



Extension Education in Wharton County
Making a Difference

2016

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

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.

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.

Wharton County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts

4-H Members	320
4-H Volunteers	71
4-H Clubs	19
Curriculum Enrichment Participants	1165

Contacts at Educational Events

Total Contacts 24,358

Educational Events 5,143

Other Contacts 19,215

Other Contacts

All Contacts 19,215

Individual Contacts – Direct 1,680

Individual Contacts – Indirect 5,240

Newsletters 10,758

Editions 27

Educational Resources 328

Individual Contacts – Volunteer 1,182

46 news releases with a distribution reaching 94,115 contacts

Social Media Posts: 9,877 with Followers: 7,155

Volunteer Involvement

Total Involved: 353

Hours Contributed: 1,524

Making a Difference

2016 Beef and Forage Education Wharton County

Developed by:
Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR
Wharton County

Relevance

Wharton County ranks 56th in State of Texas (top 25%) in the number of beef cows and calves (57,168), and 42nd in total acres devoted to forage production (39,322 acres). Livestock and forage producers in Wharton County seek information on managing invasive species, beef cattle production practices, forage production, and beef marketing.

Response

Educational programs for beef and forages are directed by the Wharton County Beef and Forage Committee. For 2016, committee members identified the following activities

- Monthly Radio Segments on Beef and Forage Production on Ag Mondays on KULP radio
- One-on-one assistance (office visits, site visits, etc.)
- Spring Beef and Forage Seminar – March 24, 2016
- Fall Beef and Forage Seminar – October 13, 2016
- Beef Quality Assurance Training – August 9, 2016
- News Releases

Providing educational programs based on identifiable needs is essential to all Extension Educational Programs. Consistent with key issues identified by Wharton County Texas Community Futures Forum (TCFF) in February 2015, the Beef and Forage Committee included livestock marketing education in their educational programs for 2016.

Results

Spring Beef and Forage Seminar

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was provided to a representative sample of 29 of the 50 beef and forage producers who attended the March 24, 2016 Spring Beef and Forage Seminar. An online evaluation instrument was utilized and produced through Qualtrics. The evaluation instrument was emailed 90 days following the Spring Beef and Forage Seminar. 8 of 29 (27%) completed the Qualtrics, electronic evaluation. An online evaluation instrument was selected over an “in person” instrument to better measure best practices adopted rather than intent to adopt.

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.

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Knowledge Level Mean Change measured using an online, Qualtrics retrospective post evaluation

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Mean Change	Percent Increase
Knowledge of recent changes in TDA regulations regarding the supervision of restricted use pesticides when applications are made by a non-licensed person.	2.14	3.43	1.29	60%
Knowledge of chemical control methods to control deeprooted sedge	2.00	3.43	1.43	71.5%
How to identify damage caused to bermudagrass by the Bermudagrass Stem Maggot	1.00	3.14	2.14	214%
Understanding of the Veterinary Feed Directive	2.57	3.43	.86	33%
Beef herd management measures that affect long term beef herd productivity	2.57	3.43	.86	33%
Understanding of price risk management tools available to cattle producers	2.00	2.71	.71	35.5%

- **4 of 7 (57.14%)** adopted best practices
- **6 of 7 (85.71%)** estimate an economic impact
- Respondents report a total of **5,210** acres managed

Economic Impact: The anticipated economic impact to clientele of the Spring Beef and Forage Seminar is \$21,772.00.

Fall Beef and Forage Seminar

The Fall Beef and Forage Seminar focused on Beef Herd Rebuilding. Presenters included Mr. Mac Young, Extension Program Specialist – Risk Management; and Dr. Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist. A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was provided the day of the event to all producers who attended the October 13, 2016 Fall Beef and Forage Seminar. 19 of 22 (86%) completed the retrospective-post evaluation. 14 of 19 (73.68%) report that they expect to benefit from the use of the bid price tool for beef cows. These respondents expect that using the bid price tool in their cattle operations will add a value of \$8.75/cow, or a total of \$551.25 to their operation. This audience reported an average herd size of 63 cows per producer.

Knowledge Level Mean Change measured using a retrospective post evaluation

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Mean Change	Percent Increase
Level of knowledge of financial aspects of herd rebuilding.	3	4	1.0	33.33%
Understanding of the Use of the bid price estimator for beef cows	2.22	3.78	1.56	70.27%
Understanding of factors affecting recent moves in cattle markets	3.05	4.05	1.0	32.79%
Understanding of breeding cow selection techniques	3.11	4.05	0.94	30.23%
Understanding of the eco. benefits of calf & reproduction management practices	3.11	4.21	1.10	35.37%

Making a Difference

2016 Commodity Marketing and Precision Agriculture Education

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen

County Extension Agent – Ag/NR

Wharton County

Relevance

Cotton, grain Sorghum, soybean, corn, and rice production continue to be a major economic force in Wharton County. The 2015 Texas Community Futures Forum identified that crop producers will need to keep abreast of marketing opportunities, precision agriculture practices, and variety/seed technology developments to remain competitive in the industry. The use of commodity pricing strategies and precision agriculture technology will be important to maintain a crop producers' economic sustainability in the years to come.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee and the Western Rice Belt Conference Planning Committee were both instrumental in developing, delivering, and evaluating educational programs in 2016 that addressed commodity marketing and use of precision agriculture technology. The following educational conferences and seminars were conducted in 2016:

- Pre-Harvest Commodity Price Management Workshop – June 3, 2016. Dr. Mark Welch, Extension Economist Grain Marketing gave a grain market update, and gave examples of a feed grain marketing plan based on current, actual trends in the feed grain market. Dr. Thomas Wynn, Coastal Rice and Futures, Inc – East Bernard, Texas presented a current Rice Market Outlook.
- Remote Crop Sensing Seminar and Demonstration – June 9, 2016. Dr. Juan Landivar, Texas A&M AgriLife Research presented an overview of drone technology research in Texas. This was followed by a drone demonstration by Mr. Joe Jett, J2 Aerial Imaging using a fixed-wing drone utilizing Enhanced Multi-spectral Imagery.
- Crop Decision Aid Workshop – November 15, 2016. Mr. Mac Young, Extension Program Specialist-Risk Management with the AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Corpus Christi taught a hands-on workshop that introduced program participants to the Crop Analyzer-Crop Decision Aid Tool. This was a hands-on workshop held at the Northside Education Center's Computer Lab in El Campo, Texas. Participants worked from individual computers to develop specific crop budgets to fit their individual operation and needs, while determining breakeven costs and what crop mix might generate the best returns.

