



# Helping Texans *Better Their Lives*

## Extension Education in Wharton County 2021

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and its partners have 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

## EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

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 2021 Educational Contacts

### WHARTON COUNTY 4-H CONTACTS

4-H Members	364
4-H Volunteers	110
4-H Clubs	18
Curriculum Enrichment Participants	755
4-H Special Interest Clubs	1
4-H County Clubs	2

### CONTACTS AT EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Total Contacts	65,576
Educational Events	54,604
Other Contacts	58,415

### OTHER CONTACTS

All Contacts	58,415
Individual Contacts – Direct	3,536
Individual Contacts – Indirect	14,131
Newsletters	30,223
Educational Resources	1,629
Individual Contacts – Volunteer	7,554

### MEDIA CONTACTS

25 News Releases with a distribution reaching 39,813 contacts  
200 Social Media Posts with 9,873 Followers

### VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Total Volunteers	4,989
Hours Contributed	196

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

### 2021 Commodity Marketing, Technology and Industrial Hemp 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. USDA reports **235,656** total acres planted in 2021 in these five major crops for Wharton County. **1.22** acres of Industrial Hemp was certified in Wharton County in the 2021 crop year. The 2015 and 2019 Texas Community Futures Forum identified that crop producers will need to keep abreast of marketing opportunities, precision agriculture practices, variety/seed technology developments, and alternative crops (e.g. Industrial Hemp) to remain competitive in the industry.

Wharton County ranks 22nd in the State in total agricultural receipts and 2nd in the State in total value of crops, including nursery and greenhouse production. The 2017 Census of Agriculture for Wharton County reports \$208,540,000 in total agricultural receipts, which is down 44% from the \$373,637,000 reported in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. As costs of production continue to increase and farm income declines, applied research and marketing education is needed to maintain a crop producers' economic sustainability in the years to come.

#### Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee was instrumental in developing, delivering, and evaluating educational programs in 2021 that addressed new crop system technology, commodity marketing, and informed producers of a new and emerging industrial hemp industry. The following educational conferences and seminars were conducted in 2021:

- Virtual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference – January 26, 2021. This event is organized as a multi-county program in Wharton, Texas (Wharton County) – Wharton, Matagorda, and Colorado County cooperating. Selection of grain and cotton production topics and presenters is directed by Row Crops Committee members in each of the three counties.
- Wharton County Soybean and Cotton Turn Row Meeting – June 30, 2021. A two-part turn row meeting on one day. The first stop was to the A&M Crop Testing Program's Soybean Variety Trial at the Howard and Dolly Wittig Farm in Lane City, Texas. The next stop was to the Cotton RACE trial in Crescent at the Michael Beard Farm.
- Result Demonstrations were implemented and data was collected on the following:
  - Replicated Agronomic Cotton Evaluation (RACE)
  - Uniform Corn Variety Trial
  - Uniform Grain Sorghum Variety Trial
  - Soybean Variety Trial
  - Evaluation of the Effect of Application Rate of Chicken Pit Manure on Corn Grain Yield

## Results

### Virtual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of the Feed Grain and Cotton Conference a retrospective-post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 44 of 128 (34.37%) completed evaluations. When asked if they prefer Virtual or In-Person educational meetings, 63.64% (28 of 44) responded that they prefer to attend in-person educational programs; 76.80% approve of Hybrid meetings in the future – they approve of having a choice of selecting to attend in-person or attend virtually. 95% (42 of 44) of the respondents report that they anticipated an economic benefit from attending the 2021 Virtual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference.

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

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Knowledge of soybean maturity groups and planting dates best suited for the Upper Gulf Coast of Texas	2.42	3.56	47.1%
Knowledge of proper insecticide tank mixed for the Red Banded Stink Bug in soybeans	2.15	3.51	63.2%
Knowledge of ongoing research in nematode control in cotton	1.88	3.44	82.9%

### Wharton County Soybean and Cotton Turn Row Meeting

To determine the programmatic results of the Turn Row Meeting, a retrospective-post evaluation instrument was administered at the conclusion of each field visit. 13 of 55 (24%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 40,709 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$321,601 or \$7.90 per acre.

### Client Change Level of Understanding: Cotton and Soybean Turn Row Meeting

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Fungicide selection based on crop growth stage and disease identification	2.71	4	47.6%
Managing cotton during periods of heavy rainfall, such as what was experienced in May/June 2021	2.6	3.8	46.1%

**57% of the soybean growers in attendance have already adopted the practice of completing the require Paraquat Dichlorid training every 3 years. Another 14% indicated that they definitely will adopt the practice. 28% were undecided.**

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*The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

**AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu**

### 2021 Upper Gulf Coast Rice Production Education Summary

#### Developed by:

Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Wharton County  
Laramie, Naumann, County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources, Colorado County  
Michael Hiller, County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, Jackson County

#### Relevance

Rice has been a mainstay of the Colorado, Matagorda, Jackson, and Wharton County's economies since the early 1900's. 53% of Texas' 154,052 acre rice industry in 2019 is found in this four-county area. Rice acreage in Texas continues to decline, dropping 18%, from 187,684 acres in 2018. The decline in rice acreage and a 42% reduction in farm income (as identified in the 2017 Census of Agriculture) is placing financial stress on both the infrastructure and the farming community. The 2015 and 2019 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. Additionally, producers will seek income from all available USDA programs to sustain the challenges brought about by trade negotiations with foreign trade partners. 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 region. The Western Rice Belt program area committee for Matagorda, Wharton, Jackson and Colorado Counties reflects 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 and the Eagle Lake Rice Research Field Day. 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, 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 USA Rice, U.S. Rice Producers, Texas A&M AgriLife Agriculture and Food Policy Center, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, and more.

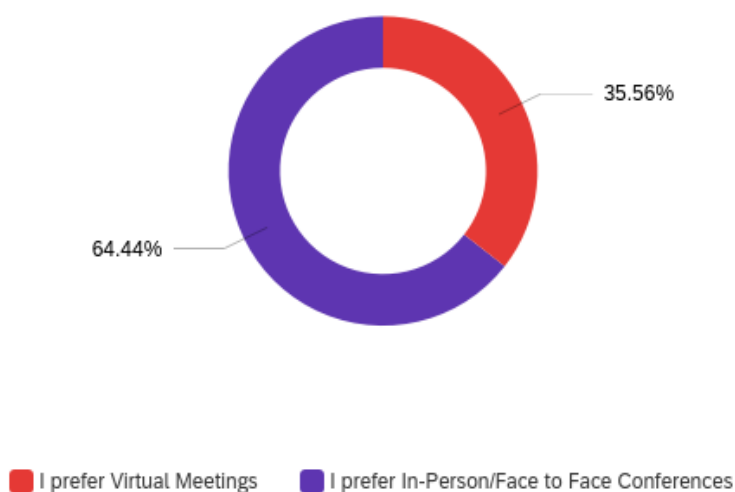
The Western Rice Belt Conference planning committee met six times in 2020, attempting to plan for an in-person Western Rice Belt Conference for January 2021. However, Covid-19 restrictions prevented the realization of an in-person conference for 2021. To continue the Committee's effort of educating rice producers and rice consumers, a virtual conference was held in conjunction with the annual rice conference that is held on the East side of Houston. The two conferences came together to hold one (1) Virtual Texas Rice Conference for 2021.

## Results

### Virtual Texas Rice Conference— January 20, 2021

One Hundred Forty-five (145) rice producers attended the virtual conference. Topics and speakers included Basics of Herbicide Resistance Development in Weeds - Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan; Rice Varieties and Current Breeding Programs in Rice - Mr. Galen Franz; Insect Management - Dr. Mo Way; Pesticide Laws and Regulations Update - Melissa Barton; Cost of Rice Production - Joe Outlaw; Rice Market Outlook – Thomas Wynn; Update on Conservation and Working Lands Programs - Dennis Neumann; and Rice Water Efficiency - Dr. Michele Reba, Research Hydrologist USDA Agricultural Research Service. To capture the knowledge gained and adoption rate of recommended practices, a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered via Qualtrics®. 97 of 145 (66%) completed evaluations. **45%** of the respondents report that they have adopted the practice of rotating herbicides by group number to combat herbicide weed resistance. Herbicide groups was a topic that was introduced to rice producers at the 2019 Western Rice Belt Conference.

**Chart 1. Percentage of Audience who prefer Virtual education experiences vs. percentage of audience who prefer in-person/Face-to-face educational experiences.**



**Table 1. Client Change Level of Understanding: Virtual Rice Research Field Day**

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Knowledge of rice water efficiency practices and the overall impact the can have on your rice operation	2.58	3.58	38.00%
Awareness of breakeven costs of rice production in Texas.	2.66	3.58	34.58%

### 2021 Pesticide Applicator Programming in Wharton County

#### Developed by:

Corrie Bowen  
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR  
Wharton County

#### Relevance

For the year 2021 Wharton County, Texas has **548** (compared to 572 in 2020; 586 in 2019) pesticide applicators licensed with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). 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. The Wharton County Row Crops Committee and Western Rice Belt Production Conference Committee identify Continued Education Units (CEUs) as a priority of program planning for Wharton County.

#### Response

Due to Covid-19 guidelines that were in place in 2021, virtual meetings were held in place of in-person educational programs until guidelines permitted the return of in-person meetings. The Wharton County Row Crops Committee provided for one (1) virtual course in 2021 that offered five (5) CEUs. The committee planned, promoted, and conducted this event based on client need and evaluation results from the 2020 Conference. This 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference is usually held each year at the Wharton County Youth Fairgrounds in Crescent, TX. CEUs were also awarded at the following seminars and workshops scheduled throughout the year: January 20, 2021 Virtual Western Rice Belt Conference; January 21, 2021 Virtual Grain Handlers Conference; January 26, 2021 Virtual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference; February 11, 2021 Virtual 5-CEU Conference; February/March 2020 Auxin Specific Applicator Training; and at seed meetings and/or field days for: Pioneer Seed@/Kresta Farms, and Krenak 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 on an as-needed basis or when requested.

