



Extension Education in Gregg County
Making a Difference

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.

Gregg County – Summary of 2015 Educational Contacts

(Since May 1, 2015)

- **Total Contacts – 30,132**
- **Individual Contacts (Direct) – 1,667**
- **Individual Contacts (Indirect) – 18,806**
- **Marketing Contacts (Newsletters, Web Site and Email) – 7,342**

Beef & Forage Management Plan

Purpose & Background Data:

Beef Quality Assurance and the Texas Beef Quality Assurance program continue to be an important issue in Gregg County. To date, a small amount or number of producers are certified. BQA will be one of the driving forces in continued quality beef production and our producers need to realize this especially as its effect marketing issues.

Beef and forage production is still a major factor and contributor to the total agricultural income in Gregg County, accounting for 50% of the total agricultural income that is reported each year. The Beef Quality Assurance issue, as it deals with proper beef cattle health management and food safety, have come about in a big way since 2000. More than ever, beef consumers are aware of the issues that affect food safety and providing a wholesome, safe product for their families. Beef producers need to be more aware of this issue as it relates to their product, beef cattle. Gregg County beef producers, under the direction of the Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club and Gregg County Extension Agriculture Committee, provides input into the program planning, implementation and evaluation of educational programs and activities to address beef quality assurance issues, as well as general beef cattle management as a whole. The programs planned will affect not only beef cattle management, but forage production practices as well.

Planning Group – Gregg County Extension AG/NR Committee & Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club

Response

The Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month for their monthly meeting and educational program or speaker. The opportunity is also presented each month to offer one (1) CEU toward any Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license to participants while attending the meeting.



The 2015 East Regional Beef & Forage Conference was held in Upshur County and was a multi-county effort by the following counties; Gregg, Harrison, Panola, Rusk and Upshur Counties. Program speakers for the day included; Paul Griffin, who discussed irrigation of pastures, Hugh Aljoe, from the Noble Foundation who discussed utilization of winter forage, Dr. Vanessa Corriher, Extension Forage Specialist from Overton who discussed options for winter forage. Craig Watson, beef producer from Sherman, Texas discussed cattle operation low inputs and rotational grazing. Jack LeClair, from Bayer Crop Science gave participants new herbicide updates for pasture weeds. This was the third year for the conference and will continue

to rotate in future years to one of the sponsoring counties. The projected economic benefit for this event was \$6.52 per acre and \$12.54 per head of cattle based on survey results that were conducted at the conclusion of the program.

The Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club toured the Longview High School Meats Lab this year; this is a new 2 million dollar facility that will open all kinds of avenues for local beef producers, both educationally and marketing of beef cattle. The tour was facilitated by the vocational agriculture department of Longview ISD.



Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Beef & Forage Weekly Electronic Newsletter - The Agricultural Email list in the county and East Texas area, continues to grow monthly, as new producers ask to be added to the list. The email list serves several purposes, mainly to send out educational program reminders on a weekly basis, as well as the weekly Price Trends Cattle Price Report that is prepared weekly by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist in Overton.

The Tractor Safety & Sprayer Calibration Program was held with the sponsorship of Kelly Equipment of Longview and Dow AgroSciences serving as meal sponsor. Mike Kelly, Owner of Kelly Equipment gave a brief presentation on tractor safety, pointing out safety concerns and the use of guards on equipment and why they are there. Darren Rozell, of Rozell Sprayer Manufacturing of Tyler and John Roach from Dow AgroSciences, discussed sprayer calibration and herbicide updates for pasture weed control.



The Gregg County Fall Beef Cattle Marketing Program was held in October, here in The Gregg County Extension office. The event was co-sponsored with the Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club. Dr. David Anderson, Extension Economist from College Station discussed beef prices and the commodities that affect them on a world-wide scale. Brian Cummins, retired County Extension Agent from Van Zandt County talked about how to avoid discounts from cattle buyers. The evening meal was sponsored by Legacy Ag Credit of Longview.

The Beef Cattle Winter Nutritional Program was held in November with Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist from Overton as the evening speaker. Jason discussed winter nutrition needs of cattle going into and during the winter months of Northeast Texas. His main topic other than nutrition was on body condition and how that alone can impact nutritional needs, but pregnancy and calving intervals as well.