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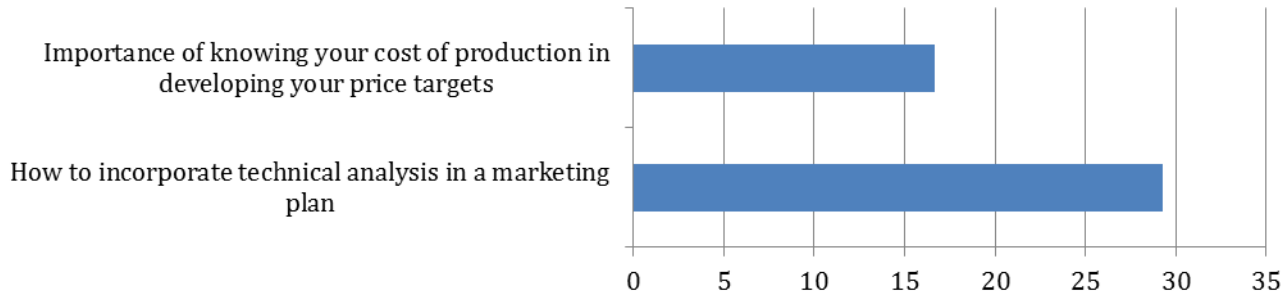
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Results

Pre-Harvest Commodity Price Management Workshop

To determine the programmatic results of Pre-Harvest Commodity Price Management Workshop a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 8 of 16 (50%) completed evaluations. 5 of 5 (100%) of the participants intend to develop a personalized budget with break-even cost of production. Participants report a total anticipated economic benefit for the operation of \$43,827.

% Client Change Level of Understanding: Pre-Harvest Commodity Price Management Workshop



Remote Crop Sensing Seminar and Demonstration

To determine the programmatic results of the Remote Crop Sensing Seminar and Demonstration a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 14 of 30 (46.7%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 10,425 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$46,750, or \$4.48 per acre. With drone technology use in agriculture still in development, 33.3% of the participants indicate an intention to adopt drone technology for crop production; 50% are presently undecided; and 16% indicate that they will not adopt drone technology for crop production.

Crop Decision Aid Workshop

A retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the workshop. 11 of 14 (78.5%) completed evaluations. 10 of 11 (90%) estimate an economic benefit from participating in the Crop Decision Aid Workshop. Participants reported 16,951 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$79,228.50, or \$4.67 per acre. 5 of 11 (45%), and 5 of 11 (45%) indicated that they Probably Will, and Definitely Will utilize the crop decision aid too to make crop management decisions, respectively; 1 of 11 (10%) was undecided.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Crop Decision Aid Workshop

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Understanding how to develop a working crop budget	2.45	3.54	44%
Understanding how the crop decision aid tool can assist producers in making management decisions by allowing them to analyze the optimal crop mix to plant under both irrigation and non-irrigation.	1.72	3.63	111%



Wharton County - 2016 Cotton Harvest Aid Trial

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent, AG/NR - Wharton County
 Kate Harrell, County Extension Agent, IPM – Wharton, Matagorda, Jackson County
 Dr. Gaylon D. Morgan, Extension Cotton Agronomist
 Dale A. Mott, Extension Program Specialist

Relevance

Often, it is advisable to delay the choice of harvest-aid treatment(s) to cotton until the crop is nearly ready to terminate, which is a balance between optimizing yield and preserving quality. While the cotton variety, soil type, and cultural inputs for a given cotton crop can be selected, the weather cannot. The final decision as to when and what harvest-aid product(s) to apply is made by the prudent producer near the time of the initial harvest-aid treatment.

Cotton harvest aid chemicals are generally grouped into three categories – defoliants, desiccants, and boll openers. Defoliants remove foliage from the cotton plant by stimulating ethylene production, which promotes the formation of an abscission layer at the base of leaf petioles. Defoliants can be classed into two categories: (1) hormonal defoliants such as thiadiazuron (Dropp®, FreeFall®, etc.), and (2) herbicidal defoliants such as tribufos (Folex®) and the PPO inhibitors (Aim®, Display®, Sharpen®, etc.). For conventional cotton (non-Roundup Ready), glyphosate may be used as an herbicidal defoliant. If applied at too high a rate, herbicidal defoliants may cause excessive leaf injury, preventing the formation of the abscission layer and resulting in “stuck” leaves.

Desiccants, such as paraquat (Gramoxone®) or sodium chlorate, simply kill and dry leaf and stem tissues. At the higher rates, these products act very rapidly and do not allow an abscission layer to form at the junction of leaf petioles and the stem, resulting in “stuck” leaves. Desiccants are typically used in stripper-harvested cotton to dry plant tissues after a defoliant has been applied. Desiccants can be used at lower rates to help defoliate cotton, but selecting the appropriate rate to defoliate and not desiccate is challenging and is dependent upon environmental conditions.

Boll openers contain the active ingredient ethephon. Within the plant, ethephon is converted to ethylene, which causes bolls to open at a more rapid pace. Increased levels of ethylene within the

plant also help activate abscission layers of the leaf petioles, further defoliating the plant. It is important to note that although ethephon does hasten the opening of bolls, it will not speed up the maturity of immature bolls. Additionally, boll openers tend to enhance basal and terminal leaf growth following application, thus timely harvest is more critical when using a boll opener.

Grower standards for cotton defoliation in the Upper Gulf Coast area of Texas tend to be one of two common mixtures: 1-2 oz. Dropp®, + 12-16 oz. ethephon (Prep®) + 4-6 oz. Folex®; or 4 oz. Ginstar® + 21 oz ethephon (Prep®) .

Response

Preparing cotton for harvest is not an exact science. Although there is much information on how and when to apply harvest aid chemicals, producers recognize that seasonal and crop conditions have effects on crop responses to harvest aid treatments that are not always predictable.

To demonstrate the performance of cotton harvest aides on the 2016 Upper Gulf Coast cotton crop in Wharton County, the Wharton County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension established a harvest aid test at El Campo, Texas. Wharton County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Corrie Bowen and County Extension Agent – IPM for Wharton- Matagorda-Jackson County, Kate Harrell cooperated with local cotton grower, Mr. Michael Watz for a cotton harvest aid test. Dr. Gaylon Morgan, Professor and State Extension Cotton Agronomist and Dale Mott, Extension Program Specialist designed the test based on products and rates recommended by the industry. They also provided the products, equipment, and assistance to apply the harvest aids and evaluated each treatment. The trial plot size was 13.33 feet wide by 40 feet in length. The application volume for each treatment was 11 gallons/acre carrier volume. Croplan® 3885B2XF was the cotton variety planted in the field where the defoliation study took place. At the time of the first application on August 2, 2016 the cotton crop was estimated to be at 52-54% Open Boll. This cotton field was moisture stress at the time of the first application.