Ag Science Teachers located throughout Texas is another audience of licensed pesticide applicators that County Extension Agent, Corrie Bowen educates. Since 2005 Agent Bowen has facilitated a Pesticide Applicator Certification Workshop and a Pesticide Applicator Recertification Workshop at the Vocational Ag Teachers Association of Texas (VATAT) annual conference. Ag Science teachers must also acquire their required recertification credits, but they often have difficulty attending the recertification course while they are teaching in the classroom. Offering CEUs at their annual conference helps teachers acquire their

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needed recertification credits. 2021 marked Agent Bowen's 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive year cooperating with the VATAT Board of Directors, providing and facilitating their annual pesticide workshops. The 2021 VATAT Pesticide Workshops were held on July 19, 2021 in Corpus Christi, Texas

## Results

Six (6) new applicators attended the Private Pesticide Applicator training and testing sessions offered at the Wharton County Extension Office in the year 2021. The number of Private Applicators completing the certification training at the Wharton Office has declined due to Covid-19, whereas applicators have an option of also completing the training online.

For year 2021 Wharton County awarded a total of twenty-three (23.0) CEUs at group meetings to a total of 684 individuals. It's estimated that due to Covid-19, the number of pesticide applicators reached with recertification credits at group meetings is down only 12% in 2021 from the 779 individuals reached in 2020.

### February 11, 2021 Virtual 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was conducted on the day of the 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference. 51 of 98 (52%) completed the evaluation instrument. 34% (17 of 49) report that over the past three years that they have addressed feral hog mitigation/control strategies by applying practices for feral hog management taught at this annual conference.

**74% (37 of 50) report an economic benefit from participating in the 2021 5-CEU Virtual Recertification Conference**

### **Client Change Level of Understanding: February 11, 2021 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference**

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Bermudagrass Stem Maggot Identification and Control Methods	1.89	3.44	89%

### July 19, 2021 VATAT Pesticide Workshop

Twenty-three (23) Ag Science Teachers attended the TDA Pesticide Recertification Workshop, which addressed Herbicide Groups and Relevance to Herbicide Resistance, Huisache Ecology and Brush Management, and TDA Pesticide Laws and Regulations. These topics were identified by Ag Teachers at the 2020 VATAT conference workshops. 21 of 23 (91%) completed a retrospective-post Survey. 65% (15 of 23) estimate an economic benefit from participating in this workshop. Participants increased their knowledge of Herbicide Groups and its Relevance to Herbicide Resistance by 50 %; and increased their knowledge of Huisach Ecology and Brush Management by 129%. Thirty-six (36) Ag Science Teachers complete the Private Applicator Certification Training.

**Participants of the VATAT Pesticide Recertification Conference Participants reported 11,910 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$68,125 or \$5.72 per acre**

## RELEVANCE

Agricultural operating costs continue to rise nationwide while commodity prices are not rising at the same rate. Producers now need to find ways to cut input costs while increasing production, and decreasing their environmental impact. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a tool that can aid producers in choosing the best approach economically and environmentally. IPM considers multiple tactics for the control of pests to reduce the occurrence of pesticide resistance, minimize environmental impact of pest control, and offer the best option from an economic standpoint.

### According to 2021 FSA Data:

- Wharton county planted 69,747 acres of cotton
- Jackson county planted 40,267 acres of cotton
- Matagorda county planted 44,958 acres of cotton

Cotton is a major crop in Texas, and one that can have complex pest pressures. Scouting fields is a reliable way to monitor and evaluate pest thresholds throughout the growing season, as well as providing information on what pests are a concern depending on the plants current growth stage.

Early season, thrips are foliar pests, fleahoppers become a concern once fruit starts to set. In some instances, wireworms and false wireworms can cause issues as well. Once fruit is present and the cotton starts blooming, bollworms, stink bugs, verde plant bugs, lygus bugs, and armyworms all have the potential to be pests. Whiteflies, aphids, and spider mites are all potential occasional pests as well.

Each pest has different responses to different insecticides, and often field conditions dictate decision making. Few in field decisions are simple, and the goal of this program is to make those difficult decisions easier by providing information on how each pesticide option works, as well as the economic benefit of each option.

## RESPONSE

The Wharton, Jackson, and Matagorda county IPM Committee has identified the Upper Gulf Coast Scouting Program as an educational approach to address the economic need for using IPM strategies on the farm.

The committee meets twice a year: once in the spring to plan the acres for the scouting program and recommend relevant research options, and once in the fall to evaluate the program and research results after harvest.

This year we participated in the Statewide IPM Audio Update program as well. I recorded, edited, and published the updates for the Blacklands and Upper Gulf Coast region.

### Program Accomplishments

- 18 volunteer growers that allow access to their fields for scouting throughout the summer
- 27 Upper Coast IPM Blog updates at <http://uppercoastipm.blogspot.com/>
- 21 Blacklands and Upper Gulf Coast IPM Audio Updates at <https://www.texasinsects.org/agriculture-audio-updates-home.html>
- 863 contacts made up of growers, relevant extension personnel, crop consultants, and agricultural industry professionals every week

## RESPONSE

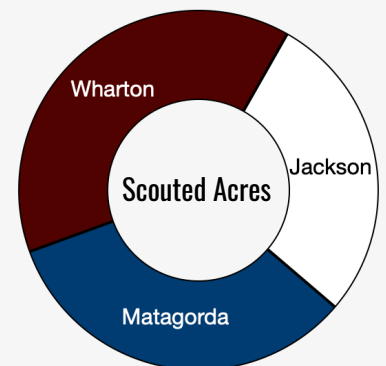
### Upper Gulf Coast IPM Program Scouting Program 18 fields scouted weekly provided information for:

- 27 total weekly blog posts
  - 327 email subscribers
  - 218 facebook followers
  - 224 twitter followers
- 21 total weekly audio updates
  - 94 text subscribers
- 3 AgFax interviews
- 2 El Campo Leader News interviews
- 1 Wharton Journal Spectator interview

**57,763**

## PUBLICATION CONTACTS

863 weekly contacts from  
information generated by the  
scouting program



**1,833 TOTAL**

Acres scouted weekly  
Wharton County: 783 acres  
Jackson County: 566 acres  
Matagorda County: 670 acres

## Response

In 2021, I hired 3 employees to support projects for the Upper Coast IPM Scouting and Research program.

- Field Scout, Duane Schroedter: repeat hire, retired teacher and crop consultant
- Field Technician, David Otradosky: repeat hire, teacher
- Intern, Lauren Watkins: new hire, Blinn student

The sole focus of the field scout is the scouting program, while my field technician aids in maintaining equipment and running in season field trials. The IPM intern is responsible for maintaining USDA invasive species trap lines, as well as assisting with in season field trials. All employees assist with the summer scouting program, and receive on the job training on updated pesticide safety and economic threshold evaluation as well as disease, plant, and insect identification. At the end of the season, the intern receives a scholarship, and at the end of the year the returning employees receive a Christmas bonus.

In addition to scouting 1,833 acres weekly, we had:

- 5 locations monitoring for 4 invasive species
- 4 corn research projects
- 6 cotton research projects
- 1 rice research project
- 2 sorghum research projects
- 5 company research projects



## Evaluation Strategy

Surveys were used to estimate the economic impact of the Upper Coast IPM scouting program, blog, and the IPM audio updates.

### Upper Gulf Coast IPM Scouting Program Survey

- sent to the 18 participating growers in December
- 4 grower responses

### Upper Coast IPM Blog Survey

- sent to the 327 email recipients of the blog
- 17 complete responses
- 7 Ag Producers
- 4 Crop Consultants
- 5 AgriLife Personnel
- 1 Ag Industry Professional

### Statewide IPM Audio Update Survey

- sent out to 402 state wide subscribers via text message
- 76 Responses

## RESULTS

### The Upper Coast IPM Scouting Program evaluations

- Valued the program at an average of \$10.25 an acre
- \$18,788.25 total estimated program value to the 18 participating producers

### The Upper Coast IPM Blog evaluations

- Ag producers valued the program at an average of \$9.85 an acre
- 6 ag producers stated that the program had no effect on pesticide use, 1 stated the program slightly decreased their pesticide use
- All ag producers answered that the blog provided information of economic value to their farming operation
- Crop consultants valued the program at an average of \$14.00 an acre
- Total value of the blog to Wharton, Jackson, and Matagorda county cotton industry estimated between \$1,526,474 and \$2,169,608.

### State wide IPM Audio Update Survey

- Ag producers state wide estimated value at \$42.10/ acre
- Ag producers for the Blacklands and Upper Gulf Coast estimated value at \$28.20/ acre

## Summary

The Upper Gulf Coast Scouting program provided information on current pest conditions, economic thresholds, scouting methods, and decision making guides throughout the summer. This information was estimated to provide a value of \$18,788.25 to the 18 volunteer producers participating in the program, and between \$1,526,474 and \$2,169,608 to the local cotton industry in Wharton, Jackson, and Matagorda county as a whole.

The Upper Gulf Coast IPM Scouting Program continues to make an economic impact for our agricultural producers and professionals, despite challenges with weather and wildlife.

## Future Programming

Next year we plan to continue the Upper Gulf Coast Scouting program, as well as using the data generated to support the Upper Coast IPM Blog, and the Blacklands and Upper Gulf Coast IPM Audio Updates for the benefit of the agricultural community in Wharton, Jackson, and Matagorda counties, and the state of Texas.



