4-H and Youth Development
- Program Assistant

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-----ATASCOSA.AGRILIFE.ORG

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating



25 East 5th Street
Leming, Texas 78050



Atascosa 4-H



atascosa.agrilife.org



830-569-0034

Atascosa 4-H Program

4-H & Youth Development

Dale Rankin - CEA Ag/NR and Ashlie Stayton - CEA FCH - Atascosa County

Agriculture and Natural Resources 4-H Projects

Texas 4-H Youth Development Program offers youth engaging opportunities to learn and develop practical skills through various Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Projects while developing citizenship, leaderships skills, and career exploration. In Atascosa County project programming is guided by the interests of members. Atascosa County 4-H members have participated in numerous stock shows and contests, including the State Fair of Texas, Atascosa County Livestock Show, Grandstand Livestock Show, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Angelo Livestock Show, Houston Livestock Show, Austin Livestock Show, District Horse Judging, District Archery Matches, District Rifle Matches, District Horse Show, District Postal League Contests, State Horse Show, State Games, Ag Product ID, and the National 4-H Rifle Contest.



Family and Community Health 4-H Projects

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's youth programs offer a wide range of knowledge and skills in Family & Community Health 4-H Projects, focusing on areas such as food and nutrition, fashion and interior design, consumer education, and health. These programs also help participants develop leadership, citizenship, and career investigation skills. 4-H uses hands-on activities to foster life skills like confidence, independence, resilience, and compassion. Specific projects include Consumer Education, where participants learn responsible shopping and money management; Food Show, where they practice cooking safety and nutrition; Fashion Show which focuses on garment construction and presentation, and Fashion Storyboard, where they develop and showcase original fashion or interior design concepts using industry standard techniques. Atascosa County 4-H members participated in the Atascosa County Food Show, Atascosa County Fashion Show, District 12 Food Show, District 12 Fashion Show, District 12 Fashion Storyboard Contest, Texas 4-H Storyboard Contest, District 12 Consumer Decision Making Contest, Texas 4-H Consumer Decision Making Contest, and the San Antonio Livestock Show Consumer Decision Making Contest.



Youth Development

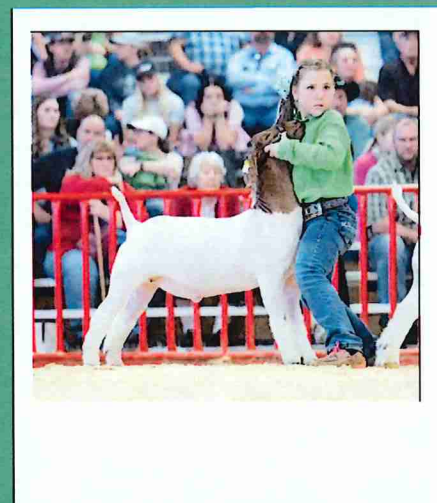
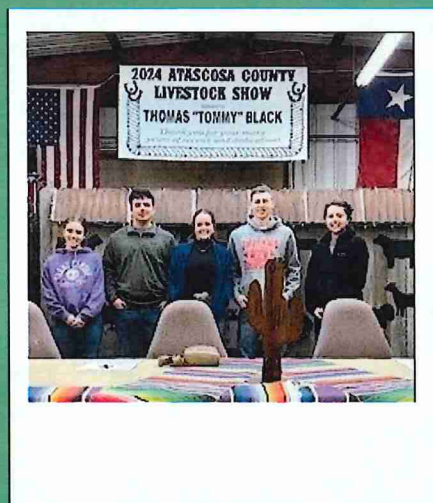
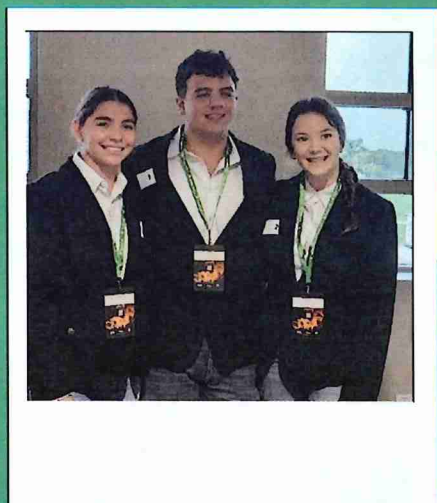
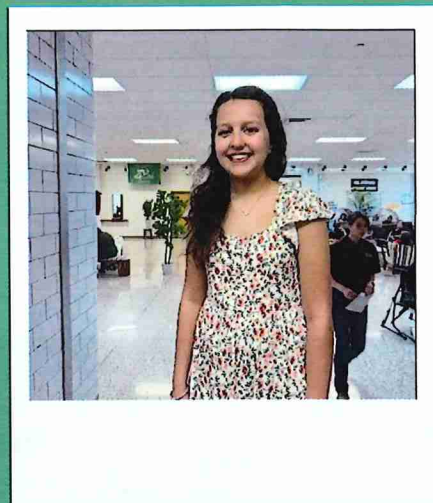
Each year Atascosa County AgriLife Extension works with local schools to help educate youth on agriculture and the path that our food takes to our plates. During the Fourth Grade Ag Field Day Program, Atascosa County AgriLife office hosts fourth grade students and teachers from all Atascosa County schools. The students have an opportunity to learn about peanuts, wildlife, soil, water, beef cattle, cotton, fire safety, electricity safety, and dairy cattle. In the Hatching in the Classroom Program, students from Lytle Primary school had the opportunity to learn about the life cycle of a chicken. An incubator was placed in a classroom, students were able to learn about what the eggs needed for hatching, and then after 21 days the students were able to witness chickens hatching from the eggs.