The Monthly Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Newsletter is published every month and sent via email to club members, those that do not have email, hard copies are sent by regular mail. The newsletter features program updates and reminders, as well as beef and forage related articles from Texas A&M and other institutions like the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Results

During the 2015 year, four major beef and forage educational programs were evaluated using the “East Region” survey tools that are located on-line. These four events were the East Texas Regional Forage Conference, Tractor Safety Program, Fall Beef Cattle Marketing Program and the Winter Cattle Feeding & Nutritional Program.

2015 East Texas Regional Forage Conference

Average head of cattle managed from the participants - 98 head

Average number of acres managed from participants – 235.80

Total anticipated economic benefit per acre - \$10.52

Total anticipated economic benefit per head - \$11.95

Average total economic impact per producers operation - \$5,682.97

Total economic impact for this program – \$227,318.80

2015 Tractor Safety & Sprayer Calibration Program

Average head of cattle managed from the participants – 62 head

Average number of acres managed from participants – 347.55

Total anticipated economic benefit per acre - \$5.16

Total anticipated economic benefit per head - \$12.36

Average total economic impact per producers operation - \$3,104.75

Total economic impact for this program – \$65,199.75



2015 Fall Cattle Marketing Program

Average head of cattle managed from the participants - 83 head

Average number of acres managed from participants – 510.50

Total anticipated economic benefit per acre - \$5.58

Total anticipated economic benefit per head - \$8.72

Average total economic impact per producers operation - \$3,390.84

Total economic impact for this program – \$54,253.44

2015 Winter Cattle Feeding Program

Average head of cattle managed from the participants - 72 head

Average number of acres managed from participants – 238

Average total anticipated economic benefit per acre - \$13.17

Average total anticipated economic benefit per head - \$13.02

Average total economic impact per producers operation - \$4,602.84

Total economic impact for this program – \$41,425.56

Total economic impact for the major programs held in 2015 in Beef & Forage - \$388,197.55

2015 Beef & Forage Program Notes...

Office Contacts - 265

On-Site Contacts - 723

Phone Contacts - 288

Contacts by Extension Volunteers - 330

Email Contacts – 22,400

Newsletter Contacts - 320

Other Agricultural Related Programming Efforts (Base AG/NR Plan and Master Gardener Program)

Planning Group – Gregg County Extension AG/NR Committee, Beekeeper's Association & Gregg County Master Gardener Association



The Longview Beekeeper's Association was started in Gregg County in June 2015. The club meets on the 4th Thursday of each month and features club business and then a program speaker each meeting. The club averages 40 to 50 members each meeting and continues to grow in membership. The club became official in September, voting and approving the club by-laws. This new beekeeper's association serves a wide area, including members from not only Gregg County, but Harrison, Rusk and Upshur

Counties as well.

Mass Media Contacts are achieved through a regular, weekly news column that is written and appears in the Sunday edition of the Longview News Journal. News articles are also sent weekly to the Gladewater mirror. There is also a regular blog in the Longview News Journal that features comments and educational materials dealing with home horticulture topics.



Agriculture and Natural Resources

A Water Right's Program was presented in October that featured Judon Fambrough, with the Texas Real Estate Center in College Station, Texas. The title of the presentation was "Who's Water is it Anyway?" and was well attended by local property owners in the area. This program was co-sponsored with the Gregg County Leadership Advisory Board.



The Gregg-Upshur County Soil Health Program was held with the Upshur-Gregg Soil & Water Conservation District helping to co-sponsoring the program and also sponsored the evening meal. Ryan Walser with the USDA-NRSC presented a session on soil health and ways to "armor" the soil. Dr. Leon Young, Agricultural Professor from Stephen F. Austin State University discussed how to interpret the soil test results and soil fertility in general as it relates to forage grasses.

The "Last Chance" Pesticide Credit Hour Program was held in December to allow pesticide license holders a chance to earn credit hours or CEU's toward their pesticide license recertification requirements. This course is a video series that featured four credit hours. This program is always a nice addition to our regular CEU's that are awarded during educational programming though out the year, to make sure that our license holders are caught up on this requirement. In 2015, since the month of May, eleven CEU's have been made available to pesticide license holders in Gregg County.