For more information:

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# Making a Difference

## 2021 Farm & Financial Resources In-Depth Plan

Documented by Mr. Braxton Mitchell MS, CEP-(AgNR), Wharton & Austin County

**Relevance** – In Wharton County and Austin County, small-scale, minority agricultural producers and landowners face issues regarding profitability and sustainability on their operations. In addition, many of them lack the knowledge and resources that could potentially increase their financial sustainability. As operational costs increase due to the national pandemic, there are a variety of methods that can be utilized by producers to see more profitability in today's market. Some of these producers have a negative outlook on the USDA Farm Agencies (FSA, NRCS, etc.) due to failed attempts while applying for financial assistance programs, acquiring farm numbers, and obtaining agricultural exemptions. Bridging the gap between producers and federal agencies can help reconcile some of these relationships. Lastly, many of these producers are not practicing modernized marketing techniques and business management strategies. Exposing producers to the business strategies of today can increase financial sustainability on their operations.

**Response** – The Wharton County Cooperative Extension Program (AgNR Unit) addressed the needs for agricultural producers and landowners in Wharton County.

- August 5th, 12th, & 19th, 2021, Ag Entrepreneurship Series

### Evaluation Methods/Results:

The Cooperative Extension Program administered online and in-person post evaluation surveys following the agricultural programs.

# Making a Difference

## Collaborators:

Prairie View A&M University, Landowners Association of Texas, The BID Consortium, Moore Farms & Insurance, Circle A Farm & Ranch, DLC Livestock.

## Results - Ag Entrepreneurship Series

- One Hundred Six (106) existing and aspiring ag entrepreneurs attended both in-person and virtually
- Of those 106 attendees, 55 of them completed evaluations
- 45 (82%) of those respondents strongly agree that their knowledge was increased after attending the program
- 39 (71%) of those respondents strongly agree that their participation in more federal, state, and local programs will increase
- Attendees agree that the potential estimated cost saving from using the information from this program totals over \$82,400

## RELEVANCE

In Texas, 33 percent of the adult population is obese and 33 percent of youth (10-17 year olds) are either overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk for diabetes, hypertension and poor overall quality of life. Moreover, health disparities among low income populations are well documented.

Thus, individuals who live in poverty have dietary intakes that do not meet the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans or MyPlate recommendations. An estimated one in six Texas families experience food insecurities, meaning that the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food is limited or uncertain. The goal of the Better Living for Texans and the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs are to provide nutrition education that increases the likelihood of participants to make healthy food choices consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Choose MyPlate.

## RESPONSE

The Better Living for Texans program (BLT) is a nutrition education program available for adults and children that are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Since Fiscal Year 1995, BLT has provided research-based nutrition education programs that help people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, grow their own foods, save money at the grocery store, and adopt better food safety habits. Better Living for Texans is a cooperative endeavor between the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that serves limited income families throughout Texas – offering classes at no cost to participants. Statewide, BLT receives over \$7 million each fiscal year for programming resources and materials, salaries, and benefits

## Summary

To address obesity and healthy eating in youth I will be implementing Balancing Food and play to the Boys and Girls Club of Wharton. To address obesity in adults in Wharton County I am collaborating with the Wharton County Seniors group and the Texas Workforce Solutions to provide Be Well, Live Well series and a Fresh start to a Healthier You.

## Evaluation Strategy

A retrospective post test will be used in evaluating these programs as well as feed back from the organizations that I collaborate with.

## RESULTS

The primary benefit of the program is increasing fruit and vegetable intake. Participants' consumption of fruits two or more times a day increased from 21% to 44%, and the same measure for vegetables increased from 24% to 48%. With the goal of increasing physical activity among senior adults, the frequency of being physically active for 30 minutes or more increased from 3.2 days per week to 4.2 days per week at the end of the program.



## VALUE STATEMENT

### Better Living for Texans

These nutritious programs teach low-income audiences to prepare nutritious meals, stretch their food resources, improve their food safety practices, and participate in regular physical activity. This not only improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease for participants, but also lowers public health care costs.

**37%**  
OF ADULTS IN  
WHARTON  
COUNTY ARE OBESE

15%

**Texas Families experience food  
insecurities**

**4 OF 10**

Poor diet has been linked to  
4 of the 10 leading causes of  
death.

For more information:

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## RELEVANCE

On a weekly basis, early childhood educators in the U.S. provide care for 11 million children younger than age five whose parents are in the workforce. It is estimated that there are over 12,900 childcare facilities in Texas with the capacity to care for more than 1 million children. Moreover, there are approximately 60,000 early childhood educators who are employed in childcare centers alone. Researchers have found that quality matters when it comes to childcare. Children who receive high-quality care 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 early childhood educator workforce is essential to providing the high quality childcare that children need to reach their developmental potential. Early childhood educators working in licensed and registered childcare programs are mandated by the state of Texas to obtain a set amount of training (i.e., clock hours) in a variety of areas associated with the care of children. The early childhood educator training conference provides an avenue to reach early childhood educators with research-based information that will enable them to obtain state-mandated clock hour credits and enhance their knowledge and skills in the early childhood educator profession.

The goals of the early childhood educator conference include: 1. To provide early childhood educators with an opportunity to obtain state-mandated clock hour credits. 2. To provide research-based training for early childhood educators in the content areas identified by the Child Care Regulation Program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. 3. To enhance the knowledge and skills of Texas early childhood educators so that they will be better equipped to address the needs of the children they care for in their programs.

## RESPONSE

The Multi-County Early Childhood Education Conference committees includes county agents, specialists, childcare providers, and Turtle Wing Foundation. The Turtle Wing Foundation has a goal to provide educational outreach to childcare providers/families of rural children with learning challenges, so the Foundation works with the ECE Committees to provide needed programs.

In 2021 there were 3 conferences planned. By using topics requested by childcare providers and state mandated requirements, speakers were secured for the February, August, and September conferences. Each conference was publicized through e-mails and a hard copy mailing list of child centers/day homes in a surrounding 14 counties, area news media, radio, county webpages, and Facebook.

Sites were secured plus speakers and various exhibitors contacted. Turtle Wing Foundation also assisted with planning, publicity and served as an exhibitor/resource for the February Conference. Vendors were also contacted.

## VALUE STATEMENT

### Early Childhood Education

Children who receive high-quality care (e.g., warm sensitive caregiving, well-educated childcare 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.

**\$2.3 Billion**

**Wages Generated by the 16<sup>th</sup>  
Largest Industry in Texas.**

**100,000+**

**# of Providers Caring for  
Children Under Age 13**

**145,000**

**Jobs Generated in Texas by  
Child Care Facilities**



# RESPONSE

Speakers for the conferences were Extension specialists, local health care professionals, and Extension Agents. Topics included: "Milestones for Young Children", "Developmentally Appropriate Activities in the Childcare Environment", "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Preschool Parent", "Looking, Listening & Learning – Language Development", and "Emergency Preparedness".

A group of District 11 agents participated and hosted a Virtual ECE Conference which was organized by a state ECE Steering Committee. Each one of the 12 districts formed a planning committee and committed to hosting a 3-hour virtual conference. The District 11 ECE committee was comprised of SE Regional FCH Program Leader and agents from Aransas, Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Lavaca, Victoria, Wharton, and Washington counties. Agents and a Specialist were the speakers and agents were also involved in planning, as moderators, Emcee, and commercial spokespersons.

Educational methods used included power point presentations, group discussions and hands-on activities. The conferences also made CPEs available to providers. A total of 16 workshop hours were provided through these conferences.

Agents also distributed PPE to Child Care Providers to assist them in staying open during the pandemic.



# Evaluation Strategy

A state-wide Child Care Conference evaluation was administered at the end of each of the conferences and entered into the state Qualtrics system.

# RESULTS

Return rate for the evaluations was 98%. The following were some of the results from the conference evaluations:

- **100%** of providers stated they had learned something new.
- **99.5%** of providers stated they would use the information to strengthen their childcare programs.
- **100%** of providers stated that the training would help them become a more effective childcare educator.

Some comments on what they considered to be the most important thing gained:

- "Every topic covered today was helpful. There were things from each topic that will be helpful and will benefit me in working with the children, now and in the future."
- "For me I consider the importance of positive behavior in a child's life as the topic which I found really striking. Because positive relationships are allowing children to avoid injury, stay healthy, build relationships and even helps in gaining self- esteem."

Agents will share the evaluation results and providers' comments with program area committees when planning 2022 workshop. Results will also be used during Annual Commissioners' Court Interpretative Events.

# Summary

Because of COVID-19 issues the February Child Care Conference was changed to a virtual format but still had a strong attendance at close to 200 participating. The Victoria Child Care conference held in August was face-to-face with the committee meeting all health protocols in place at the church site.

# Future Programming

2022 Multi-County Conferences will be planned by working with program area committees, community partners, and specialists. In the planning stages, providers comments regarding sessions will be considered in this process. Either face-to-face or virtual conferences will be offered at various times by these teams throughout the year.

## Comments:

**"Great training and so glad I attended"**

**&**

**"I learned how to interact to the children in a positive way as well as to keep them safe"**

For More Information:

**Lori Garcia**

FCH Agent  
Wharton County

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## RELEVANCE

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's 4-H Youth Development program places great value on the 4-H Family and Consumer Sciences projects. In addition, these projects allow 4-H members to explore the academic disciplines of family and consumer sciences and help them gain valuable skills and knowledge that can be applied to daily life

### Experiences for 4-H members will include;

- **Workshops;** 4-H members will have multiple opportunities to attend workshops which match their interests in Health and Nutrition as well as Clothing and Textiles.
- **Practices;** 4-H members will be given the opportunity to practice the skills they learn.
- **Contests;** 4-H members will be given the opportunity to showcase the skills learned at contests at the local, district and state level.

