

Extension Newsletter for County Commissioners Court

Leading in Times of Need

To address accidental, man-made or natural disasters, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and our County Extension Agents and specialists work to prepare families, businesses, and communities to be resilient during times of crisis and work with other State and Federal Agencies to aid in the pending response and recovery.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension serves as a state agency member to the Texas Emergency Management Council led by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). In this role, AgriLife Extension staff serve as communicators and educators related to emergency preparedness, mitigation, and recovery. In addition, AgriLife Extension personnel serve on District Disaster Committees across the State and in the State Operations Center to support the initial response efforts of Texas related to agricultural production damage assessments, stabilization of the livestock infrastructure, and security of Texas' food supply.

Regarding stabilization of livestock infrastructure and securing of the Texas' food supply, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension maintains strike teams of County Extension Agents, supervisors, and specialists from across Texas that stand ready to deploy to an impact zone in support of recovery efforts coordinated by TDEM and supported by our state agricultural partners. During deployments, Extension personnel will establish animal supply points (ASPs) to coordinate the receiving and distribution of hay, feed and water to impacted livestock owners. Donated hay and feed are provided to livestock owners via direct pickup at an

ASP and, in some cases, air dropped or ferried in by boat to stranded livestock. This provides needed resources to enhance the survivability of displaced or stranded livestock until they can be recovered and the local agricultural infrastructure can stand back up. The efforts of Extension through an ASP not only save livestock, but it aids in stabilizing the finances of families that produce livestock for a living and the communities that rely on production agriculture as one of its economic engines. Through the efforts of Extension, some 13 ASPs were established across the Harvey impact zone and 5,100 tons of hay, 530 tons of cattle cubes, 432 tons of horse feed and 451 tons of all-stock feed were distributed. In addition, 2,200 miles were surveyed by air by Texas A&M AgriLife Wildlife Services and USDA personnel to locate stranded livestock and 117 tons of hay and cubes were airlifted by Texas Military Forces to these stranded animals.

In addition to carrying out traditional roles related to disasters, the sheer magnitude of Hurricane Harvey led to an expanded role for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and our County Extension Agents in those counties impacted by Harvey.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Military personnel load round bales to be dropped to a stranded herd of cattle during



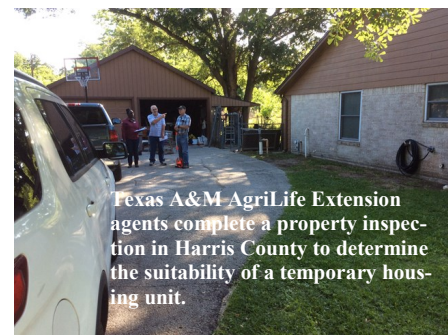
Tyler Coufal, CEA-AG and Natural Resources
Chelsea Stevens, CEA-Family & Community Health
Lauren Harmon, CEA-4-H Youth Development
Kate Whitney, CEA-Horticulture
Shelley Franklin, CEA-Natural Resources

With the formation of the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas (GCRT) and the assignment of Texas A&M University System Chancellor, John Sharp, as the Commissioner of GCRT, local county Extension Agents were tasked to serve as a liaison between county, municipal and school district officials and State and Federal Agencies working in Harvey recovery in the counties they serve. These Extension liaisons made daily contact with local jurisdictions to determine if they had any recovery related issues associated with damaged public property and equipment. Any identified issue was forwarded to the Assistance Center on the Texas A&M campus or the FEMA Joint Field Office in Austin to be reviewed and a resolution outlined. Resolutions were then shared with the Extension liaison who, in turn, then shared it with the appropriate elected official. Over 6,500 such field reports were documented by Extension liaisons during Harvey with some 747 resolutions provided back to local elected officials. Such daily communications aided in identified and clearing roadblocks associated with the Hurricane Harvey response with the hope to make recovery efforts more efficient.

Other roles assumed by some local county Extension agents and some Extension specialists included serving on financial technical assistance teams and conducting inspections of damaged homes and property. To help jurisdictions more efficiently organize and file reimbursement requests for such things as debris removal, providing emergency protective services, and repair to damaged facilities or equipment through the FEMA Public

Assistance Grants portal associated with the recovery efforts from Harvey, Extension personnel received special training and deployed to assist jurisdictions as requested. Finally, several County Extension Agents completed inspection of damaged homes and property for the General Land Office to expedite the placement of mobile homes or recreational vehicles as temporary housing units for families repairing or rebuilding storm damaged homes.

This use of local County Extension agents as a force multiplier in times of disaster was also tested during the recent October flooding the many parts of Texas experienced. County Extension agents helped TDEM in completing preliminary damage assessments across many counties impacted by heavy rainfall. Such coordination could lead to a process of making such assessments more efficient and timely, thus aiding in speeding the recovery for impacted communities.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents complete a property inspection in Harris County to determine the suitability of a temporary housing unit.