Gregg County Master Gardener Program

The Gregg County Master Gardener program volunteers did an excellent job keeping the association together until the new Extension staff was in place and help with educational efforts. The association continues to hold their monthly Master Gardener Association meetings, post events on their Facebook site and help Extension staff with news articles and other promotional items.



The 2015 Master Gardener Class graduated four interns from this class and was awarded completion certificates during their Annual Master Gardener Awards Luncheon that was held this spring. The 2016 Master Gardener class schedule has been set and registrations are coming in. This year's class will be a joint program between Gregg and Harrison Counties. The class will start in January 2016.

Several Master Gardener "Learn at Lunch" programs were held though out the year, after the monthly Master Gardener Association meetings. These programs allowed the general public to attend and hear guest speakers talk about several subjects such as Earthkind Gardening, Basic Greenhouse Management, Water and Managing a Healthy Lifestyle to name a few.

The First Annual Fall Master Gardner Plant Sale was held in October of this year at the Gregg County Extension office. This was the first sale that the association has hosted as a fundraiser. The association did well and the sale was a success, plans are to hold this plant sale each fall in October and make this an annual event!



Acknowledgments

The Gregg County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee and the Oil Belt Farm & Ranch Club both offer great insight into the educational programs and activities in the county, thanks for their dedication and service to the educational needs of the county as a whole. Also to the farm supply stores and

Agriculture and Natural Resources

various vendors in the area for supporting Extension education. To Legacy Ag Credit for sponsoring many of the meals and educational content that was offered in 2015.

Family and Consumer Science Program

Planning Groups – Gregg County Extension FCS Committee & Gregg County Diabetic Support Group

Family & Consumer Science (FCS) Committee

The Family and Consumer Science Committee was formed and met for the first time on June 29, 2015. This committee supports the FCS Agent and programs implemented in Gregg County. This group consists of nurses, a public health director, business managers, teachers, and past volunteers. The committee met every month with the last monthly meeting being in September. The committee will begin again in January and will be scheduled to meet quarterly.



Food Preservation Class was held on August 29, 2015 we held the first Food Preservation class. There have been classes in the past with other agents, but the first with the new FCS Agent. Precinct 1 employees were gracious to allow the class to be held in their kitchen. There were approximately 13 attendees with Dr. Jenna Anding from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension presenting a hands on demonstration on how to make strawberry jam and dehydrating foods. The class was a success and there have been requests for continuing classes in the future.

Walk Across Texas “Gregg County Switcheroo”

34% of adults (% of adults with a BMI greater than or equal to 30 kg/m²) in Gregg County are obese. This calculates to approximately 42,479 adults in this county. Obesity leads to other preventable illnesses like type 2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, heart failure, high blood pressure, stroke, high blood cholesterol, metabolic syndrome and cancer. This is a major concern for Gregg County. The first program implemented to address this issue was Walk Across Texas “Gregg County Switcheroo”. Walk Across Texas is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. The program is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Each team consisted of eight people and each person was to pick a partner to switch their tennis shoes to ensure participation to complete the program. The walk began on September 1, 2015 with a kick-off event held at the Gregg County Court House. Ten teams signed up and in the end eight teams participated with approximately 14K miles walked by October 27, 2015. The program will be implemented in Gregg County twice a year and the next event will be on April 1, 2016.



The Dinner Tonight-Yamboree was held on October 16, 2015, five county FCS Agents held a Dinner Tonight at the Yamboree Exhibit Building in Gilmer, Texas. The purpose of this program was to demonstrate and serve the individuals attending easy and healthy recipes to take home to make for their family. This program was a success and we are looking forward to providing this information every year at the Yamboree Festival.



The Harvest Festival Home Economics Exhibition and Judging was held on October 21, 2015 over 300 entries were submitted for the Gregg County Harvest Festival Home Economics Division. This event was challenging as the agent had never experienced an event like the Harvest Festival. In the future, the FCS Agent will form a committee for this division to ensure accuracy by making changes to the rules for all entries. Each committee member will agree to participate and be in charge of one area during the event.