In order to become informed adults in relation to consumer and family skills, activities in the areas of health and nutrition, clothing and textiles, consumer decision making, housing/environment, and child development, projects will be designed to help youth make informed and wise decisions through 4-H FCH related projects, activities, and contests. Youth in Wharton County will learn the importance of acquiring consumer decision making skills and other cost-effective ways of making or buying consumer products such as food and clothing, enabling them to save money and live a healthy lifestyle.

## RESPONSE

Goals of the 4-H FCH Program will be addressed through recruiting and building capacity in volunteers to help guide youth through sequential learning activities that will enhance practical life skills.

**The local 4-H FCH project coalition will provide overall guidance to support development of the following:**

- **Becoming responsible citizens and leaders in family, community, and work settings.**
- **Promoting optimal nutrition and wellness across the life span.**
- **Managing resources to meet the needs of individuals and families.**
- **Balancing personal, family, and work lives.**
- **Using critical thinking skills to address problems in diverse families and communities.**
- **Successful life management, employment, and career development**

## VALUE STATEMENT

Wharton County FCH-4-H

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.

25 Adult  
Volunteers  
Utilized

100

100 Youth member  
participants

7 Contests

For youth  
participation



# RESPONSE

## Creating a Quality County Experience:

In order to create the best experience for our Wharton County 4-H participants, we hosted numerous contests and opportunities for our Food and Nutrition and Clothing and textile 4-H members.

- We hosted a Kids in the Kitchen and Kids in the sewing room summer day camp. There were approximately **46** participants in total from this event.
- Fashion Show, Duds to Dazzle, and Fashion Story Board contests were held with about **26** members participating.
- Food Show and Food Challenge contests were held with **94** total participant and **18** Food Challenge Teams (the highest number of Food challenge we have ever had).

We also had participants who went on to compete at district and earn a trip to State Contests as well. Our county Food Show and Food Challenge contests continue to be close in size to a typical District Contest. We utilize approximately 40 -50 volunteer judges total for all contests we host. This allows for many members of our community to see what our kids have been learning and is a wonderful opportunity for our kids to showcase newly learned skills. For Kids in the Kitchen, we were able to utilize an older 4-H member who is enrolled in Culinary Arts at her high School to teach some portions of the Kids in the Kitchen as well as assist in other ways. We rely heavily on the help of adult volunteers for the success of these programs.



# Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation will be based on the level of participation of 4-H members in each activity available to them. If participation levels decrease in a particular area, then members and volunteers will be surveyed to try to determine a cause in a decline in participation and adjustments made as necessary to increase participation as long as there continues to be interest in the event.

## RESULTS

Overall participation in Food and Nutrition and Clothing and Textile projects has increased this year. We have seen higher numbers of participant in almost all activities that we provide.

- Food Show participation was up from previous years with a small increase in numbers
- Food Challenge saw the greatest increase going from approximately 10 teams in prior county contests to 18 teams for our county contest this year.
- We continue to have about the same number of participants in the Consumer Decision Making Contest this year.
- Fashion Show numbers dropped slightly.
- Duds to Dazzle numbers stayed even.
- Fashion Story Board numbers dropped slightly as well.
- Kids in the Kitchen numbers increased dramatically from last year
- Kids in the sewing room also saw an increase in numbers,
- We have seen our county participants who have advanced to district contest place very well in their respective contests with several Senior level participants advancing to State Contest as well.

## Summary

Our 4-H program provides so much for our participants. We also use a large number of adult volunteers to assist with this program. Everything from adult leaders who work with our youth on a constant basis, but also to volunteers within our community that come in once or twice a year to serve as judges and assist in so many ways to help us give our youth a quality county experience. Our youth are excited to be at our events and the excitement shows in their eyes when the step in the door.

## Wharton County 4-H Making the Best Better!

## Future Programming

In the future we want to continue to:

- Provide quality local programs that both interest and excite our 4-H members.
- Grow our 4-H numbers by strengthening the programs we provide.
- Provide new opportunities for our 4-H members to expand their knowledge and skills.

For More Information:

**Lori  
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## RELEVANCE

Each year, nearly 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. While some people may view this as a mere case of “food poisoning” foodborne illness has serious health and economic consequences. In fact, foodborne illnesses from five pathogens alone (Campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli O157:H7, and E. coli non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$6.9 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. All of us are at risk for foodborne illness, but older adults, pregnant women, young children, individuals with chronic disease, and those with a compromised immune system are at an increased risk. Since half of our food dollars are spent on foods eaten away from home, it is imperative that employees who work in retail food service handle food safely. Effective September 16, 2016, revisions in the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) went into effect. One major change requires that all food employees complete an accredited food handler training within 60 days of employment.

Since Wharton County does not have a Health Department nor a local health inspector, food safety in our county has been identified as an important issue by our county issues forum. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension’s Food Safety program addresses these issues by allowing for quick and local access to a certified Food Safety Educator. Without these programs available in the county, many food establishments would have to send their employees outside of the county for certification.

## RESPONSE

To meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments, the Food Protection Management (FPM) program was developed. The two-day certified food manager program prepares food service workers to sit for the state Certified Food Manager exam. Jackson and Wharton County agents co-taught the two-day certification course and offered courses throughout the year. Agents planned quarterly two-day programs which alternated between Jackson and Wharton Counties. Each of the Extension Offices also served as a site for “Tests and Retests Only” for individuals who did not pass their original exam or just needed to test only without participating in the 2-day FPM program. Also, the 2-hour food handler program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services, trains front-line food service workers on the basic principles of food safety.

### PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Each year I work with 3 Wharton County School Districts to certify all their Culinary Arts Students in both Food Handler Safety and Food Protection Manager’s Certification.

## VALUE STATEMENT

### Food Safety

Both those who work in food-service establishments and those who simply cook in their own kitchens benefit from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension’s food-safety education programs. The resulting improvement in safe food handling benefits consumers by helping prevent food-borne illnesses and the public health care costs they cause.

48 million Illnesses

128,000

Hospitalizations

3,000

3,000 deaths per year

8 Deaths  
per day



# RESPONSE

## Food Handler Safety

- 113 people certified in Wharton County
- High School Culinary Arts programs in 3 Wharton County Schools districts certify every Culinary Art Student through this program.

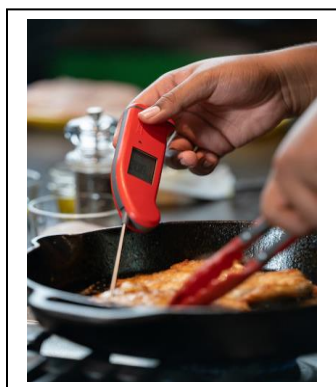
## Food Protection Manager's

- 51 people enrolled in FPM courses in Wharton County
- High School Culinary Arts programs in 3 Wharton County School districts enrolled Culinary Arts Students who were interested in becoming Food Protection Manager's Certified.

Without the Food Safety Training provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension within our county, many food establishments would have to send new employees out of town for training. This costs the employer time as the new employee must be gone for an extended period to receive the training that is required by the State of Texas.

Food Protection Manager's Certification is a 2-day course. Every food establishment must always have a certified Food Protection Manager on site during operating hours. Testing for this Certification is very strict and if not held in the county by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, then, employers would have to send employees to Houston for this testing.

Properly trained and certified employees are necessary to ensure a safe food supply in our county.



# Evaluation Strategy

For Food Handler's a pre and post test was utilized to measure knowledge gained and adoptions of best practices. A total of 99 of 113 (88%) participants completed the retrospective post survey instrument.

## RESULTS

Out of 51 participants registered for Food Protection Manager's, 19 (37%) passed the State Certified Food Manager Exam and received their certifications.

On the Food Handler's Safety pre and post tests;

- Mean test scores went from 69 on the pretest to 77 on the post test, an increase of 10% from pre to post.
- When asked about the temperature danger zone, pretest only 64% answered correctly compared to 79% on the post test.
- When asked about when they should inform their supervisor about illness, 56% answered correctly on the pretest compared to 78% on the post test.
- When asked how many people does a food borne illness outbreak involve, 66% answered correctly on the pretest compared to 82% on the post test.
- Only 66% could accurately identify the act of cleaning on the pretest, 79% were able to correctly identify cleaning on the post test.
- 74% were able to identify how to stop cross contamination on the pre test compared to 86% on the post.

## Summary

95% of those enrolled in Food Handlers have less than a high school education. Only 21% have worked in the food industry prior to taking this course and 54% of participants have never received training in food safety prior to this class. These trainings are held in the Wharton County schools every year and the certifications are good for 2 years. However, I am still certifying just over 100 uncertified students every year in Wharton County. Some of these are being certified for their first time ever, and some are re-certifying after their 2-year certification has expired.

## Future Programming

I hope to expand this program to reach more food establishments and work with them to train their employees on a regular basis. I also hope to increase the number of high school students taking the State Certified Food Manager Exam. I also want to increase the pass rate of participants on the exam.

For More Information:

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## RELEVANCE

The Texas Extension Education Association was organized in 1926. This association works with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development and community service.

### Their Objectives include:

- Strengthen, develop, coordinate, and extend adult researched-based education.
- Improve the quality of life for families and communities in cooperation with the Texas A&M University System.
- Promote family strengths and leadership development.
- Serve as a medium for the expression of charitable and educational interests.
- Award 4-H and TEEA adult scholarships on a nondiscriminatory basis to worthy applicants.
- Function exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes.

## RESPONSE

TEEA members will improve their quality of life through participation in research-based educational programs and develop leadership skills. The Wharton County Extension Education Association has two clubs, with sixty-five members. WCEEA plans to increase membership in 2022, by promoting the organization through networking and targeting various individuals in the community. Wharton County continues to have the largest numbers of active members in District 11. Wharton County members are very active in our community and provide tremendous support for Wharton County AgriLife Extension programs.