ATASCOSA COUNTY 4-H

COMMISSIONERS COURT INTERPRETATION

2023-2024



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE

Atascosa County

Dale Rankin - CEA Ag/NR

Ashlie Stayton - CEA FCH

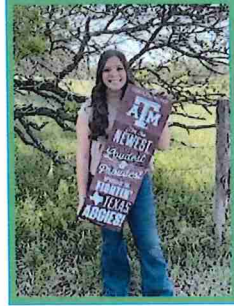
Holly Kopplin- 4-H Program Assistant

Monica Zepeda - Administrative Secretary

📍 25 East Fifth Street P.O. Box 379 Leming, Texas 78050

☎ 830-569-0034

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



STOCKSHOWS

2 members placed at the State Fair of Texas

79 Atascosa County 4-H members made the sale at the Atascosa County Livestock Show

2 members placed at the Grandstand Livestock Show

5 members participated at the Fort Worth Livestock Show

3 members placed at the San Angelo Livestock Show & Rodeo

34 members placed at the San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo in various events

20 members placed at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo

16 members placed at the Austin Livestock Show

OTHER AWARDS

\$25,000 in Scholarships awarded to 4-H members

2 Gold Star Award recipients

1 Member made the Texas 4-H Rifle Team

1 Texas 4-H Salute to Excellence Award

NATIONAL 4-H CONTESTS ATTENDED

NATIONAL 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS COMPETITION-
1 MEMBER PLACED 6TH IN THE NATION.
THE TEXAS TEAM PLACED 4TH OVERALL.

DISTRICT AND STATE AWARDS

District Food Show- 2nd Junior, 2nd Intermediate

District Consumer Decision Making Contest- Senior 1st Place Team; Senior Fourth Place Team; Intermediate 2nd Place Team; Junior 1st Place Team; 4th Place overall individual

District Archery-1st Place Intermediate Modified 420 Compound Aided; 1st Place Senior Modified 420 Compound Aided; 1st & 2nd Place Intermediate Modified 420 NASP Genesis; 3rd Place Junior Modified 420 Compound Aided; 3rd Place Intermediate 3-D Compound Aided. 3rd Place Senior 3-D Compound Aided

District Storyboard-1st Place Senior Individual

District Horse Judging- 1st place Intermediate Team, 3rd place Senior Team, 1st place Intermediate Individual

District Fashion Show- 1st place Senior Construction Category Semi Formal/ Formal, 3rd place Intermediate Buying Category Semi Formal/ Formal

District Roundup- 1st place Talent Showcase Musical Instrument

District Rifle- 3rd place 3-P Junior team, Junior Individuals Silhouette- 1st place, 3-P 3rd place, 1st place Intermediate 3-P team, Intermediate Individuals 3-P- 1st place Silhouette Metallic- 3rd place, 2nd place 3-P Senior team, Senior Individuals- 3-P- 2nd place, Silhouette Metallic- 1st place, 2nd place, Silhouette Telescopic- 1st place

