

May 2023

## Extension Newsletter for County Commissioners Court

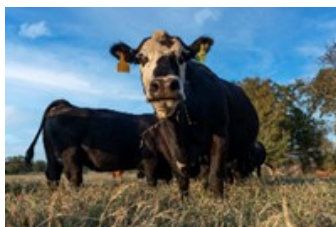
### AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

AgriLife Extension teaches agricultural producers to adopt best management practices based on new scientific knowledge that will help them increase production, enhance sustainability, and conserve natural resources. Also, by educating the public about agriculture and food production, AgriLife Extension creates a partnership with all Texans that can improve food safety and security, reduce the prevalence of food insecurity, and improve diet and human nutrition throughout the state.

Additionally, safeguarding our precious natural resources and maintaining a clean and healthy environment are among AgriLife Extension's top priorities. We encourage production practices and the use of technologies that promote sustainability in agricultural production, conduct conservation programs that reduce drought impacts, improve, and preserve water quality, minimize wildfire risks, and help maximize water supplies through more efficient irrigation and conservation. We also help to promote the safe and reduced use of pesticides through the pesticide use training, and the integrated pest management program.

#### Program Accomplishments

##### Animal Agriculture



Contact totals for **livestock and forage** producers was 58,114. Clientele participated in 32 educational programs conducted in 21 counties. Wildlife education continues to be a significant portion of the Extension program effort; wildlife education reached

8,342 total clientele. Wild Pigs continue to be a significant pest in District 8. The Extension response in District 8, included 27 events. Total contacts for this effort were 15,518.

##### CROPS, Water, & Applicator Training

Thirty-nine field crop related educational programs were conducted in 15 counties involving 87,111 total clientele.



**Water quality** and conservation continues to be a major issue. Both youth and adults have been participants in home, landscape, and production agriculture activities. 18 counties conducted events and involved over 17,449 individuals. Applicators with agricultural, structural, and private pesticide licenses must participate in continuing education to maintain certification. District 8 has 10,638 this equates to an estimated \$93,987,728 wage base that benefits from certifications provided by Extension.

#### HORTICULTURE AND PUBLIC / AG INTERFACE



Horticulture continues to be in strong demand by District 8 clientele. The Extension response in District 8 is a robust effort that strives to reach these folks through multiple efforts including 15 Master Gardner Chapters with 700+ members. These members contributed 50,000+ Volunteer hours back to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Total **horticulture** contacts in 2021 were 57,582.

**Agriculture literacy** was identified as a major issue. Extension engaged in a unique opportunity and provided outreach while involving various commodity and health related groups. Activities featured unbiased research-based information concerning the importance and appreciation of the vital role agriculture plays in daily lives. 35,332 adult and youth participated.

Although District 8 does not include any "major" metropolitan areas, we do see an influx of folks moving into counties in the District to enjoy a more rural lifestyle. With this comes the need to educate that clientele about issues and opportunities that come with a rural lifestyle. The Central Region educational response included 10 counties providing New Landowner Series with a total of 60 face-to-face sessions. Total contacts were 3,167.

District 8 continues to have a robust agriculture production impact in Texas. Beef cattle continues to lead the way with other commodities.

#### District 8

Top Ranked Commodities by Economic Impact of  
Agricultural Production and Related Items, 2021

Commodity	Estimated Value* (\$1000's)	Percent of District Value	Economic Impact** (\$1,000's)
Other Beef	\$903,744.80	32.31%	\$1,867,515.43
Milk	\$378,678.50	13.54%	\$845,115.36
Hay	\$382,267.90	13.67%	\$806,811.57
Feed Corn	\$319,308.30	11.42%	\$769,552.80
Broilers	\$201,180.00	7.19%	\$461,965.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,185,179.50</b>	<b>78.12%</b>	<b>\$4,750,960.77</b>

## Agriculture and Natural Resources:

- *Tri-County Cow-Calf Workshop* was held in Jan 2022 and included sessions on marketing cattle, weed control, livestock management, nutrition, and producer processing-facilities (138 attendees).
- The *Winter Grains Field Day* was held in April 2022. Topics included new wheat and oat varieties, and a special session on foliar disease management. (16 attendees).
- The *2nd Annual Fiber Hemp Variety Field Day* (July 2022). The trials were personally established and managed to select varieties suitable for Central Texas conditions. Other speakers discussed legal issues, outsourcing seed and best management practices. This was one of only 3 Statewide locations (60 attendees).
- The *Blackland Income Growth Conference* was held in Waco on January 2022. The Grains Session highlights included grain marketing/fertilizer updates, pest management in corn and sorghum, and a CEU program on sprayer design and managing sprayer drift (28 attended).
- *D8 Farm and Ranch Seminar*: 8-CEU event was held on December 2022. Pesticide Laws; Pasture pests; Feral Hog Management, and Pesticide handling (50 attended).
- *Master Naturalists*: The *Goodwater Branch* has 167 active members who logged 10,397 volunteer hours in 2022.