## Summary

The Wharton County EEA ladies can always be counted on to assist with county programs. They are also dedicated to raising money for the 4-H center in Brownwood to help maintain a nice facility for current and future 4-Hers. They are also a wealth of knowledge in so many areas of expertise. They really are a precious resource that our county benefits from in so many wonderful ways.

## Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation of this program will be based on the level of participation of Wharton County EEA members. I will be looking at whether membership is increasing or decreasing. I will also be looking at what the clubs accomplish each year.

## RESULTS

- Our TEEA ladies donated 39,000 hours of service to our community and programs.
- Members collected and cut out coupons and mailed \$2,000 in coupons to Armed Service Families.
- Donated \$3,000 in scholarships to worthy Wharton County Youth.

"I am very appreciative to have been selected as a recipient of your scholarship. I plan to use the money to help pay for my college tuition."

Tate Fuechec  
Wharton County EEA Scholarship Recipient

## VALUE STATEMENT

### Extension Education Association

The Texas Extension Education Association is a means by which member in cooperation with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension may interpret and provide programs of local, county, district, regional, state, national and international importance in preservation of the American home and the promotion of better international understanding.



### For more information:

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## RELEVANCE

This Program is used for programming efforts that may not fit in with other program plan areas that I have. One of the benefits of being an Extension Agent is that we are able to constantly adjust and continue to find ways to assist our clients. Quite often we have clients come to us and request specific program needs that we are more than happy to supply even though they are not pre-planned activities that are present in our program plans. Many of these opportunities are such that we come in once or twice to assist and will not have a continual role past the one or two visits. Conducting one shot events raises the likelihood of an agent being asked back to conduct a program series, so these one shot events are a great way to market your programs.

## RESPONSE

As Extension agents we continue to be open to new opportunities and new partnerships. We will meet the request of new partners in the hopes of forging an ongoing relationship. Through these types of programming efforts, we have the opportunity to look at potential new areas of need within our county and bring this information back to our program committees. These opportunities allow us to identify new and changing needs within our community and stay current and relevant with the needs of our clientele.

I have had the opportunity to discuss future collaborations with the Boys and Girls Club in Wharton. Unfortunately, due to Covid issues this year, I was unable to come in and do programming, but we are really excited about plans for 2022. I have also been in discussions with the Texas Workforce Solutions for Wharton County and they are interested in the Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes. This is a much needed resource for the workforce commission. Again, we are looking forward to implementing this in the 2022 year. Many of her program attendees cannot meet under current peaks in Covid cases within our county as they are all considered high risk populations.

## RESULTS

- I attended 16 Professional Development opportunities both in person and virtual
- I am an active member of the Texas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Science and the National Extension Association.
- I continue to work closely with Wharton County's Office of Emergency Management on both Covid response and with flood activity.
- Served on the Executive Board for the Creative Arts Department of the Wharton County Youth Fair

## Summary

Although Covid issues created obstacles to our typical programming, these obstacles also created new opportunities by allowing us to meet new partners and create new collaborations. We also learned a lot about new ways of presenting programs for our clientele.

"Thank you so much for helping make the WCYF Creative Arts Program successful! I appreciate your long hours and help throughout the week. Thanks Again!"  
Melinda Gary  
Wharton County Youth Fair  
Executive Committee

## VALUE STATEMENT

### Health and Nutrition

As Extension agents, we constantly try to identify new and changing needs within our community in order to keep our programming current and relevant to the needs of our clientele. I think the ability to constantly look for better ways to serve our community is the strength of our agency.



For more information:

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Family & Community Health  
Wharton County

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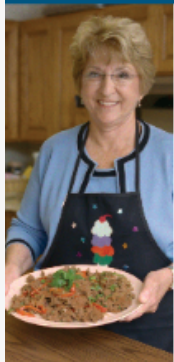
Email: [Lori.Garcia@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Lori.Garcia@ag.tamu.edu)

# Jackson County & Wharton County Retail Food Safety 2021 Program Results

Courtney Mercer, County Extension Agent - Family and Community Health, Jackson County  
Lori Garcia, County Extension Agent - Family and Community Health, Wharton County

## VALUE

### Food Safety Education



Both those who work in food-service establishments and those who simply cook in their own kitchens benefit from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's food-safety education programs. The resulting improvement in safe food handling benefits consumers by helping prevent food-borne illnesses and the public health care costs they cause.

## Reaching Every Texan!

### Relevance:

Each year, nearly 1 in 6 people become ill from the food they eat. Symptoms of foodborne disease include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, and headache. While some people may view this as a mere case of "food poisoning" foodborne illness has serious health and economic consequences. In fact, foodborne illnesses from five pathogens alone (Campylobacter, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli O157:H7, and E. coli non-O157:H7 STEC) cost more than \$6.9 billion in medical expenses, lost productivity, and even death. All of us are at risk for foodborne illness, but older adults, pregnant women, young children, individuals with chronic disease, and those with a compromised immune system are at an increased risk. Since half of our food dollars are spent on foods eaten away from home, it is imperative that employees who work in retail food service handle food safely. Effective September 16, 2016 revisions in the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) went into effect. One major change requires that all food employees complete an accredited food handler training within 60 days of employment.

## Program Summaries

### Response | Call To Action

To meet the need for quality food safety education in Texas retail food establishments, the Food Protection Management (FPM) program was developed. The two-day certified food manager program prepares food service workers to sit for the state Certified Food Manager exam. Jackson and Wharton County agents co-taught the two-day certification course and offered courses throughout the year. Agents planned quarterly two-day programs which alternated between Jackson and Wharton Counties. Each of the Extension Offices also served as a site for "Tests and Retests Only" for individuals who did not pass their original exam or just needed to test only without participating in the 2-day FPM program.

Also, the 2-hour food handler program, which is accredited by the Department of State Health Services, trains front-line food service workers on the basic principles of food safety. Food handler classes were offered on an as needed basis at various sites in each county during the year. The FPM and food handler's programs were publicized through news media, radio program, flyers, Facebook, quarterly FPM newsletters to local food establishments, and county & state websites.

### Results | Providing Solutions

**59** Participants **Signed**  
up for Food Managers  
Certification

**21** Participants **Passed**  
Certified Food  
Managers

**180** Participants  
Certified in Food  
Handlers

## POST SURVEY RESULTS



**100%**

Satisfied or very satisfied with the instructor's knowledge of the subject.



**100%**

Almost always or always wash their hand for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.



**100%**

Sometimes or never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands



**100%**

Never come to work with vomiting or diarrhea.



**100%**

Almost always or always use a thermometer to check the doneness of food.



**100%**

Were satisfied or very satisfied with the program.

**El Campo ISD, Ganado ISD, Edna ISD, East Bernard ISD and Wharton ISD culinary arts students were included in these numbers. Public Food Handlers Certification were held as needed. Public Food Managers Certification were held quarterly, alternating between Wharton and Jackson County.**

**Jackson County Extension Office**

411 North Wells, Rm 111 Edna, TX 77957

(361)782-3312 | <https://jackson.agrilife.org/>

## RELEVANCE

In the United States obesity is a major health issue resulting in numerous of life-threatening disease. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 42.4 % of adults are obese and 19.3% of children between the ages of 2-19 are obese. Texas ranks 10 among the 50 states of the highest obesity rates in the U.S. One third of residents in Texas are obese which is 34.8 % of Texans. Increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of obesity and certain chronic diseases and delay the onset in individuals at risk. Wharton County obesity rate is 28.5%, with unhealthy eating, lack of knowledge about nutrition, or physical inactivity obesity will continue to affect the American population.

## RESPONSE

We utilized the CHFFF curriculum and used foodhero.org for more recipes. It encouraged families to cook together and learn about different nutritious recipes that can also be cooked at home. Choose Health: Food, Fun, Fitness uses experiential learning to teach healthy eating and active play. The goal is to improve the following research-based behaviors for preventing obesity and chronic disease. The participants learned how to use more fruits and vegetables in their diets, eat whole grains, and eat less food that's high in sugar or fat. Our goal was to be innovative and creative with the programming. I knew it would require more efforts because of COVID-19. A lot of parents were very hesitant about letting their family participate. The programs started off being virtual only on YouTube. Each day we would make pick up bags that was available for pick up for our patrons. On the backend, I would create a YouTube video for them to follow along. In person, it was challenging because some recipes from the curriculum needed more time to complete. We pulled in additional recipes from foodhero.org.

## VALUE STATEMENT

### Heroes 4 Health Grant

The Heroes 4 Health program focus on food access, cooking skills, and basic nutrition behaviors while budgeting meals, and involving families in meal planning. These programs support healthy food choices and family involvement.

**In the US 14.4 million  
Children and  
Adolescents are  
Overweight or Obese.**

**12.9 % or 13 million of  
children in the US are living  
in poverty.**

**12.9 % or 3.7 million  
children in Texas are living  
in poverty.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



## RESPONSE

We implemented the CHFFF curriculum to help educate the youth, adults, and families in Wharton County. The sessions were hosted at: Wharton High School, Wharton County Library, Louise Library, East Bernard Library and The Boys and Girls Clubs. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, we met both in person and virtually throughout the year. We couldn't have done this without the help of our volunteers. They were a huge asset to facilitating and managing the group activities and lessons for each workshop.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for these curriculums is the youth. With a focus on low resources and underserved youth in Wharton County.

## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

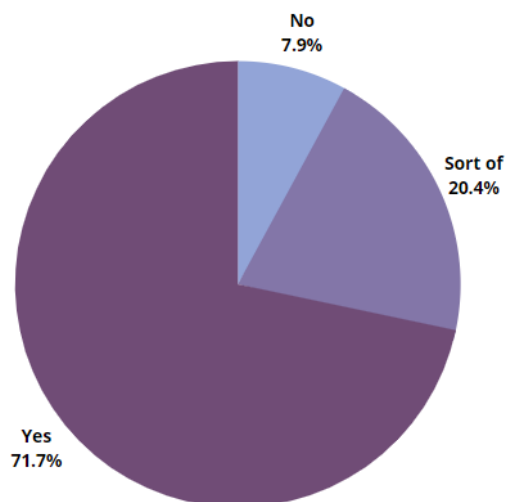
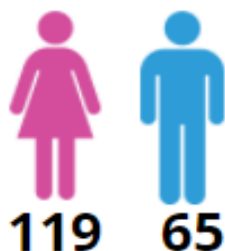
Walmart Foundation, Wharton High School, Wharton County Library, El Campo Library, East Bernard Library, Lousie Library, and Communities in Schools. As always, that you for your commitment and support.

## EVALUATION STRATEGY

Quantitative data will be collected through posttests. The data collected will be analyzed and used to measure impact. This data will also be used to increase program effectiveness.

## RESULTS

-Have you given your family ideas for healthy meals or snacks?



## FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The future plans for the Wharton County Childhood Obesity plan will continue its educational classes with the Heroes for Health Program. The program goal(s) will continue to raise awareness about childhood obesity. All while making it a fun and learnable experience. Our hope is to pull in more community partners and business. Not, only will children benefit from this plan, but their whole family will be included with the lifestyle change. Personally, I learned that children are struggling during the pandemic... like everyone else. Showing them grace and meeting them "where they are would" be my biggest lessons and take away this year. Our kids in Wharton County are glued to their phones. So instead of me complaining and telling them to get off TikTok, I asked them to find a healthy recipe of dance challenge for us to do!



For More Information:

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## Helping Texans Better Their Lives

# CEA Annual Achievement Report (2021) Kashara Bell, FCH Agent, Wharton County

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### In-Depth Program Planning (Also attach In-Depth Summary(ies))

- Reached underserved and limited resourced audience
- Maintained copies of all sign in sheets, consent forms, and evaluations
- Updated extension office with current events
- Committee member conducted childhood obesity educational programs at all of Wharton County Libraries
- Family Community Health (FCH) committee meetings were conducted virtually and face to face on: April 14th, November 29th, October 25th, and December 13th,
- Committee members recruit volunteers, market and promote programs, and assist with programming i.e., sign in sheets, meeting room set up and break down, assists with dissemination and collection of surveys, assist with educational materials
- Committee member conducted nutrition educational programs

### In-Depth Program Implementation

- 2 educational classes (health and wellness)
- 305 participants (health and wellness)
- 10 presentations (childhood obesity)
- 184 participants (childhood obesity)
- 9 county events (fostering strong families)
- 197 youth and adults (fostering strong families)
- Audiences: limited resource and underserved populations
- Educational methods: virtual workshops (YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom), presentations, classes, handouts, Facebook, and county website

### In-Depth Program Evaluation

- **Health and Wellness Safety Days**
  - Reaching **305** youth and adults
  - 2** Presentations
- **Childhood Obesity 4-H Heroes 4 Health**
  - Reaching **184** youth and adults
  - 10** Presentations

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

- Partnered and work closely with committee members to ensure county wide coverage
- Data and evaluations were greatly affected due to programming being held virtually
  - **Social media**
    - 35 posts to Wharton County FCS Facebook and Agrilife county page

### **Outreach Program Summary**

- **Fostering Strong Families**
  - 9 educational classes (fostering strong families)
  - 197 podcast listeners (fostering strong families)
- **4-H Youth Development & Life Skills**
  - 747 students
  - 19 workshops

### **Accountability and Interpretation**

- Wharton County Extension Service Staff Office Conferences
- Report monthly to Texas Data
- Interpretation to commissioner's court December 13, 2021
- Programming Interpretation with FCS Committee on 12/10/2021
- Report to Wharton County Leadership Advisory Board Meetings

### **Volunteer Management and Engagement**

- Wharton High School
- Communities in Schools
- Planned Wharton County System Library youth summer programming
- 91 volunteer involvement; volunteer hours valued @\$27.20 (\$2,475.00)

### **Other Human Resources**

- Prairie View A&M University Fire and Life Safety Training - RMS- 11/04/2021
- Prairie View A&M University Clery Act Basics – EVERFI Course - HR 11/04/2021
- Prairie View A&M University Building Supportive Communities: Clery Act and Title IX - EVERFI Course- HR 10/14/2021
- Prairie View A&M University Information Security Awareness- HR 05/04/2021
- Prairie View A&M University Nepotism Policy- HR 05/03/2021
- Supervise one Wharton County Administrative Assistant I, July 2016-present

### **Material Resource Development**

Received monetary donations for programing support from:

- Gifts for Safety event pumpkin decoration contest-Wharton /county Library System \$125.00
- Supplies for nutrition classes - El Campo Wharton, East Benard, and Louise Library \$1,200.00
- Funds for nutrition programs – Community in Schools \$255.00
- Hero's For Health Walmart Grant- \$1800.00 per class

### **Internal Relationships**

- Support new agent Braxton Mitchell with his Ag Entrepreneurship Series on August 5,12,19, 2021

- Created a vision board training session for CEP Specialists II Talia B. Washington for her upcoming small business workshop
- Collaborated with Texas A&M Regional Program Leader Erika Bochat and served on the (FCH) Resource Advisory Committee
- Collaborated with Mary Washington for Safety Day in Brenham on June 10, 2021
- Served on the Total You Wellness Committed with other county agents from Cooperative Extension Program, Prairie View A&M University

## External Relationships

- Communities in Schools
- Amerigroup
- PALS
- BACODA
- MEHOP
- Access Health WIC
- El Campo Memorial Hospital
- Faith Christian Academy
- Established partnership with Texas Child Protective Services
- University of Idaho Extension
- Elevate LLC.
- Wharton, El Campo, and Louise County Library
- Wharton Junior High School
- Wharton High School
- El Campo Leader News
- Wharton County News
- Wharton Journal Spectator
- Wharton County Junior College Senior Center
- Wharton County Sheriff Department

## Other Teamwork Examples

- Attended Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service weekly D11 4-H Coffee and Chat
- Collaborated with Texas A&M Regional Program Leader Erika Bochat and served on the (FCH) Resource Advisory Committee
- Attended SE Region Fall Program Planning Conference in Bryan TX September 2, 2021

## Professional Development

- Assisted agents in multiple districts with branding, graphics, flyers
- Served on the committee for Prairie View A&M University CEP 2021 Going Beyond Ordinary Program Planning
- Attended Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension program planning
- Received mentoring from Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program Family and Consumer Science agent Dr. Crystal Wiltz (Travis County), Rosondra Hartsfield (Falls County), and Te'Anna Reed (Harris County)
- Provided Canvas 101 training to CEP FCH agents

**EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE**  
*Providing Solutions*

- Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Heroes 4 Health Grant Orientation Training by Specialist Dawn Burton February 2, 2021

### **Professionalism**

- Supportive of co-worker's programs and events
- Maintained required office hours requested by County and District Extension Adm.
- Comply with Prairie View A&M University policies and procedures
- Provided supervision of office administrative support staff
- Completed all SSO and EVERFI training provided by human resources
- Attended mandatory Agrilife District 11 trainings and agent meetings

## Family and Consumer Sciences

### 2021 Youth Development and Life Skills (Outreach)

#### Kashara Bell- Family and Consumer Science Agent- Cooperative Extension Program



#### Relevance

The Texas Community of Futures Forum, Leadership Advisory Board, and Wharton County Agents met and identified issues we needed to address for program excellence here in Wharton County. Some of Wharton County identified issues were: Life skills, Youth Development, and Character Building. We believe that learning life skills help the youth build who they are and what they want out of life.

#### Response

Imagine our youth people, graduating from school with excellent scores, but not knowing the first thing about coping with reality. What if they couldn't communicate effectively? Or couldn't handle money issues and were always in debt? These programs taught our youth real life lessons for real life moments. That's exactly what we focused on this year. Our Wharton High School PALS Club stand for Peer Assistance and Leadership. The club is a national organization that sponsors a leadership and mentoring program. Peer Assistance and Leadership is a program for high school students that demonstrate leadership abilities, and focuses on building areas in active listening, and communication skills. During our PALS workshops we've learned about character building, hygiene lessons, college prep 101, budgeting, table etiquette and the importance of goal planning. This isn't just about education...we've bonded into one big family!



•Reaching **747** students

•**19** Presentations

## Family and Consumer Sciences

### Education Efforts:

**Life Skills & Youth Development**

These are skills we need no matter where life takes us.

**1 Welcome to the Real World**

is a curriculum for ages 12-18 to try their hands at making adult choices such as what career to pursue, what car to buy, building credit, where to live, and how to pay their bills based on the life decisions they've made.

**2 Tackling Tough Skills**

is a self-paced course designed with you in mind. This course is about where you've been, what you've learned from experiences, and how to use this information to build a better life.

**Attitude**

- Problem Solving**
  - Decisions
  - Open Mind
  - Team Work
- Communication**
  - Listening
  - Conflict
  - Positivity

**3 Financial Management**

Many adults struggle everyday with managing their money. Getting a full understanding about finances will help you have a better plan for your future and ensure your life is secured financially. Teaching our youth now will help them in the future.

**4 College 101**

also called student success. Is a fun introduction to the college lifestyle. We education high school students on filling out applications, college choices, assistance with academic and career planning, and what to expect when/if you leave home. We plan to visit and tour a couple of Texas colleges in 2022!