District Postal League- Archery Compound Aided Junior- 1st place Intermediate - 3rd place Senior- 2nd place, 3rd place NASP Genesis Intermediate- 3rd place Recurve Intermediate- 2nd place, Rifle Junior 2nd place team, Intermediate Individuals- 1st place, 2nd place Intermediate 1st place team, 2nd place team, Rifle Senior Individuals- 2nd place Senior 2nd place team, 3rd place team

District Photography- Juniors- 2 Blue Awards, Intermediates- 10 Blue Awards, 4 Rosettes - Best of Class Seniors- 2 Red Awards, 7 Blue Awards, BEST OF SHOW Senior Division, 1 Rosette- Best of Class

District Horse Show- 1st place- Junior Barrel Racing, Junior Pole Bending, Junior Stakes Race, Junior Showmanship at Halter, 3rd place- Mare 5 & over Division Junior Champion- Timed Horseman and Judged Horseman

Shooting Sports State Games- 4 members participated

State Horse Show- 2 members participated

State Photography- 2 Blue Awards, 2 Red Awards

RELEVANCE

Texas enjoys the largest youth livestock and 4-H program in the nation and the Atascosa County Texas Community Futures Forum identified the support of the traditional 4-H Program in Atascosa County as being of the highest importance. Livestock Projects and 4-H projects teach our youth many different things that include building character, creating discipline, teaching youth about agriculture, teaching sportsmanship, learning to be a healthier individual and above all allows 4-H'ers the opportunity to gain confidence in themselves by caring for something that is 100% dependent on them.

Target Audience:

This educational program targeted the Atascosa County 4-H members and livestock project members.

RESPONSE

County Extension Agents Rankin, Stayton, and program assistant Kopplin worked with the 4-H County Council and volunteer leaders for Atascosa County to address the needs of our youth livestock project participants and our 4-H members. The Council offered a number of educational programs to help increase the young person's knowledge on livestock and understanding where their food comes from. Agents updated livestock educational resources, developed project marketing pieces and my plate educational activities.

Educational Programs:

Multi County Path to the Plate 4-H Youth Livestock and Health Day Camps conducted with Wilson County, Beef Workshops, Rabbit Workshops, Sheep and Goat Weigh and Play Days, Beef Weigh and Play Days, Virtual Poultry Workshops, Showmanship Opportunities, Livestock Judging Practice, Double Trouble Prospect Show, and a 4-H Showmanship Show was offered for its members.

Evaluation Strategy

A Post Evaluation was used at the Multi County Path to the Plate 4-H Youth Livestock and Health Day Camps, and direct questions were asked at the 4-H Showmanship Show.

VALUE STATEMENT

Youth Livestock

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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.



RELEVANCE

4-H has a long history in Texas. Established in 1908, Texas 4-H has provided youth with valuable life skills through hands-on activities. These activities are supported by adult volunteers and Extension Agents. The hands-on approach that 4-H strives for is proven to grow youth's life skills such as confidence, independence, resilience, and compassion through stages and developed through experiences.

In a survey of 4-H youth completed by National 4-H.

- 96% reported that 4-H has helped them to identify things they are good at.
- 82% reported that 4-H helped them explore career options.
- 58% reported that 4-H has helped them with college decision-making.
- 42% reported that they learned about healthy food choices in 4-H.

Family & Community Community Health (FCH) projects help youth explore careers in foods & nutrition, health, fashion, and interior design. By participating in FCH 4-H projects, youth obtain subject matter knowledge and life skills in fashion, interior design, health, nutrition, safety, and consumer education.

RESPONSE

Atascosa County Extension Agents work with volunteers, club managers, and youth to implement project workshops and practices for 4-H members to learn about each project and what is entailed at each contest.

Consumer Education: The consumer decision making project teaches youth how to make responsible choices when shopping. They learn how to compare prices, test for quality, and make purchases based on facts and research. Participants learn money management, smart purchasing, and decision-making skills.

Food Show: Youth who participate in the food show project learn cooking safety, how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks, and meal ideas to reduce their risk of disease. In the food show, youth choose a recipe from the contest categories, then prepare and present that recipe to a panel of judges.

Fashion Show: Youth learn how to showcase their skills in buying and constructing garments. They then will explain, showcase their garment, and interview with a panel of judges.