## Family & Consumer Sciences:

- Four *Food Preservation Workshops* were offered from June-September 2022. Participants learned the steps for water bath and pressure canning. (54 total attendees)
- *Cooking Well with Diabetes*: 4-week cooking program offered in June 2022. (6 participants)
- *Step Up & Scale Down*: 8-week series for weight management. September-November 2022 (6 participants)
- Meal preparation class called *Freezer Pleasers* was offered in August 2022. Participants learned tips and tricks for easy meal prepping and cooking a few recipes. (6 attendees)
- *Walk N Talk*: 8-week series. Alternate fruit or veggie each week, with 20-30 minutes of physical activity. Crystal Falls Crossing Apartments in Leader from September-November 2022. (4 attendees)
- A *Food Handler's* class was offered in February 2023 with 11 participants.
- *Preserving the Harvest* series was offered in March 2023 with 14 participants. Dr. Jenna Anding, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Specialist was the guest speaker during session 1.
- Family & Community Health's Quarterly Newsletter: Rooted in Wellness started in January 2023 with 150 subscribers

### Better Living for Texans (BLT)

#### Adult Series:

- A *Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* promotes increasing fruit/veggie intake, food safety, and food resource management. **11 sessions delivered; 56 contacts; 8 graduates**
- *Get the Facts* helps participants learn how to use the Nutrition Facts Label to make healthy food choices. **8 sessions delivered (done jointly with a District 8 BLT agent); 47 contacts; 5 graduates**
- *Walk N Talk* encourages increased physical activity by giving participants an opportunity to learn about fruits & vegetables and completing a physical activity. **8 sessions delivered; 29 contacts; 1 graduate**

#### Youth Series:

- *Walk N Talk* encourages increased physical activity by giving participants an opportunity to learn about fruits & vegetables and completing a physical activity. **24 sessions delivered; 315 contacts; 25 graduates**
- *Choose Healthy* promotes My Plate, energy balance via physical activity, making nutritious choices, and choosing healthy drinks. **5 sessions delivered; 76 contacts; 2 graduates**

## 4-H and Youth Development:

- *4-H Youth Enrollment* – **538**; Adult volunteers – **88**; **16** Clubs
- Our top 4-H youth programs include: Shooting Sports – **195** youth; Livestock – **187** youth; STEM – **58** youth; Public Speaking, Leadership, and Citizenship – **53** youth, and Food and Nutrition – **40** youth
- **114** youth competed in 4-H Contests at the county, district, and state level. **5** youth placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the state in their respective contests.
- *4-H Youth Leadership and Personal Development*:
  - o 7 County Council Officers, and 32 County Council members
  - o 2 Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors
  - o 2 Texas 4-H Healthy Youth Ambassadors
  - o 2 Texas 4-H Fashion and Interior Design Ambassadors
  - o 3 Williamson County Youth selected to participate in the GLOBE Leadership Program (only 20 total participants selected)
- *Curriculum enrichment* is a large part of the youth development program, providing lessons on horticulture, STEM, water conservation, healthy living, and agriculture. Throughout the year we reached **2,539** youth in public schools, private schools, homeschools, and after school organizations through curriculum enrichment.
- *Williamson County Livestock Show and Williamson County Youth Fair* are held annually in December, and provide opportunities for youth to show livestock projects as well as crafted items and art. Livestock Show highlights include **127** exhibitors with **324** entries, and **10** Champions and **18** Reserve Champions. Youth Fair highlights include **91** youth with **368** entries, **12** Best in Show, **38** Grand Champion, and **35** Reserve Champions.
- At the *Texas Major Shows*, Williamson County was represented by **77** youth with **440** entries in livestock projects, judging contests, and agriculture mechanics projects. Of those participants, we had **5** Champions, **1** Reserve Champion, **12** top 10 placings at the judging contests, and **30** youth make the auction at the major shows. One of our participants earned Grand Champion at the San Antonio Livestock Show's Shootout, and also earned a **\$10,000** scholarship.

## Horticulture

- *Green Thumbs Up*: monthly educational program about lawn and garden topics. Partnered with Round Rock Public Library, Cedar Park Public Library, and Brushy Creek Community Center for facilities and advertising. Master Gardeners and CEA teach programs. Conducted 31 programs at participating locations (**395 participants**).
- *Hands on in the Garden*: Monthly program to teach hands-on lawn and garden topics in the MG demonstration garden. Taught by MG volunteers and CEA with seasonal topics (**234 participants**).
- *Monthly Newsletter and Bi-weekly newspaper column*: 1,700 newsletter subscribers and circulation of 10,000 for Williamson County Sun Newspaper.
- *Lawn & Garden 101*: Hosted a seven-week series in the spring (**89 program participants**). Master Gardeners and Horticulture Agent presented at two-hour classes each week. Hosted a four-week program series in the fall (**74 program participants**).
- *Vegetable Conference* in April 2022 (**50 attended**); Fruit Forum in September 2022 (**16 attended**), and an Organic Growers Conference October 17-18, 2022 (**35 attended**)
- Spoke at 22 civic and community organization meetings for a total of **856 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 agent, Kate Hajda and her team. 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 or e-mail at d-kelm@tamu.edu.