The Wharton County Harvest Aid Test was sprayed with the initial treatments on August 2, 2016. A total of 16 treatments were evaluated (including an untreated control), with each treatment replicated three (3) times. Treatments designed to include a second application of harvest aid were applied on August 9, 2016. Each treatment was rated on August 9, 2016 (7-DAT) for percent Defoliation, Desiccation, Green Leaf, and Green Boll; and on August 12, 2016 (10-DAT) for percent Defoliation, Desiccation, Green Leaf, Green Boll, and Regrowth.

A turn row meeting was conducted on August 12, 2016 (10 days after first application) at the site of the Wharton County Harvest Aid Test. Dr. Gaylon Morgan walked participants through each treatment, describing each treatment, the treatment's performance, and recommended best management practices based on the results of the Wharton test. Approximate cost per acre for each treatment was provided to participants with the 7-day post-treatment results.

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Results

Results for the Wharton, Texas Cotton Harvest Aid Trial are given below in **Table 1**. The 7 DAT Evaluation of % Defoliation, % Desiccation, % Green Leaf, and % Green Boll; and **Table 2**. 10 DAT Evaluation of % Defoliation, % Desiccation, % Green Leaf, and % Regrowth. Treatments are listed by active ingredient or product name of the treatment. Some treatments required a follow-up, second application of harvest aid. This is noted by Application Timing*, Application A = 8/2/2016; Application B = 8/9/2016. Table 1. Lists the estimated total cost/acre of each of the harvest aid treatments evaluated.

Table 1. 7 DAT Evaluation of % Defoliation, % Desiccation, % Green Leaf, and % Green Boll

Treatment	Product	Rate	App Timing*	% Defoliation August 9, 2016 7 Days After Trt.	% Desiccation August 9, 2016 7 Days After Trt.	% Green Leaf August 9, 2016 7 Days After Trt.	% Unopened Boll August 9, 2016 7 Days After Trt.	Approximate Cost, \$/acre
1	Untreated Check			13.3 b	0.0 b	86.7 a	6.0 a	\$0.00
2	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	92.3 a	3.7 b	4.0 b	6.0 a	\$3.97
	Ginstar	2 oz/a	A					
3	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	91.2 a	1.0 b	7.8 b	4.1 a	\$4.57
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	B					
4	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	94.3 a	1.7 b	4.0 b	2.7 a	\$7.85
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	B					
5	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	84.3 a	0.3 b	15.3 b	5.3 a	\$6.94
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Folex	4 oz/a	A					
6	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	88.0 a	1.0 b	11.0 b	4.7 a	\$8.66
	Ethephon	26 oz/a	A					
	Folex	6 oz/a	A					
7	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	91.3 a	1.0 b	7.7 b	3.7 a	\$11.16
	Folex	4 oz/a	A					
	Ethephon	24 oz/a	B					
	Folex	8 oz/a	B					
8	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	91.6 a	0.2 b	8.2 b	6.2 a	\$12.41
	Folex	6 oz/a	A					
	Ethephon	32 oz/a	B					
	Folex	6 oz/a	B					
9	Thidiazuron	2.4 oz/a	A	93.3 a	1.7 b	5.0 b	6.0 a	\$15.79
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	A					
	Display + NIS(0.25%)	1 oz/a	B					
10	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	89.0 a	3.0 b	7.7 b	4.3 a	\$10.56
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Sharpen + MSO + AMS(7.5lb/100)	1 oz/a	B					
11	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	90.0 a	7.0 a	3.0 b	4.0 a	\$9.89
	Sharpen + MSO	0.5 oz/a	A					
	Sharpen + MSO + AMS(7.5lb/100)	1 oz/a	B					

12	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	92.7 a	1.0 b	6.3 b	3.0 a	\$17.66
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	ETX + COC	1.3 oz/a	B					
13	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	90.7 a	0.3 b	9.0 b	3.0 a	\$17.13
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Action + MSO (2.5lb/100) + AMS	6 oz/a	B					
14	Thidiazuron SC	1.6 oz/a	A	93.3 a	1.0 b	5.7 b	1.3 a	\$13.22
	Finish 6 Pro	21 oz/a	A					
	Ginstar + NIS	2 oz/a	B					
15	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	90.3 a	1.0 b	8.7 b	3.3 a	\$20.23
	Finish 6 Pro	21 oz/a	A					
	Gramoxone + NIS	24 oz/a	B					
16	Ginstar	4 oz/a	A	90.0 a	0.3 b	9.7 b	2.3 a	\$8.73
	Ethephon + Freeway(1oz)	24 oz/a	A					
	LSD P=.05			8.92	2.19	9.47	2.83	
	Standard Deviation			5.33	1.31	5.66	1.69	
	CV			6.2	86.61	45.37	40.99	
	Treatment F			40.21	5.474	37.478	2.324	
	Treatment Prob (F)			0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0261	

*Application A = 8/2/2016; Application B = 8/9/2016

Means followed by same letter do not significantly differ (P=.05, LSD)

Mean comparisons performed only when AOV Treatment P(F) is significant at mean comparison OSL.