Fashion Storyboard: Youth learn how to showcase their original fashion or interior creation using an industry-inspired method called a storyboard. A storyboard includes original illustrations, flats, inspiration, and more to help promote their design.

VALUE STATEMENT

Youth FCH

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service youth programs provide valuable knowledge and skills within the scope of Family and Community Health. Through participation in projects or curriculum, youth are exposed to academic disciplines on topics ranging from food and nutrition, fashion and interior design, consumer education, and health and personal safety. In addition, participants have potential to gain leadership, citizenship, and career investigation skills.

82%

of 4-H youth surveyed reported that 4-H helped them explore career options.



58%

of 4-H youth surveyed reported that 4-H helped them with college decision-making.



Ag & Natural Resources

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Dale Rankin CEA-Agriculture & Natural Resources - Atascosa

Educational Workshops include :

Beef Cattle Production

- The Annual Atascosa Cattleman Annual meeting in which 55 producers attended.
- Multi County Reproduction Management Workshop in which 6 beef cattle producers participated.
- Multi County Carbon Credit Workshop in which 25 producers attended
- South Texas Beef and Forage Field day in which 80 producers attended
- Multi County Forage Field Day in which 40 producers attended.
- Preparing for the Spring educational workshop in which 32 attended
- Multi County Estate Planning workshop in which 42 attended
- Private Applicator Training in which 7 producers have went through the training.
- 6 Youth Scholarships were awarded for \$750.00 each



Strawberry Production

- Spring Educational Strawberry Production Workshop in which 9 producers attended.
- Fall Educational Strawberry production Workshop in which 19 producers attended
- Variety Result Demonstration Established to evaluate new and established varieties.
- Freeze Cloth Result Demonstration Established
- Slow Release Fertilizer Demonstration
- Release of Texas Strawberry Commercial Production Guide



Peanut Profitability

- Spring Annual Meeting for growers 19 producers attending
- Fall Growers Field Tour with 50 producers attending
- Peanut Variety Demonstration
- Peanut Fungicide Demonstration
- Peanut Herbicide Demonstration



Wildlife Production

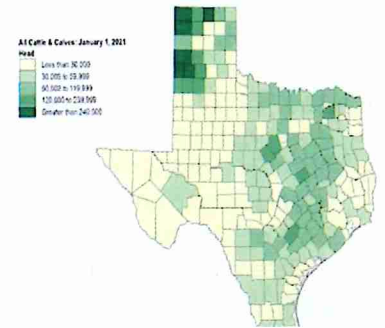
- Ag Appraisal Workshop for Citizens and Appraisal Districts 23 attendees
- Hunter Education Class 14 individuals attended
- Fishing Fun and Education Workshop 18 attendees
- 9 youth were supported at the Texas Brigades Camps.



VALUE STATEMENT

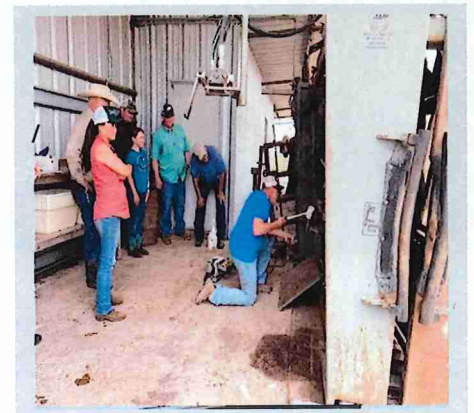
Livestock Production

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs target large- and small-scale livestock producers and help generate safer food and fiber products with maximum efficiency. The result is quality, consistent, affordable products and industries that support the state's rural economies.



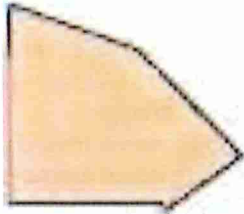
63,000

**Head of Beef Cattle and
 Calves in Atascosa County
 2024**



<https://atascosa.agrilife.org/>

RELEVANCE



Atascosa County is made up of 1236 square miles of ranching and farming property and information provided in the 2024 National Agriculture Statistic Service report Atascosa County has 63,000 head of cattle and calves in the county by numbers provided in the last producer survey.