Agriculture and Natural Resources:

- Milam/Williamson Small Grains Field Day: Multi-county program held April 26 with 32 in attendance.
- Stiles Farm Field Day: Held June 19 with over 200 total participants. Topics included wild hog control, weed management, insect control and new technology. Anticipated economic impact of \$696,520 for participants. Multi-county program hosted by Williamson, Milam, Falls, McLennan and Hill counties.
- Williamson County Land Expo: Held July 18th with 41 in attendance.
- Williamson County Beef Cattle Symposium: Held September 6th with 42 in attendance. Topics included selecting replacement heifers, beef cow nutrition, forage management, beef cattle economics and fly control.
- Williamson County Crops Conference: Held October 16 with 80 in attendance. Topics included small grains, corn, sorghum, cotton, economics and laws and regulation presentations. Anticipated economic impact of \$590,436 for participants.
- D8 Farm and Ranch Seminar: District-wide program held December 13 with 50 in attendance. Topics included weed control and management, laws and regulations, turfgrass management, worker protection standards, spray equipment set-up, pest management and wild hog control.
- **Master Naturalists:** 116 active members, 19 members in training, Average 1400 volunteer hours per month. First place individual in the City Nature Challenge Species ID, 2nd Place individual Observations

4-H and Youth Development:

- 4-H youth enrollment 543; Adult and Youth volunteers-82
- Group youth enrollment- 987

4-H Leadership and Personal Development

- 8 youth participated in District Consumer Decision Making
- 22 youth participated in District 4-H Fashion Show
- 12 youth participated in District 4-H Fusion
- 9 youth participated in District 4-H Roundup
- \$90,000 was awarded in total Scholarships

4-H Livestock Projects

- 245 4-H members are participating in a livestock project with representation at all Texas Major shows, The Williamson County Livestock Show and the Wilco Youth Expo
- Highlights: Reserve Champion Goat & Hen, at the HLS&R; Reserve Champion Cockerel and Hereford at Rodeo Austin, Champion Polled Hereford Heifer at the FWSSR

NR Contests

- 13 Contest Participants
- Horse Judging - 6 members attended 8 contests; 3rd Place Team HLS&R, High Point Individual NCHA (National Cutting Horse Association) & HLS&R (Houston Livestock Show), State Qualifying Team
- Livestock Judging - 8 members attended 6 contests

Shooting Sports

- 16 members participated in the State Games, 2nd Place Jr. Bare bow
- Regional High Point TSRA Jr and 1st Place Team and member of the National TSRA team in Highpower Rifle
- National Jr Olympic Championship qualifier in air rifle

Horticulture:

- Green Thumbs Up Gardening: Monthly program offered at both the Cedar Park and Round Rock Public Libraries about lawn and garden topics. 151 participants since beginning in January 2019.
- Hands on in the Garden: Monthly program offered at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden to offer training and hands-on experience in fruit, vegetable, and ornamental gardening. 452 participants since May 2018.
- Master Gardener Monthly Meeting: Monthly program offered to the public about a variety of gardening topics. 1,173 participants since May 2018.
- Pecan Grafting & Integrated Pest Management: Field day workshop offered to commercial pecan growers and homeowners about grafting and managing pests. 34 attended.
- Peach Pruning & Planting Workshop: Hands-on workshop about good peach varieties for Williamson County. Demonstration for proper planting and pruning techniques. 36 attended.
- Tomato Lunch & Learn: Workshop to teach homeowners how to grow and prepare tomatoes. Participants were given two tomato transplants and the FCH Agent demonstrated a tomato soup recipe. 34 attended.
- Lettuce Lunch & Learn: A one-hour program to talk about how to grow lettuce and the nutrient value of lettuce. Participants conducted a taste-test to rank the best lettuce varieties grown in the demonstration garden. 26 attended..

Family & Community Health:

- Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School is being held monthly at the new Georgetown Annex. 45 participants
- Step Up & Scale Down program with 51 City of Georgetown employees and with an additional 32 Sun City residents last fall. Combined they had a total weight loss of 395 pounds. .
- Williamson County Youth Fair was held December 3-6 in Taylor, TX. We had a total of 875 entries, with 23 Best in Show exhibits auctioned at the live auction in conjunction with Williamson County Livestock Show. These exhibits sold for a total of \$7,100.
- Williamson County Extension Education Association gave (2) \$1,500 scholarships that were awarded to Williamson County 4-H members.
- Hosted an Air Fryer 101 Workshop on May 3rd with 25 participants.

Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to update you on the Extension educational programming in Williamson County and the efforts being made by your county Extension agents Tyler, Chelsea, Kate, Lauren and Shelley. They continue to provide programming which is in tune with our mission which is to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing educational programs and services to the people of Texas. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 254-968-4144 ext.204 or e-mail at d-kelm@tamu.edu.



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District Extension Administrator