Table 2. 10 DAT Evaluation of % Defoliation, % Desiccation, % Green Leaf, and % Green Boll

Treatment	Product	Rate	App Timing*	% Defoliation August 12, 2016 10 Days After Trt.	% Desiccation August 12, 2016 10 Days After Trt.	% Green Leaf August 12, 2016 10 Days After Trt.	% Unopened Boll August 12, 2016 10 Days After Trt.	% Regrowth August 12, 2016 10 Days After Trt.
1	Untreated Check			13.3 b	0.0 a	86.7 a	2.0 a	12.7b
2	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	94.3 a	1.3 a	4.3 b	2.3 a	3.7b
	Ginstar	2 oz/a	A					
3	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	93.7 a	1.7 a	4.7 b	3.3 a	3b
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	B					
4	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	95.3 a	1.0 a	3.7 bc	2.0 a	3b
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	B					
5	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	88.0 a	0.3 a	11.7 b	3 a	4.3b
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A					
	Folex	4 oz/a	A					
6	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	90.0 a	0.7 a	9.7 bc	2.3 a	5.3b
	Ethephon	26 oz/a	A					
	Folex	6 oz/a	A					

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7	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	98.0 a	0.3 a	1.7 bc	2.0 a	3b					
	Folex	4 oz/a	A										
	Ethephon	24 oz/a	B										
	Folex	8 oz/a	B										
8	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	98 a	1 a	0.4 bc	1.8 a	1.8b					
	Folex	6 oz/a	A										
	Ethephon	32 oz/a	B										
	Folex	6 oz/a	B										
9	Thidiazuron	2.4 oz/a	A	97.3 a	1.3 a	1.3 bc	2.0 a	1.7b					
	Ginstar + NIS(0.25%)	2 oz/a	A										
	Display + NIS(0.25%)	1 oz/a	B										
10	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	98.0 a	1.3 a	0.7 bc	0.3 a	2b					
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A										
	Sharpen + MSO + AMS(7.5lb/100)	1 oz/a	B										
11	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	98 a	2.0 a	0 c	0.3 a	1.3b					
	Sharpen + MSO	0.5 oz/a	A										
	Sharpen + MSO + AMS(7.5lb/100)	1 oz/a	B										
12	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	96 a	0.7 a	3.3 bc	1.0 a	4b					
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A										
	ETX + COC	1.3 oz/a	B										
13	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	95.7 a	1.7 a	2.7 bc	3.0 a	2.7b					
	Ethephon	21 oz/a	A										
	Action + MSO (2.5lb/100) + AMS	6 oz/a	B										
14	Thidiazuron SC	1.6 oz/a	A	97.0 a	0.7 b	2.3 bc	0.3 a	8.7ab					
	Finish 6 Pro	21 oz/a	A										
	Ginstar + NIS	2 oz/a	B										
15	Thidiazuron SC	2.4 oz/a	A	97.7 a	1.7 a	0.7 bc	0.7 a	6.7b					
	Finish 6 Pro	21 oz/a	A										
	Gramoxone + NIS	24 oz/a	B										
16	Ginstar	4 oz/a	A	90.3 a	0.3 a	9.3 bc	1.0 a	13a					
	Ethephon + Freeway(1oz)	24 oz/a	A										
	LSD P=.05								6.22	1.38	6.44	2.24	4.13
	Standard Deviation								3.72	0.83	3.86	1.34	2.47
	CV								4.13	82.6	43.13	77.87	51.51
	Treatment F								92.748	1.557	89.171	1.66	6.639
	Treatment Prob(F)								0.0001	0.1491	0.0001	0.1179	0.0001

*Application A = 8/2/2016; Application B = 8/9/2016

Means followed by same letter do not significantly differ
(P=.05,LSD)

Mean comparisons performed only when AOV Treatment P(F) is significant at mean comparison
OSL.

Conclusions

Treatments with Folex® were slightly less effective than treatments with Ginstar®. Treatments that included Ginstar® showed a 5-10% better % defoliation at than treatments with Folex® at 7 DAT; 4-6 % better % defoliation at 10 DAT. Treatments that included Ethephon (Prep®) showed the most sign of regrowth at 7 DAT, with 15.3% green leaf using the common treatment of 2.4 oz Dropp®, 4 oz of Folex®, and 21 oz of Prep®. Ethephon did not increase the percentage of open bolls at the 7 or 10 day rating. This may be due to the mature cotton and hot, dry weather during the time following the application.

Experience gained from conducting this test resulted in increased success in reaching specific goals of boll opening, defoliation, desiccation, and regrowth suppression.

Acknowledgements

The authors extend a special thanks to our cooperating grower, Mr. Michael Watz, and another special thanks goes out to Lisa Supak, crop consultant with Green Point Ag for identifying a proper site to conduct this study. We also extend our appreciation to Dr. Zach Eder, Wharton County Row Crops Committee Member for assisting with the implementation and evaluation of this much needed annual data.

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Making a Difference

2016 Pesticide Applicator Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:
Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR
Wharton County

Relevance

For year 2016, Wharton County, Texas has 623 pesticide applicators licensed with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Private Pesticide Applicators are required to obtain fifteen (15) CEUs (continued education credits) every five years in order to renew their license. Commercial and Non-Commercial Applicators are required to obtain 5 CEUs every year in order to renew their license. There is a substantial audience and a need for Extension to provide the educational opportunities for these applicators to obtain their CEU credits. In addition, new applicators seek opportunities throughout the year to take the certification course at the Wharton County Extension Office to obtain their license.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee provided for one (1) individual course in 2016 that offered five (5) CEUs. The committee planned and conducted this event based on client need and evaluation results from the 2015 Conference. This 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference is scheduled each year at the Wharton County Youth Fair grounds in Crescent. CEUs were also awarded at the following seminars and workshops scheduled throughout the year: January 14, 2016 Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference; January 19, 2016 Grain Handlers Conference; January 20, 2016 Western Rice Belt Conference; February 4, 2016 5-CEU Conference; March 24, 2016 Spring Beef and Forage Seminar; April 7, 2016 Wheat Field Day; June 9, 2016 Remote Crop Sensing Seminar; August 12, 2016 Cotton Defoliation Turn Row Meeting ; and at seed meetings and/or field days for Simplot®, Crop Production Service; Agricumbia Resources, Bayer Crop Science®, Pioneer Seed®/Kresta Farms, and Krenek Seed Company. CEU credits are also made available to pesticide applicators by viewing a series of Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

The mandatory Certification Training for potential pesticide applicators to obtain their pesticide applicator license was provided by the Wharton County Extension Office throughout the year.

Results

Ten (10) new applicators attended the Private Pesticide Applicator training and testing sessions offered at the Wharton County Extension Office in the year 2016.

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For year 2016 (reporting January 1 – September 1), Wharton County awarded a total of **21.5 CEUs** at group meetings to a total of **535** individuals. In addition to CEUs obtained at group meetings, a total of fifteen (**15**) licensed Pesticide Applicators obtained a total of **90** hours of CEU credits by viewing our Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was provided to a representative sample of 40 of the 100 pesticide applicators who attended the February 4, 2016, 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference. For 2016, an online evaluation instrument was utilized and produced through Qualtrics. The evaluation instrument was emailed five months following the conference. **10 of 40 (25%)** completed the Qualtrics, electronic evaluation. An online evaluation instrument was selected over an “in person” instrument to better measure practices adopted rather than intent to adopt.