RESPONSE

As a response to the need for beef cattle education the Atascosa Cattlemen's Association met four times during the 2024 year in January, April (2), September to plan, organize, implement, evaluate and interpret educational activities including the

Atascosa Cattlemen Association Annual Meeting April 2024 in which 55 Beef cattle producers learned about Beef Cattle Nutrition and Vaccine protocol and issues that are currently affecting vaccine supplies.

The Atascosa Club Calf breeders met 4 times to plan and implement an annual club calf sale for producers in Atascosa County that would like to consign steers or heifers to the annual sale. 34 lots were offered that generated approximately \$127,000 dollars in sales

Target Audience

Efforts targeted 55 producers and roughly 54,616 acres of production and 3394 head of beef cattle.

Partnerships and Multi County programs

- Multi County Reproduction Management Workshop May 2024 collaborating with Frio, McMullen, Live Oak, Bexar, Wilson and Medina Counties in which 6 beef cattle producers learned about Breeding Soundness Exams, Bull Nutrition, vaccinating and trich testing your bulls.
- The Multi County Beef and Forage Program May 2024 collaborating with Bexar, Guadalupe and Wilson County in which 40 producers learned about Beef Cattle Nutrition, Brush Management techniques, Managing vegetation for high water infiltration, and weed and brush control.
- South Texas Beef and Forage Field Day May 2024 collaborating with Bee, Mc Mullen, Live Oak, Jim Wells, Nueces and Refugio Counties in which 80 producers learned about supplementation strategies in beef, cow adaptability and grazing, weed control in pastures, linking carbon and water to forage production

RELEVANCE

Atascosa County is made up of 1,236 square miles of rich soils producing about 50 acres in strawberry production in Atascosa County. Strawberries are critical to the economic viability of Atascosa County. The Poteet Strawberry Festival is known for its great times and spectacular strawberries across the United States. Agent Rankin works with the Poteet Strawberry Festival Association, and Poteet Strawberry Growers Association, Poteet Rotary Club to help meet their needs across those industries. There are currently 14 Strawberry Farms in production.

RESPONSE

As a response to the need for strawberry education Agent Rankin and Extension horticulture specialist work with the local Poteet Strawberry Festival Association and the Poteet Strawberry Growers Association during their monthly meeting to identify educational needs of producers. The specialist and agents also worked to procure a TDA grant to support Texas strawberry production. One of the big objectives for the TDA grant is the final development of the Commercial Strawberry Production Guide that will be released in 2024. In the demonstration in 2023-2024 we looked at Varieties, Fertilizer rates, Floating Row Cover. Two educational events were held on these subjects in 2023-2024: Spring Grower Workshop, and a Fall Grower Workshop where we highlighted many items in the Commercial Strawberry Field Production Guide.

Evaluation Strategy

Our evaluation for the 2023-2024 strawberry season was a review and final edits from the Agrilife Extension Specialist and strawberry producers committee putting final guidance on the Commercial Strawberry Field Production In Texas Educational Resource.

The educational resource was finalized and released from Ag Communication in September 2024 and should be coming available to the public.

VALUE STATEMENT

Horticulture & Turf

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs targeted to producers of strawberry crops are increasing profitability and productivity of farmers, thereby helping to build and sustain rural economies and support jobs.



RELEVANCE

Peanut production is a significant part of the agricultural industry in Frio and Atascosa Counties. Peanut is the primary crop with over 20 million dollars in cash receipts each year. Disease management, varietal selection, herbicide resistance issues, proper use of new technology, salinity management, nutrient management, irrigation efficiency, and marketing strategies are some of the current issues and programming needs of the area peanut producers.

NUMBERS:

- **677,994** acres of land in agricultural production.
- **1,023** acres is the average size of farms in Frio County.
- **Over 55,000,000lbs.** of peanuts marketed annually.
- **\$21,031,000 net cash** farm income in Frio County.

With over 20 million dollars in cash receipts each year and facing current inflation challenges, it is crucial to educate local farmers on how to maximize the use of their land and increase their knowledge in these subject matter areas to allow for better management practices to increase overall profitability for the individual farming operations in Frio and Atascosa counties.

RESPONSE

The Frio & Atascosa County Agriculture & Natural Resources Committees and the South Texas Peanut Growers Association have identified the **South Texas Peanut Growers Annual Peanut Meeting and Annual Peanut Tour** as the educational approaches to address the crop and forage production issue related topics in Frio & Atascosa counties along with several other educational activities.