The Gregg County Health Fair was held on November 5, 2015 the Gregg County Health Fair was held and a success. There were three committee members, over 30 vendors and a large county participation. This event will be held again in 2017. There was a request that the county provide a health fair for community events due to health disparities and the need for education.

Maintain No Gain

'Maintain No Gain' is a community and worksite wellness program created by the Cardiovascular Health and Wellness Program of the Texas Department of State Health Services. The program is designed to encourage participants to gain no more than two pounds during the holiday season. According to the 'Maintain No Gain' resource guide, "This six-week program will serve as a guide to control holiday weight gain and encourage a healthy lifestyle that will help persons decrease their risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke." The goals of the program are that participants maintain their weight within two pounds throughout the holiday season, beginning the week of Thanksgiving and continuing through New Year's. Also, to increase knowledge about ways to maintain healthy eating habits and to encourage participants to continue regular physical activity throughout the holidays. On November 17, 2015 a meeting was held for those businesses in Gregg County interested in participating in Maintain No Gain. We had one individual participate and signed up to encourage his employees and members of a health facility to participate. This event will be held again in 2016 with county employees and outside participants.

Diabetic Support Group-In Depth Plan for 2016

A 2012 report by the CDC estimates that approximately 10% of the population in Texas has been diagnosed with diabetes and the number increases every year. Gregg County's population is approximately 125K; therefore the amount of people diagnosed with diabetes is an estimation of 12K. Due to increased rates in this county, the extension office felt the need to implement a Diabetes Support Group focusing on Type 2 Diabetes. The plan for this group is support and to increase knowledge, self-care, dietary management and disease management in people with this preventable condition. Also to increase compliance and reduce their risk of complications by providing a general combined approach to program efforts through various Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs by reaching individuals with the following programs: Do Well Be Well with Diabetes and Walk Across Texas. This group began meeting in September with two people in attendance, again in October with five people attending and November with eight in attendance. Anna Purdum presented on bean bread and Krystal Fredericks (Good Shepherd) on carbohydrate counting. In the future, we will implement The Do Well Be Well with Diabetes program. This is a five week program with topics listed below:

- Getting Started: How Food Affects Your Blood Glucose
- Are You Eating The Right Number of Carbohydrates?
- Beyond the Diet: Improving Your Blood Glucose Control with Physical Activity?
- Beyond the Diet and Physical Activity: Improving Your Blood Glucose Control with Medication.
- Celebrating Diabetes Control While Avoiding Complications: Having Your Cake (or Snack) and Eating It, Too?

4-H and Youth Development

4-H & Youth Development

Texas 4-H is a club for kids and teens ages 5-18, and it's BIG! It's the largest youth development program in Texas with more than 550,000 members each year. No matter where you live or what you like to do, Texas 4-H has something that allows you to be a better you! You may think 4-H is only for your friends with animals, but it's so much more! You can do activities like shooting sports, food science, healthy living, robotics, fashion, and photography. Gregg County currently has approximately 75 4-H members to date and five community clubs, *Shiloh (White Oak Community Center)*, *Happy Hearts (Longview, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church)*, *Big Woods Archery (Longview)*, *Livestock, (Nporth Creek Animal Hospital, Kilgore)* *Shamrocks, (County Extension Office, Longview)*, that participate in a wide variety of projects from Leadership, Livestock, Fashion, Food Science, Robotics, Shooting Sports and much more. The skills learned from these projects allow for the youth of Gregg County to develop life skills through responsibility, citizenship, humility and dedication.



Planning Groups:

Gregg County 4-H Council- This council is made up of 11 to 18 year old 4-H members who have been selected by their peers to serve as a delegate on the county level. Their duties are to plan and implement county contest, events and programs.

Volunteer Leaders Council- This is a collected group of parents, leaders and volunteers to help in guiding our 4-H program through assisting the 4-H Council and managing events and fundraisers, as well as handling County 4-H funds.