Knowledge Level Mean Change measured using an online, Qualtrics retrospective post evaluation

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Mean Change	Percent Increase
Understanding of pesticide labels and labeling	2.90	3.70	0.80	27.5%
Selection of spray nozzles to minimize drift potential	2.50	3.40	0.90	36%
Right Of Way vegetation management in Texas	2.20	3.30	1.1	50%
Key destructive insect pests in Wharton County	2.60	3.60	1.0	38%
Knowledge of TDA's new requirement that a signed supervision affidavit or signed label must accompany pesticide records when a pesticide license holder supervises the use of a restricted use pesticide by a non-licensed person	2.10	3.60	1.5	71%

- **9 of 10 (90%)** adopted best practices
- **6 of 10 (60%)** estimate an economic impact
- Respondents report a total of **3,340** acres managed

Economic Impact: The anticipated economic impact to clientele of the Annual 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference = \$24,747.85

Educational Outreach Efforts	# of Contacts
8 Ag Monday Radio Programs on KULP, AM 1390	16,000
4 Electronic Newsletters	1,578
4 Newspaper Articles	40,316

Making a Difference

2016 Row Crop Production Education Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County
Kate Harrell, County Extension Agent – Integrated Pest Management; Matagorda, Wharton, Jackson County

Relevance

Wharton County ranks 17th in the State in total agricultural receipts, and 2nd in the State in total value of crops, including nursery and greenhouse production. The 2012 Census of Agriculture for Wharton County reports \$373,637,000 in total agricultural receipts. Cotton, corn, grain sorghum, and soybeans are among the chief agricultural products in Wharton County, totaling 188,686.11 acres for the 2016 crop production year. As costs of production continue to increase, applied research is needed to evaluate new emerging technologies to determine their feasibility in local farming systems. In order for growers to maintain profitability and long-term sustainability of production, educational programs in herbicide weed resistance, variety selection, emerging insect and disease issues and fertility need to be available at the local level.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee planned, conducted, and evaluated educational programs and applied research projects for the 2016 crop production year. An annual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference was held on January 14, 2016 as a multi-county program in El Campo, Texas (Wharton County) – Wharton, Matagorda, and Colorado County cooperating. On August 12, 2016 Wharton County held a Cotton Defoliation Plot Tour to showcase how sixteen(16) different cotton defoliant might perform with the current cotton crop, under current growing conditions.

Three committee members also served as Result Demonstration Cooperators. The following result demonstrations were conducted in 2016:

- 2016 Wharton County Grain Sorghum Uniform Hybrid Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Duane Lutringer – El Campo, Texas
- 2016 Wharton County Corn Uniform Hybrid Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Terry Marek – Pierce, Texas
- 2016 Replicated Agronomic Cotton Evaluation (RACE) Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Keith Kresta – El Campo, Texas
- 2016 Cotton Defoliation Study with cooperating grower Michael Watz – El Campo, Texas

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Results

Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of the Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference, a retrospective post evaluation instrument was mailed 90 days later to a representative sample of 54 of the 115 who attended the conference. 23 of 54 (42%) completed evaluations.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
How to properly assess the designation of specific grain sorghum as having substantial tolerance/resistance to the sugarcane aphid	2..20	3.13	42.2%
Knowledge that TDA made effective on December 18, 2015 the following exceptions from the Regulated Herbicide Classification: <i>(A) 2,4-D or dicamba when used in accordance with the approved product label for transgenic auxin herbicide tolerant crops; and (B) applied by ground application equipment only; and (C) applied when winds do not exceed 10 miles per hour.</i>	2.30	3.39	47.3%
Knowledge of current applied research being conducted to evaluated the practical use of UAV Drones in agriculture	1.6	3.04	90%
Knowledge of current research being conducted in Texas regarding potassium fertilizer rates in cotton.	2.0	3.04	52%

Cotton Defoliation Field Day

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was provided to a census of the 8 producers who attended the August 12, 2016 Cotton Defoliation Plot Tour. An online evaluation instrument was utilized and produced through Qualtrics. The evaluation instrument was emailed ninety (90) days following the plot tour. 3 of 5 (60%) completed the Qualtrics, electronic evaluation. An online evaluation instrument was selected over an “in person” instrument to better measure best practices adopted rather than intent to adopt. 2 of 3 (66%) indicated that they have adopted a minimum of one best management practice as a result of attending the Cotton Defoliation Field Day. Evaluation respondents report a total of 5,000 acres managed, and a total economic impact of \$46,275 as a result of the research data and education received from the 2016 Cotton Defoliation Trial.

Result Demonstrations and Applied Research

Results for all applied research projects conducted in Wharton County are posted, and can be downloaded at <http://varietytesting.tamu.edu>

Making a Difference

2016 Western Rice Belt Conference

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County
Brent Batchelor, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Matagorda County
Stephen Janak, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Colorado County

Relevance

Rice has been a mainstay of the Colorado, Matagorda, Jackson, and Wharton County's economies since the early 1900's. Rice income accounts for \$135 million in the tri-county area. However, lack of profitability is placing financial stress on both the infrastructure and the farming community. Acreage has declined approximately in recent years creating negative impacts on the local economy in general. In response to challenging economic conditions, changes in land ownership patterns, and changes in water availability, Rice farmers are diversifying their operations through entrepreneurial pursuits - new enterprises, value added, niche marketing, seeking new water sources, etc. To achieve and maintain the economic viability of rice producers, we must provide business profitability and risk management-based programs in response to the educational needs of those in the county/region. The county program area committees in Matagorda, Wharton, and Colorado Counties reflect this educational need.

Response

County Extension Agents with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Wharton, Matagorda, Jackson, and Colorado come together each year to provide the Western Rice Belt Conference. This has been an ongoing multiyear, multi-county educational effort since 2005, at which time the combined rice production acres for the Texas Western Rice Belt totaled 116,157 acres. The conference is comprised of a Producers Seminar, along with a Consumers Seminar, held each year on the third Wednesday of January. All stages of the event from planning to evaluation are directed by two, multi-county Western Rice Belt Conference planning committees – one for the producers section and one for the consumer section. Committees are made up of County Extension Agents, equipment dealers, rice warehouse managers, rice producers, rice producers, U.S. Rice Producers Association, USA Rice, Inc., wives of rice farmers, and Extension Education Association (EEA) members. The committee builds the agenda each year to address current production and consumer issues in the rice industry with guest speakers from Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, LSU Ag Center, and more.