**Plan Implementation & Results**

This plan was implemented at Wharton High School, Boys & Girls Club, and the libraries in El Campo, Wharton, and Louise Texas.

**2021 4-H Youth Development & Life Skills**

**62.9%**

**747**

Kashara Bell- Family and Community Health Agent  
(979) 532-8863 kishelton@pvamu.edu

### Participants Comments

- “ This is exactly the type of learning our young people need. They need to learn the basics of living and writing a check”- Jackie Hearse
- “I’m a junior and should be looking at colleges. Could you help me?”-Cora Williams
- “Where can I sign up for all programs? I need help with self-esteem and college choices”- Winter Gonzales

## Family and Consumer Sciences

### 2021 Wharton County Fostering Strong Families (outreach) Kashara Bell- Family and Community Health Agent- Cooperative Extension Program

#### Relevance

What happens in your life can set the foundation of a lifetime. It's key that families obtain the tools and resources that they need to provide a stable and nurturing environment for their families. In order to reach that goal, Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program must educate to strengthen families and empower families to upgrade their life! We all have a shared responsibility for making our communities strong. According to the Wharton County Family plan the solution to prevent poverty and low resources is to offer educational programming. As the population continues to grow and diversify, our quality of life increasingly depends on understanding the impact of human behavior. Individuals who are raised in an environment, in which they learn to make informed decisions, manage their basic needs, and tackle pressing human and societal challenges lead to happier and healthier lives.

#### Response

Our workshops focus on practical habits and tactics designed to help face life's adversities. Being that our target audience is low resources and underserved, tackling the root of the issue is where we started. How can you increase the quality of your life without having goals and a plan? Some people in the community lack basic life skills like: tackling tough skills, how to properly fill out a resume, and having goals and aspirations. No one is born with these skills, but we can all learn them over time. Knowing how to solve family issues and conflict management is important for family resilience. Being educated on how to be resourceful and creative will expose possibilities when overcoming adversity. To strengthen families, we must: 1) engage youth and their families in an educational pilot program that promotes learning and behavior change in the areas of prevention, nutrition, and physical activity, 2) implement healthy living programs, 3) develop and begin implementing curriculums.



- Reaching **197** youth and adults
- **9** Presentations

## Family and Consumer Sciences

### Education Efforts:

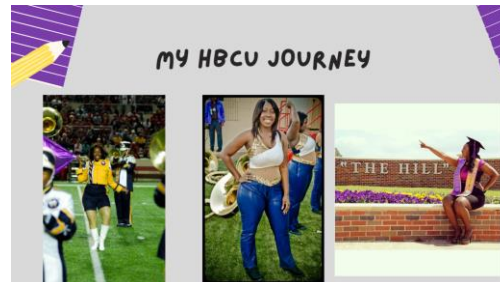
**Family Vision Board Night-** A vision board is a collage that uses the law of attraction to draw more of what you want into your life. Even if you don't believe in the law of attraction, making a vision board helps to define goals in a fun and creative way. Vision boards can focus on something specific like career, health goals, or the upcoming year. You can also make a board that encompasses your general life intentions. Usually our vision board parties are done students. We received so many inquiries about having a family vision board night, so we tried it. The teachers suggested we host it the school. Since parents had to come there anyway. It turned out amazing! Even the men engaged and completed a vision board. There was food, fun, giveaways, and networking. Everyone left with a tangible vision, goal, encouragement, prizes, smile, and full stomach!

-Programs implemented at **Wharton High and Junior School**

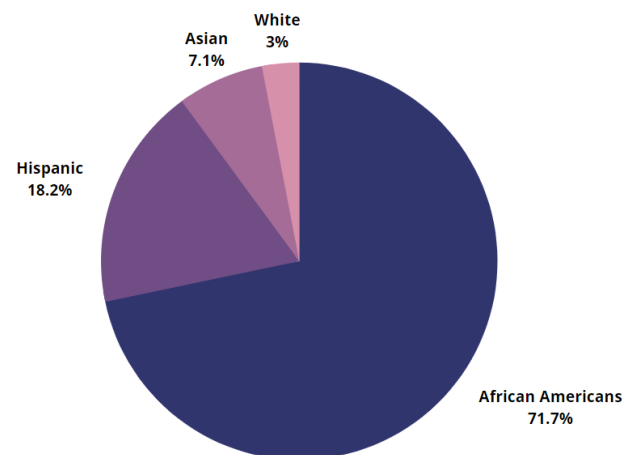
-Prizes and Food was provide by: **Communities in School and Wharton High School PALS**

-**Wharton Junior High School** donated tents, chairs, tables, and fans.

**Career Development and Career Day-** is a career awareness program in which businesses from a variety of companies come together at the school or online to share information about their company, their job, and the education and skills that are required for success in their career. Both adults and youth benefited from attending this workshop!



- Workshop was available to children and adults
- Invited other businesses to be apart of the career day
- 95** participated in the workshop virtually



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

## RELEVANCE

Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program strives to address the health and wellness needs of Wharton County by offering programs that help prevent chronic illnesses. Being that Covid-19 has made such an impact on our country, our FCH committee decided to educate our community on CDC precautions, Covid-19 safety tips.

## RESPONSE

Educating individuals on how to be safe and still live a normal life with Covid-19 was our goal. Our safety days equipped participants with the information and resources they need to understand about safety. During the pandemic, so parents struggled with finding activities at home and explaining Coronavirus to their children. Most younger children don't understand why they couldn't go over their friend's house or go communal spaces like playgrounds or the movie theater. As a result, we provided at home entertainment which was fun and gave them a visual breakdown of what Coronavirus is. The goal of our programing is to positively impact participant's health and wellbeing through improvements in health and physical activity. Wharton County Cooperative Extension Program strive to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

- The primary target audience is the community. Everyone can be impacted by coronavirus. Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program main goal is to serve the low resources and underserved community.

- 305 participants
- 2 education presentations



## VALUE STATEMENT

### Safety Days Goal

The goal of our health education program is to positively impact participant's health and wellbeing through improvements in self-efficacy, self-care behaviors, nutrition and safety knowledge.

These programs will help participants incorporate new Covid-19 safety habits into their everyday lives.

## Overall Prevalence of COVID-19 in Texas is 5.29M

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



# EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

## Safety Days

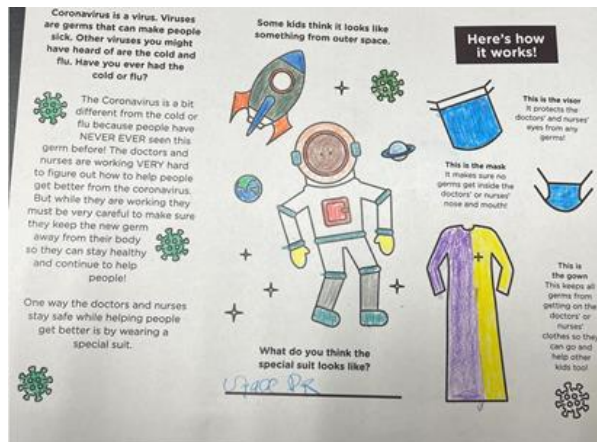
is an educational field day that provides training and resources for local communities to conduct one-day safety and health programs. Safety Days are designed to be age-appropriate, hands-on, fun, and safe for children. We covered topics like:

- Germ Prevention
- Stranger Danger
- DIY Mask
- Drug Safety
- Covid Testing Video Example
- Understanding Coronavirus Coloring Page
- At Home Activities

This program provided clientele with educational workshops that included demonstrations along with different types of activities to do daily.

# RESULTS

Due to Covid-19 we didn't get to do a lot of our normal programming, because of certain CDC restrictions. In response, deciding to have safety days was a great way to inform our community about the life changing virus. In 2022 our goal is to branch out and have more safety days at schools in Wharton County. Which all depends if Covid-19 threat level increases or decreases.



*Video of Agent Bell getting tested for Covid.*

# FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The future plans for the Wharton County Health and will continue its health and wellness classes to help the community manage or prevent health diseases and maintain a healthy lifestyle.



For More Information:  
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Prairie View A&M University  
Cooperative Extension Program  
Family and Community Health Extension Agent  
Wharton County

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# Making a Difference

## CEA Annual Achievement Report 2021

Laura Reyna, CEA 4-H Youth Development, Wharton County

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### In-Depth Program Planning (In-Depth Summaries Attached)

#### **Prestige Leadership Conference – Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, Bastrop, Burleson, Fayette, Karnes, Victoria, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- Enhance the participant's knowledge of their officer responsibilities and parliamentary procedures
- Strengthen county council officer's leadership, communication, teamwork skills, public speaking skills
- Provide resources for officer teams to plan a successful 4-H year
- Planning group establishes topics, identifies presenters/speakers, and plan activities
- Exposed youth to College Majors and Career Development at Blinn College in Brenham
- Use Leaders 4 Life Evaluations to determine participant's knowledge gained

#### **Train Like A Champion Livestock Series – Austin, Burleson, Fayette, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- Increase in experienced and new 4-H families-initiated series development
- Designed to be educational and hands on
- Hosted one session virtually to accommodate Covid restrictions
- Collaborated with Austin County Fairgrounds and Adult/Parent Associations
- Knowledge Gain, Intent to Adopt, and Increase in Understanding survey data collected

### In-Depth Program Implementation

#### **Prestige Leadership Conference – Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, Bastrop, Burleson, Fayette, Karnes, Victoria, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- Identified location and developed educational and recreational activities for county council officers
- Provided leadership activities to conduct successful meeting and 4-H year
- Partnered with Blinn College to provide Career Exploration Opportunities