Multiple educational methods to reach targeted audiences and increase the adoption of recommended practices were employed. Programming efforts were directed to using the **South Texas Peanut Growers Annual Peanut Meeting and Annual Peanut Tour** covering Texas A&M AgriLife Peanut Breeding Trials & Research Results for 2023, 2023 Peanut Trial Update & Diesel Nut Report, Peanut Herbicide & Weed Control & trials, Peanut Economic Outlook, Farm Bill Discussion, followed by a Dicamba Auxin Training. Program collaborators and sponsors provided updates on the Texas Peanut Producers Board and the South Texas Peanut Growers Association.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- These programs were targeted towards approximately **71** crop & forage producers that represented **9** different counties (Frio, Atascosa, LaSalle, Medina, Bexar, Wilson, Jim Wells, Hidalgo, and Starr).
- Approximately **22,716 acres** of land were represented by attendees.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Texas Peanut Producers Board, South Texas Peanut Growers Association, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Tech Farms, G&M Farms, Gary Boyd Farms, Wilmeth Farms, Bill Slomchinski Farms, and Bennett Partnership contributed greatly to the success of these educational events.
- Special thank you to the specialists, speakers, and co-sponsors who presented at the below mentioned programs.

VALUE

Crop & Forage Production Education

This 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.

21 %
663 FARMS

In Frio County are
 499 acres or less.

2%

**Increase in the number of
 farms since 2012**

1023 Acres

**Average farm size in
 Frio County**



RELEVANCE

Atascosa County is made up of about 1,236 square miles of rich wildlife diversity. In which the Wildlife and Fisheries Committee have a strong desire to educate our wildlife managers to best support the native mixed brush plant communities that support wildlife populations in Atascosa County. Wildlife resources are critical to the economic viability of Atascosa County. Proper management of wildlife habitat enhances the wildlife resources of the county. Wildlife provides opportunities in tourism, hunting, and other activities that economically impact landowners and the community. Hunting opportunities provides landowners with another stream of income, an estimated \$400,000 annually throughout Atascosa County according to the 2023 Ag Increment Report. White-tailed deer, wild turkey, quail, and dove are the primary wildlife species in the region. Small pond impoundments are also important to our wildlife resources providing fresh water for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species.

RESPONSE

As response to the need for wildlife management education, the Atascosa Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, met three times during the year in September, January April . of 2023 & 2024 to plan, organize, implement, evaluate, and interpret educational activities including the Wildlife and Agriculture Tax Valuation Program for December And a youth fishing education outreach opportunity The Atascosa Wildlife Committee and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents identified educational topics for programs, helped secure speakers, held educational workshops helped educate wildlife managers on management techniques and strategies, and support the youth of Atascosa County that are interested in Wildlife by sponsoring youth to attend Texas Brigades Camps.

Partnerships and Multi County programs

A Multi County Carbon Credit Workshop was held with Bexar, Wilson, Guadalupe and Median Counties. These counties partnered with Farm Credit to offer this event for there citizens.

EVALUATION STRATEGY

A Retrospective Post Evaluation was used to measure results of the programs at

- Atascosa Tax Evaluation Workshop
- Understanding Carbon Credit Workshop

VALUE STATEMENT

Wildlife Management

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs educate landowners in fish and wildlife, and teach participants how to effectively manage these valuable resources. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching contribute approximately \$8 billion to the state's economy annually, supporting 139,000 jobs in Texas and enhancing quality of life for all residents.



**Family &
Community
Health**

Family & Community Health

Ashlie Stayton, CEA-Family & Community Health - Atascosa County

Healthy Cooking with Food Pantries Program

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offers healthy food preparation programs aimed at improving diet and nutritional well-being through meal planning, food shopping, and preparation. These programs encourage small, affordable changes for lasting health benefits, addressing chronic disease management and prevention. In Atascosa County, 38% of adults are obese, 32% are physically inactive, and 20% report poor health. In response, AgriLife Extension developed education-based programs. The Healthy Cooking with Food Pantries Program teaches participants how to cook nutritious meals using pantry items on a budget. An average of 76 individuals participated in the program, and reached 399 when members of the household were factored in. The Atascosa County Extension Office plans to expand this program in the upcoming year to additional food pantries within Atascosa County. Food pantries play a key role in reducing food insecurity, and access to them has linked to a 6.2% improvement in poor health.