Results

The 12th Annual Western Rice Belt Conference was held on January 20, 2016 at the El Campo Civic Center. 179 rice producers and 110 rice consumers attended the conference. To determine the programmatic results of the Western Rice Belt Producers Seminar a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. **142 of 179 (79%) completed evaluations. 79.6%**

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of the participants plan to adopt at Least One Practice and/or Technology. Rice producers report a total anticipated economic benefit for their farm operations of \$957,631, or an economic benefit of \$4.26 per acre.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Western Rice Belt Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
The regional conservation partnership program (rcpp) composed of ducks unlimited and usa rice.	2.23	3.05	27.3
Understanding of the new march 1st and july 1st reviews dates for lcra water releases	2.29	3.10	27.0
Understanding of the new cbgcd meter requirement for all permitted wells	2.23	3.14	30.3
Understanding of new exceptions from texas regulated herbicide classification.	2.26	3.19	31
Understanding of the habits and lifecycle of the planthopper found in 2015 ratoon rice	1.88	3.25	45.7
Understanding of crop margin coverage insurance	1.94	2.74	26.7

V A L U E

Crop and Forage Production Education



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.

Making a Difference

2016 Wharton County Flood Response by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County
Rachel Berry, County Extension Agent – 4—H and Youth Development, Wharton County

Relevance

On the weekend of April 16th, a large amount of rainfall fell in several counties to our north, upstream along the Colorado River and San Bernard River watersheds. A few of those counties to mention are Fayette, Bastrop, and Austin Counties. Fayette and Bastrop counties fall in the Colorado River watershed and parts of Austin County fall in the the San Bernard River watershed. LaGrange, Texas saw a foot of water overnight on April 17th. By Monday, April 18th Wharton County was preparing for flooding along both the Colorado and San Bernard Rivers that flow through Wharton County. With the extreme amount of rainfall that fell to our north it was very difficult to forecast the river flood levels. All week the river levels exceeded forecasted levels. At one point the Colorado River was forecasted to crest at 47.3 feet on April 20th, but by April 22nd the Colorado River crested at 48.38 feet. The San Bernard River at East Bernard, Texas reached a record-breaking crest at 28.45 ft on April 20th.

The cities of East Bernard and Wharton experienced city flooding during the week of April 18th. There were extensive losses along the Colorado and San Bernard rivers to grain and cotton fields. Some crop fields had been under water in places for four to six days. USDA confirmed approximately 140 head off cattle lost on the Colorado and San Bernard Rivers in Wharton County, combined.

Floodwater can be contaminated by substances from upstream, such as manure, sewage from flooded septic systems or wastewater treatment plants. A septic system near a well also can cause contamination when the soil is flooded. To ensure that well water is safe after a flood, homeowners are advised to disinfect wells that were submerged during recent floods, and then have the water tested to make sure that the pathogens (disease-causing organisms) have been eliminated.

Response

Under action of the Wharton County Animal Issues Committee approximately (17) seventeen dogs were sheltered at the Wharton County Fairgrounds until Saturday morning, April 23rd, as the Annual County Fair began later that day. Rachel Berry, our Wharton County 4-H Agent assisted ten (10) 4-H youth with the transportation and relocation of fair animal projects out of the Colorado and San Bernard flood plain in Wharton County a week prior to the County Fair. These were fair project animals on feed just five days or so before the Fair!

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Mr. Billy Schwertner, owner of Wharton Livestock Auction Barn provided his auction barn a large animal shelter for horse and cattle owners needing a place to relocate their animals out of potentially flooded areas. 3 horses and 15 head of cattle were temporarily sheltered at the Wharton Auction Barn

The Colorado River reached major flood stage again on May 31, 2016 at 46.85 feet, flooding many of the corn acres that were flooded in April, and replanted to grain sorghum or cotton in May. This flood event did not cause flooding in Wharton that was experienced in April. The Wharton County Animals issues committee did not activate, although cattle producers were alerted to the need to relocate any animals in low lying areas along the Colorado River.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Wharton County Office held a Decontaminating Flooded Water Wells Program on Thursday, May 19, 2016 at the East Bernard, Texas Library to educate residents how to decontaminate water wells that were flooded in the late April floods and how to test drinking water for fecal coliform bacteria. Water sample bottles and submittal forms for health department water labs in our area were made available to participants.

Results

To determine the programmatic results of the Decontaminating Flooded Water Wells Program, a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the program. 5 of 5 (100%) completed evaluations. 4 of 5 (80%) of the participants estimate an economic benefit from knowledge gained by attending the Decontaminating Flooded Water Wells Program. Participants indicated that the economic benefit is attributed to avoiding new costs, and impact on their personal health and hygiene.

Client Change Level of Understanding: May 19, 2016, Decontaminating Flooded Water Wells Program

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Understanding of why we would disinfect after a flood event	2.60	4.00	53.8%
Understanding of the step-by-step process of disinfecting a water well	1.8	3.60	100.0%
Knowledge of the health department water labs in the area that test for fecal coliform bacteria	1.6	4.00	150.0%
Understanding that sampling methods are critical to taking a water sample for fecal coliform testing	1.6	4.00	150.0%

Making a Difference

IPM Programming: Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties 2016

Developed by Kate Harrell, EA- IPM, Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties

Relevance:

Agricultural operating costs continue to rise nationwide while commodity prices remain low. For area producers to continue farming, they must find ways to cut input costs while increasing production. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a tool that can aid producers in the reduction of input costs. IPM considers multiple tactics for the control of pests, maintaining pest populations below a damaging level and conservation of the environment. Agriculture is one of the primary occupations in the county.