Projects:

Citizenship – To learn, lead, and make a difference in our community through the 4-H citizenship project. As our members learn more about our community and how to participate, they will learn about local government and Texas legislative process. Some 4-H members even decide to serve on community boards for parks or local community groups. Your leadership, communication, decision making skills will improve as you develop a sense of pride in your community.



Livestock- Members involved in the 4-H Livestock project (beef, sheep & goat, swine, rabbit, poultry) learn all about animal health and nutrition, breeding, selection and marketing. Members can participate in market projects, breeding projects and even non-competitive projects. Make it your own! This is a great way to gain valuable life experiences while making lifelong friends.

2015 State Livestock Project Validations continue to be held with State Steer, State Fair of Texas Lamb & Goat Validation in June, State Lamb & Goat Validation in October and State Heifer Validation that is held in the spring and fall of this year.

Judging – Judging is a great way to learn decision making and public speaking skills. Through judging you are able to learn past the individual production of your project and apply your knowledge on an industry bases and learn valuable marketing skills. Gregg County currently participates in Meat, Dairy, Goat and Consumer Decision Making.

4-H and Youth Development

Quiz Bowl – Quiz bowl is an opportunity to demonstrate all of the information that you have gained through your project. This is a contest that will help members learn more about his or her project while getting the opportunity to compete. It is a team event where you compete against another team and whoever buzzes in first, gets to answer the question. This is another project that offers members the opportunity to learn past their individual project and learn key knowledge of an entire industry.

Fashion – Our 4-H members who are interested in fashion and being creative participate in the Clothing and Textiles project. In the 4-H this Project members learn to sew, how to be a good consumer when purchasing clothes, and the art of designing clothes and accessories, and careers in the fashion industry.

Shooting Sports – Members that enjoy the outdoors and hunting, love the shooting sports project! This project covers firearm safety and teaches responsible handling and use. This project is hands. Our members learn about a variety of firearms – currently our focus is in Archery and Shotgun.

Food & Nutrition- Preparing and serving food is a passion for our members who compete in the food & nutrition project! They learn kitchen and cooking safety, how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks, and meal ideas to reduce your risk of disease. Learning experiences focus on nutrition, food purchasing, food preparation, food safety, and related careers.

Robotics- Robots are all around us. From the food we eat to the cars we drive, robots help make our lives easier, more efficient, and simply more fun! The field of robotics is expanding at a rapid pace, and Texas 4-H is poised to help lead young people into this exciting field. Our members learn how to design, build, and program robots in an exciting and hands-on project. We build robots to do certain task; the robot can be whatever you can imagine it just has to complete the task. This is a great project for creative minds.



Youth Development

Garden-n-Gloves- This lesson allows student's hands on opportunities to plant flowers/vegetables and watch their entire growth of the seed to a flower. The students record the progress of the seeds and partake in experiments to show how the environment and other conditions effect the seeds growth performance.

Wildlife Success Stories – This lesson teaches fourth graders how careful management can help protect endangered species of wildlife. Animals featured include the wild turkey, wood duck, black-footed ferret, shortnose sturgeon, white-tailed deer, alligator, Kemp's Ridley's sea turtle, bald eagle, golden-cheeked warbler, and red-cockaded woodpecker. The lesson plans are TEKS aligned and include TAKS practice questions. Student copies and teacher transparencies are included, along with pre- and post-tests to track knowledge gained from lesson.



Hatch in the Classroom – This lesson provides an excellent opportunity to learn the development of each stage from the egg to the chick. The students record changes in the eggs by checking fertile eggs, monitoring temperature and humidity and listening for chirps in the last stage of growth. Educational activities include in-depth discussion on: egg formation, embryology, incubation and classroom experiments.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Harrison County

Personnel

Randy Reeves – CEA - AG/NR
Tami Putnam – CEA - FCS
Trevor King – CEA - 4-H & Youth
Veronica Boykin - Office Manager/Secretary

Contact Us:

Phone - 903-236-8429

Fax - 903-758-3345

Office Web Site - <http://gregg.agrilife.org>

Mailing Address:

Gregg County Extension Office
405 East Marshall Ave. Suite 101
Longview, TX. 75601