Youth Healthy Cooking and Physical Activity Programs

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides programs that teach children and adults how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to reduce obesity and improved overall health. These programs help build a healthier population, lower healthcare costs, and increase productivity by promoting better eating habits and physical activity, which are key in managing and preventing chronic diseases. In Atascosa County, healthy youth nutrition and physical activities were identified as priority needs through community meetings. In response, programs such as the Smoothie Bike where children learn the importance of physical activity by powering a blender to make a healthy smoothie. Healthy Cooking Day Camp program showed youth how to cook balanced meals and then sample their creations. Physical Activity Day Camps showed youth ways to exercise through games, and dances they can practice at home.



Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat, Go Programs

Atascosa County is facing a public health crisis, with high rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, often linked to poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. To address this, youth nutrition and exercise programs have been implemented to promote healthier habits among the county's children, aiming to reduce future chronic disease risk. The Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat, Go program teaches children about growing plants, the benefits of fruits and vegetables, and the importance of exercise. This program was held at the Pleasanton and Charlotte Public Libraries, 26 parents were surveyed with 19 surveys returned and 100% reported their child is more willing to taste fruit after the program, 93% reported their child is more willing to taste vegetables after the program, and 69% reported increased physical activity in their child. This program is a step towards improving health outcomes by fostering better lifestyles from a young age.



RELEVANCE

Increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk. According to the 2023 Atascosa County State of Health Report, 38% of adults are obese, 32% are physically inactive, and 20% of adults report being in poor health. As a response, AgriLife has developed healthy lifestyle programs that can address these issues with an evidence-based approach through education.

- **13%** of adults in Atascosa County are diagnosed with Diabetes.
- **9,080** of SNAP eligible individuals in Atascosa County.
- **7.7** is the Food Environment Index for Atascosa County.
- **23%** of children under age of 18 in poverty in Atascosa County.

According to Feeding America, the food insecurity rate in Atascosa County is 12.4%. Food pantries play a crucial role in addressing food insecurity in Atascosa County, providing essential sustenance to individuals and families in need. Food pantries often prioritize providing healthy, nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. A study by UT Southwestern Medical Center and the University of Dallas showed that access to food pantries had a 6.2% reduction in poor health. By providing access to food, food pantries alleviate the financial burden of purchasing groceries, allowing individuals to allocate resources to other essential needs.

RESPONSE

Through meetings with the Atascosa County Inner Agency, Atascosa County Citizens in Action, and meetings with Regional Extension Program Specialists, how to cook healthy choices from the food pantry as an educational approach to address the poor health and obesity in the county.

Target Audience

- This program was targeted towards approximately 95 individuals who attend the Bountiful Blessings Food Pantry distribution.

Partnerships & Collaborators

- The Bountiful Blessings Food Pantry is the largest food pantry in Atascosa County, ran by volunteers. It is open to all residents in Atascosa County that show a need.
- Regional Extension Program Specialist and local Extension Family Community Health Agent, Ashlie Stayton, worked with local non-profit, Pleasanton Women's Club, to find organizations in need of health education.

VALUE STATEMENT

Healthy Food Preparation

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service healthy food preparation programs help individuals improve the quality of their diet and nutritional well-being by building and improving skills in meal planning, food shopping, and food preparation as well as promotion of family engagement and social interaction. Benefits promote small changes that are feasible, affordable, and lead to lasting eating routines that promote good health.

20%

OF ADULTS IN ATASCOSA COUNTY REPORT BEING IN FAIR OR POOR HEALTH

38%

OF ADULTS IN ATASCOSA COUNTY REPORT A BMI OVER 30.



RELEVANCE

Atascosa County faces a concerning public health crisis, with alarming rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease among adults. These conditions are often linked to unhealthy lifestyle choices, including poor nutrition and a lack of physical activity. **Implementing comprehensive youth nutrition and exercise programs is crucial to combat these trends and promote a healthier future for the county's youth.** By educating young people about healthy eating habits and encouraging regular physical activity, we can empower them to make informed choices that will benefit their overall well-being and reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases.

- **13% of adults in Atascosa County have diabetes.**
- **38% of adults are obese.**
- **32% of adults are inactive**
- **Cardiovascular deaths rate is 47.6 per 10,000 population.**

Increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk. As a response, AgriLife has developed healthy lifestyle programs that can address these issues with an evidence-based approach through education. By implementing youth nutrition and exercise programs, Atascosa County AgriLife Extension can help to take a proactive approach to addressing these pressing health challenges and build a healthier community for generations to come.