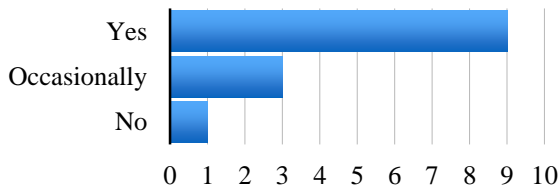
Response:

- Summer Field Scouting Program
- Wharton County CEU Workshop
- Sugarcane Aphid Workshop
- Harvest Retrospective
- Crop Decision Aid Workshop
- 4 seed meetings
- 3 radio programs
- Several field meetings
- Upper Coast IPM Blog - 22 issues
- Household pests with Kids in the Kitchen
- Library outreach program

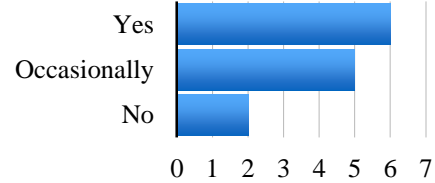
Results:

15 people responded to a 7-question survey evaluating the Upper Coast IPM blog at uppercoastipm.blogspot.com/. 5 questions pertained to information found in the blogs and how useful the information was to the constituents, and 2 questions addressed how they accessed the blog. 9 responded that they do apply information from the blog, 2 occasionally, and 1 no. When asked if they used the blog as a reference for economic thresholds, 6 responded yes, 5 occasionally, and 2 no. 10 responses showed that information in the blog helped them to reduce their pesticide use, and 3 said it did not. Of the 10 that said the information helped them reduce pesticide use, 8 responded that their usage decreased by 0-25% and 2 decreased their usage by 26-50%. When asked if they learned about a pest they had not heard of before reading the blog, 7 had learned of at least 1 new pest, 2 at least 2, 2 at least 3, 2 more than 3, and 1 had not learned of a new pest. When evaluating how the blog was accessed, 12 primarily used the link in the email and 2 used Facebook as a source. 4 tended to read the blog on their phones and 10 on their computer.

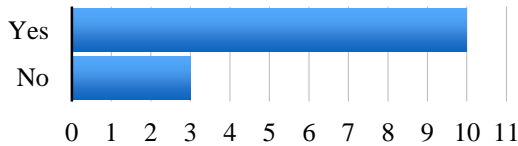
Did you apply information from the blog to your farming or consulting operation?



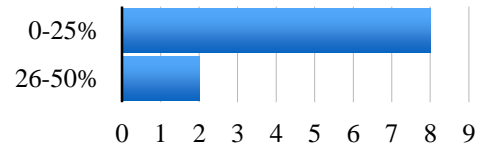
Did you reference the economic thresholds in the blog?



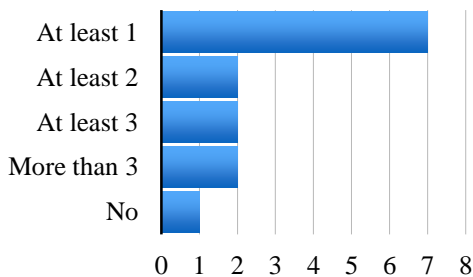
Did the information in the blog help you reduce pesticide use?



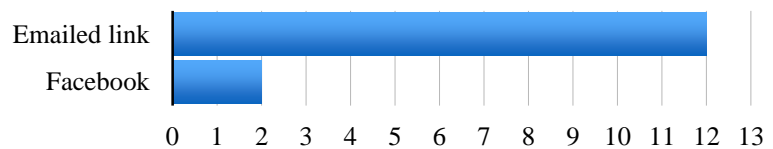
What percentage did your usage decrease by?



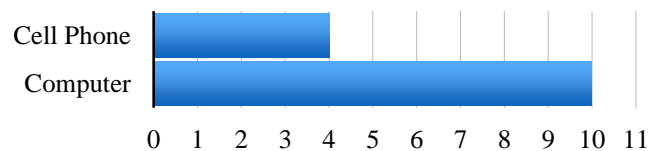
Did you learn about a pest species you had not heard of before?



How do you usually access the blog?



On what device do you usually access the blog?



Future Plans:

Several conclusions can be drawn in evaluating the Jackson, Matagorda and Wharton Counties IPM program in 2016. A majority of the agricultural producers recognize the essential components of IPM and the actual decision of when to apply a pesticide is based on either an external influence (private consultant or IPM program) or scouting their own fields. The source of information about specific pesticide use can be acquired from the private sector, as well as the IPM program. The source can play a significant role in influencing the pesticide use patterns in this three county area. Therefore, via the IPM steering committee, a relationship has been forged between local private consultants and the IPM program, which reflects an ongoing effort by all parties concerned. Future plans include a continuation of the IPM scouting program and involvement in the education and development of the youth in the tri-county area.

2016 Wharton County Learn, Grow, Eat, GO!!

Developed by Rachel Berry CEA 4-H Wharton County

Relevance:

The high prevalence of childhood obesity in Texas is cause for concern because it is linked to negative health consequences for children and their families. Schools are uniquely positioned to have a positive impact on children's knowledge and behaviors associated with obesity. For example, vegetable exposure plus school gardening has been shown to improve consumption of fruits and vegetables. Adding more frequent and more vigorous physical activities during school has been shown to improve student fitness and weight. The home environment is also an important influence on a child's eating and activity behaviors. The greater the frequency of vegetable consumption and physical activity by parents, the greater the consumption of these foods and exercise by their children. With child obesity rates among low-income children in Texas ranging from 10% to over 20%, engaging schools and families in prevention efforts is critical.

Response:

Learn grow eat go was implemented at Sivells Elementary School in Wharton, Texas to educate 3rd grade students on the importance of improving physical activity and eating behaviors of children. The lessons included:

- Analyzing what plants need and how they support people and animals.
- Evaluating a food sample using the five senses.
- Identifying the edible plant parts from a variety of crops.
- Create planting templates divided into representative fractional amounts to ensure that the plants have enough room to grow.
- Learning to germinate seeds and transplanting them into the soil.
- Classify foods into groups, and describe the groups' relationships and importance.
- Use fraction names and symbols to describe MyPlate meals.
- Investigate and compare foods to plan healthy meals.

Results:

Fourteen participants completed a pre-test and a post-test, in order to measure the effectiveness of the Learn, Grow, Eat GO! Curriculum.

- Out of the 20 different vegetables listed on the pre-test and post-test, 100% of participants enjoyed eating 40% of the 20.
- At the end of the program, 100% of participants enjoyed eating 80% of the 20 different vegetables.
- 70% of participants increased their knowledge of the importance of choosing water over fruit juice, soda or a sports drink.
- 30% of participants increased the amount of orange and green vegetables they eat in 1 day.
- 60% of participants increased the amount of fruit they eat in 1 day.
- 30% of participants increased the amount of time one should spend being physically active instead of watching TV or playing video games on a daily basis.