RESPONSE

Through meetings with the Atascosa County Inner Agency, Atascosa County Citizens in Action, local partners, and Texas Community Futures Forum, healthy nutrition and physical activities for youth were highlighted as a need within Atascosa County. Programs that addressed these needs are:

- **Early Childhood Learn Grow Eat Go:** Children learn about plants, what plants need to grow, and how plants provide for our needs. Children plant plants themselves while sampling fresh fruits and vegetables. In the final part of the lesson, children learn the importance of exercise through a movement activity.
- **Smoothie Bike:** Children learn the importance of physical activity and eating healthy. They will pedal the smoothie bike to power the blender, which will make a healthy smoothie snack to try at the end of the lesson.
- **Healthy Cooking Day Camps:** Day camps are held to teach youth how to cook, and the importance of maintaining a well balanced diet. Participants get hands on training on how to make each recipe and end the camp day with sampling their creations.
- **Physical Activity Day Camps:** Children learn the importance of daily exercise. They learn different physical activities such as exercises, games, dances, and more they can take home and implement with their families.

VALUE STATEMENT

Weight Management

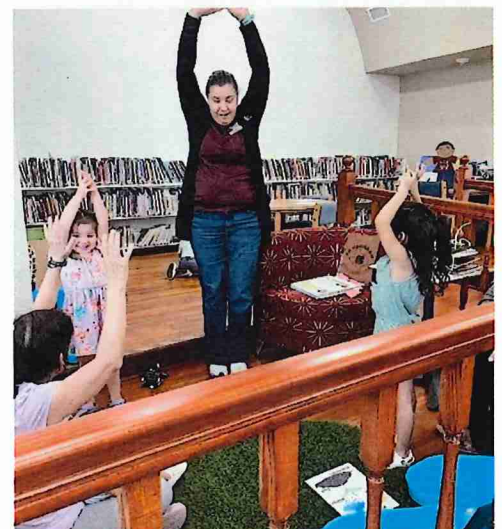
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service engages children and adults in programs that teach them how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to promote health and reduce their risk for obesity. Texans benefit through a healthier population, reduced healthcare costs, and increased productivity.

38%

of Adults in Atascosa County report a BMI over 30

32%

of adults in Atascosa County reported no leisure-time physical activity.



ATASCOSA COUNTY

Dear Friends of Extension,

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a unique education agency with a statewide network of professional educators, trained volunteers, and county offices. It reaches into every Texas county to address local priority needs. Some of our major efforts are in mitigating drought impacts; conserving water use in homes, landscapes, and production agriculture; improving emergency management; enhancing food security; and protecting human health through education about diet, exercise, and disease prevention and management. AgriLife Extension demonstrates the latest technology and best practices to improve the state’s food and fiber system, which serves all Texas consumers and contributes nine percent of the gross domestic product. Atascosa 4-H, our primary youth program, engages some 250 youth every year in learning projects, leadership development, and community service. We are pleased to extend an invitation to you for any of the following educational programs and events in 2025:

Agriculture and Natural Resources

March TBA	Strawberry Workshop/ Field Day
March 4	South Texas Peanut Growers Association Annual Meeting
April 15	Atascosa Cattlemen’s Association Annual Meeting
April 16	Multi County Water Screening program
May 6	Multi County Reproduction Management Workshop
May 7	South Texas Beef and Forage Workshop
May 9	Multi County Beef Workshop
June TBA	Turf Grass Education
August TBA	Strawberry Workshop
September TBA	South Texas Peanut Growers Annual Tour
October 16	Atascosa County Ag Day
December 10	Preparing for the Spring Growing Season CEU Workshop

Family and Community Health

Monthly	Cooking Healthy with the Bountiful Blessing Food Pantry
All Tuesdays in March	Learn Grow Eat Go Early Childhood, Pleasanton Public Library.

Throughout the year different classes will be held for diabetes, hypertension, general nutrition, and eating healthy on a budget. If you are interested in any of these programs, please call the Extension Office.

- Coping for Control
- Cooking Well with Diabetes
- General Nutrition and Exercise
- Car Safety and car seat resources available.

Business Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00am to 5:00pm

Atascosa County
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
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