Making a Difference

2016 Wharton County Youth Livestock Outcome Summary

Developed by:

Rachel Berry, County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development, Wharton County

Relevance

In the year 2000 there were over 75,000 county livestock show entries for cattle, swine, meat goats and sheep (Coufal, 2006) One half of those entries were 4-H youth. There have been six major benefits identified as a result of exhibiting livestock: 1. social relations; 2) character; 3) family; 4) competition; 5) learning new cultures and environments; and 6) helping finance the youth's higher education. Parents of youth suggest that life skills are enhanced by raising a 4-H livestock project. The longer youth are engaged in the project they are more likely to develop life skills (Boleman, 2003).

Response

The Wharton County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Wharton County 4-H provided opportunities for youth to be involved in 4-H Livestock related projects to exhibit personal character attributes and acceptable livestock management practices associated with these projects. Agent Berry provided opportunities for youth and parents to attend livestock trainings at the local level. The following workshops were made available for the following projects: September 22, 2016 Market Lamb and Goat Workshop and October 13, 2016 Market Swine Workshop. Agent Berry was presenter at the Lamb and Goat Workshop and Wharton County 4-H member and Livestock Ambassador, Regan McGuill was our presenter for the Swine Workshop. Agent Berry also provided showmanship education at the Showmanship Clinic on April 10, 2016. Showmanship skills were taught in all species including rabbits, swine, lamb, goat, steer and heifers, and horse. These workshops were open to all 4-H and FFA youth and their families in Wharton County and surrounding counties.

Wharton County 4-H youth were also given the opportunity to enter and exhibit livestock at the 2016 Wharton County Youth Fair and at the 2015-2016 Texas Major Livestock Shows.

Results

Total attendance at all three youth livestock workshops was one hundred eighty-seven (187) individuals. Of this total, one hundred thirty-three (133) were youth. Evaluations from all three workshops indicate that 80% (4 of the 5 youth) of the participants attending completed evaluation forms. When measuring the knowledge gained from the education provided at the workshops,

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evaluations indicate an average increase of 45%. All respondents indicated that the information presented at the workshop would help them to make better decisions.

The Wharton County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Wharton County 4-H submitted a total of 75 livestock entries to the Texas Major Livestock Shows (Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show at Fort Worth; San Antonio Livestock Show; San Angelo Livestock Show; Start of Texas Livestock Show; Rio Grande Valley Stock Show and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.) Of these combined 75 total entries, a total of 22 Wharton County 4-H livestock exhibitors returned home with a combined total of \$24,429.45 in auction premiums and market sales from the 2015-2016 Texas Major Livestock Show season. One exhibitor received a \$12,000 scholarship for his Scramble Heifer Record book at the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Making a Difference

2016 All Babies and Children Child Care Conference

Developed by:

Bethany Jackson - County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Science, Wharton County
Chinatu Gladrich - County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Science, Matagorda County
Tina Trevino - County Extension Agent-Family Consumer Science, Calhoun County

Relevance:

Over 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. The Texas Workforce Commission estimates that there are over 100,000 child care providers caring for more than 760,000 children under the age of 13 in licensed or regulated child care facilities in the state of Texas. Additionally, child care is the 16th largest industry in the state, generating over 145,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in wages for Texans.

Findings from longitudinal research have clearly established the fact that quality does matter when it comes to child care. Children who receive high-quality care (e.g., warm sensitive caregiving, well-educated child care staff, low child-to-adult ratios, small group size) develop better language, math, and social skills; exhibit fewer behavior problems; and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school. Having a well-trained child care workforce is essential to providing the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

Response:

On June 11, 2016, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service conducted a child care provider training conference in Wharton, Texas for 75 child care providers and directors who provide care for 821 children enrolled in 15 child care centers or family day homes. Seventy-five participants completed a written evaluation of the conference (see Table 1 for participant characteristics). A total of 450 clock hours of training were provided to child care professionals seeking to meet state mandated training requirements established by the state of Texas.

Results:

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 75)

Variable	Percentage*	Mean
Age (in years)		43.9
Number of Years in Child Care Profession		12.0
Gender		
Female	97.3	
Male	2.7	
Ethnicity		
African American	29.3	
Caucasian	40.0	
Hispanic/Latino	28.0	
Other	1.3	
Education		
Less than High School Diploma	0.0	
High School Diploma	76.0	
Associates Degree	12.0	
College Graduate	10.7	
Program Type		
Home Day Care	8.0	
Child Care Center (other than Head Start)	90.6	
Other (e.g., Montessori)	1.3	
Program Licensed and/or Registered		
Yes	98.7	
No	0.0	
*Percentages do not always equal 100% due to missing cases.		

Participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the training (See Table 2 for participant responses).

Table 2. Participant Satisfaction with the Training (N = 75) *

Not at all = 1 Slightly = 2 Somewhat = 3 Mostly = 4 Completely = 5

Item	Average
Overall, how <u>satisfied</u> are you with this training?	4.5
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the training?	
Information being <u>what you expected</u> to receive	4.6
<u>Accuracy</u> of information	4.7
Information being <u>easy</u> to understand	4.6
<u>Completeness</u> of information being given	4.6
<u>Helpfulness</u> of the information	4.7
<u>Relevance</u> of the information presented to the work that I do in the child care profession	4.6
<u>Quality</u> of training materials	4.6
Instructor's <u>knowledge level</u> of subject matter	4.7
Instructor's <u>speaking/presentation abilities</u>	4.7
Instructor's <u>organization/preparedness</u>	4.7
Instructor's <u>response to questions</u>	4.7

Participants were asked to rate the quality of the conference compared to other child care trainings they have attended in the past by non-Extension organizations/agencies. Table 3 below contains the results.

Table 3. Perceptions of Quality Compared to Other Non-Extension Trainings (N = 75)*

Item*	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Compared to other child care trainings you have attended (not provided by Extension), how would you rate the quality of today's training?	0.0%	1.3%	14.7%	29.3%	41.3%
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases					

In addition to the above items, participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements related to the training. Table 4 below contains the results.

Table 4. Additional Survey Items (N = 75)*

Question	% Yes	% No
Did you learn new information from this training?	98.7	1.3
Do you plan to take any actions or make any changes based on this training?	88.0	6.7
Would you recommend this training to others?	96.0	1.3
*Percentages do not equal 100% due to missing cases		

As can be seen in the tables above, child care providers found the training to be very beneficial. The vast majority of participants were highly satisfied with the training, rating it a 4.5 on a 5-point scale. Moreover, **71%** of providers rated the training “Better” or “Much Better” compared to other trainings they have attended that were not conducted by Extension.

Report prepared by Dr. Stephen Green on December 9, 2016. For more information, please call (979) 845-6468.

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