## **Train Like A Champion Livestock Series – Austin, Burleson, Fayette, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- Collectively identified specialist to provide presentations and hands on demonstrations
- Secured support funds to provide supplies and prizes to assist with raising specific species, \$3,250 Donation/In Kind Sponsorship and sponsorship from the 4-H PALA
- Marketed program locally to 4-H members

## **In-Depth Program Evaluation**

### **Prestige Leadership Conference – Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, Fayette, Karnes, Victoria, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- 60 County Council Officers Attended the 2 Day Training from 8 counties
- 98% of participants are more confident in serving in a leadership role
- 92% of participants know how to be an effective communicator and good listener
- 96% have developed and improved their teamwork skills
- 94% can effectively participate in a business meeting using correct parliamentary procedure
- 100% believe that what they learned has given them the ability to make better leadership decisions

### **Train Like A Champion Livestock Series – Austin, Burleson, Fayette, Washington, & Wharton Counties**

- January – Educational Clinic for Sheep/Goats, Swine, Beef, Poultry, and Rabbits held virtually (75 participants)
  - 97% learned the proper facilities and the basic daily management tasks that must be performed for their project's success
- July – Educational Clinic and Show for Beef Cattle and Sheep/Goats (50 participants)
  - 100% will work at home to improve their showmanship skills

## **Outreach Program Summary**

### **Wharton County 4-H Grows**

- 364 enrolled members
- 48 enrolled adult volunteers
- State Recordbook 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner, 5<sup>th</sup> Place Winner
- Texas 4-H Fashion & Interior Design Ambassador
- 3 Texas Youth Livestock Ambassador
- 1 District 11 4-H Council Officer
- Wharton County 4-H Council
- Dispersed Water and Snacks to the community in promotion of One Day 4-H

### **Wharton County 4-H Livestock ANR**

- 17 youth exhibitors at Major Livestock Shows
- 150 youth participated in the Wharton County Youth Fair
- Validated all major show livestock

### **Wharton County 4-H FCH**

- Clothing & textiles project – 35 youth involved
- Food & Nutrition Project – 125 youth involved

## Accountability and Interpretation

- Wharton County 4-H Awards Banquet – 150 attendees
- Wharton County 4-H Annual Interpretation Event to Commissioner's Court
- Wharton County 4-H One Day 4-H Proclamation by Commissioner's Court
- Distribute bi-monthly 4-H newsletter – 600 per circulation
- Distribute weekly "Friday Roundup" E-mail – 600 per circulation
- Wharton County 4-H Facebook Page – 1,032 Followers
- Wharton County 4-H Instagram – 290 Followers
- Submitted newspaper articles to 3 local papers
- Attend Commissioners Court & Host Annual Interpretation Lunch
- Submit 2021 Texas plans, In-Depth Summaries, and Making A Difference Document
- Submit County one pager document
- Submit Monthly Reports

## Volunteer Management and Engagement

- 48 screened Adult Volunteers
- 56 4-H Youth Volunteers
- Wharton County 4-H Parent Adult Leaders – 8 meetings; 20 members; MOU/Budget/Bylaws
- 18 Chartered 4-H Clubs – MOUT/Bylaws/Budget
- 2 Project Clubs – Shooting sports and Swine
- Mandatory Club Manager Training

## Other Human Resources

- Work well with support staff
  - Yearly performance reviews conducted with all agents
- Mentor for Logan Bauer, Nueces County 4-H agent
- Assist other 4-H Agents

## Material Resource Development

- \$20,000 awarded to 1 member – Texas 4-H Opportunity Scholarship
- 1 actively involved member received a Terry Foundation Scholarship - ~\$100,000
- Support Group Funds reviews annually to ensure best case management practices.
- Raised approximately \$24,000 through 4-H Fundraiser and \$5,000 in Donations
- MOU's are in place for all Wharton County 4-H clubs – allow agent to be hands on with all clubs in ensuring that they are developing material resources to meet their needs.

## Internal Relationships

- Wharton County 4-H Council & Parent Adult Leaders Association – Advisor
- Texas 4-H Livestock Validation Chairman (Steers, Heifers, Poultry, Sheep, and Goat)
- Texas FFA Livestock Validation Chairman – Swine
- Chair, District 11 Jr. Leadership Lab Committee
- Member, District 11 Crossroads Committee
- Member, District 11 Leadership Lab Committee

**EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE**  
*Providing Solutions*

- Member, Texas 4-H Summit Planning Committee
- Chair, Texas 4-H Summit Registration Committee
- Quiz Bowl Chair, District 11 Spring Spectacular Committee
- Co-Chair, District 11 4-H Recordbook Committee
- Served on District 11 Program Development Committee
- Worked with agent cluster of Kayla Kaspar, Allyson James, Erik Taylor, Paige Melton, and Emilee DeForest to hold Prestige Leadership Conference for our County Council 4-H Officer training.

### **External Relationships**

- Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition
- Wharton County Farm Bureau – Ag in the Classroom, Financial support of 4-H program
- Wharton County Commissioner’s Court
- Boling, East Bernard, El Campo, Louise and Wharton ISD – Adjunct Faculty
- St. Philip Catholic School and Faith Christian Academy
- James B. Harrison Foundation
- Tabulate Livestock Judging Contest for fellow agents and fair associations
- Wharton Boys and Girls Club
- Wharton and El Campo Tractor Supply Company – Paper Clover Campaign and Special Events
- Wharton Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture – Ag Committee Chair
- Wharton West End Initiative
- St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church - Events

### **Other Teamwork Examples**

- Creative Arts Executive Committee, Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition
- Co-Chair, Livestock Judging Committee - Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition
- Co-Chair, Jr. Breeding Beef Committee – Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition
- Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Kitchen
- Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Sewing Room
- Wharton County 4-H Days Camps
- Western Belt Rice Conference

### **Professional Development**

- Texas Association of Extension 4-H Agents
  - Actively involved in District and State association events
  - Serve as member of Finance Committee
- Attended Texas 4-H Summit
- Participated in multiple on-line State-wide trainings

### **Professionalism**

- Worked to maintain a level of professionalism that was expected by clientele and management
- Truly worked with co-workers and others to accomplish our goals in a positive light
- Co-Manage the Wharton County Extension Office

## RELEVANCE

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential by promoting positive youth development through participation in animal projects, community service projects, family and consumer science projects and leadership projects just to name a few. In Wharton County we have individuals that are involved in every different aspect of the 4-H program. By involving these youth in the many different projects and activities they are able to experience positive youth development that helps to prepare them for their futures.

## RESPONSE

### Target Audience

4-H Youth participants, ages 8-18, in Wharton County who strive to help the community and prepare for the future.

Wharton County currently has a very strong 4-H Program. Covid in 2021 did not stop us, our numbers were down but we continued to have strength in what we did. We continue to work on nurturing the relationships with 4-H members, their families, and those who support the program. By doing so we were able to increase enrollment and participation. It is also important to provide quality contest and programs that our members enjoy participating in. By providing adequate training for our adult volunteers this allows us to empower them to help us lead our youth. A training was held for club managers and volunteers, they were able to learn the different aspects of the 4-H program and given the tools needed to run a successful 4-H club. We also hosted virtual opportunities to learn about the 4-H program as well as hosting a virtual recordbook workshop. Setting our 4-H members up for success is another way that we can continue to retain members.

A big part of 4-H is working with and helping the community, One Day 4-H has given our 4-H clubs an outlet to do this during National 4-H week. We held a county wide community service project where our 4-H members gave out free water and snacks at local community events to thank our community and promote our message. Our clubs also did a wonderful job coming up with their own One Day 4-H service opportunities. We also host a community service project each month during the County Council Meetings, our youth truly see the impact that they can have by helping others in numerous ways. Youth participants have learned that through their community service efforts they are directly helping our community, in turn this helps promote their positive youth development.



## VALUE STATEMENT

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities

## 4-H'ERS EXCEL

- NEARLY 4X MORE LIKELY TO MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES
- ABOUT 2X MORE LIKELY TO BE CIVILLY ACTIVE
- NEARLY 2X MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN SCIENCE PROGRAMS DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
- NEARLY 2X MORE LIKELY TO MAKE HEALTHIER CHOICES



# RESULTS

- 364 members enrolled in Wharton County 4-H
- 48 Adult volunteers enrolled on 4-H Connect
- 17 Community Clubs, 1 project club, 1 county club and 1 Parent Adult Leaders Association
- 18 Adult Volunteers participated in Volunteer/Club Manager workshop
- 150 attendees to the Annual Awards Banquet
- 40 Youth participated in County Food Show
- 72 Youth participate in the County Food Challenge
- 26 youth participated in the District Food Show
- 4 Teams/16 Youth participated in District Food Challenge.
- 17 youth exhibitors participated in San Antonio Livestock Show, Houston Livestock Show, and Rodeo Austin, State Fair of Texas, and Heart O' Texas Major Livestock Shows.
- 1 Dairy Judging Team and 2 Livestock Judging Teams
- 24 individuals participated in Recordbook training
- 37 youth participated in the County Photography Contest, submitting 225 pictures
- 35 youth participated in County Roundup
- 8 youth entered the County Fashion Show
- 2 youth entered the County Fashion Story Board Contest
- 17 youth/5 teams entered the Duds to Dazzle Contest
- 48 pictures advanced to the District Photography Contest
- 9 youth with 15 photos participated in State Photography Contest
- 5 youth participated in the District Horse Show
- 30 youth participated in the County Recordbook Contest
- 8 youth and 5 Adults participated in State 4-H Roundup
- 6 youth attended District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Bastrop, TX
- 22 youth attended Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Kitchen Camp
- 14 youth attended Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Sewing Room Camp
- 8 County Council Officers attended Prestige Leadership Conference in Brenham, TX
- 4 youth attended Junior Leadership Lab in Rockport, TX
- 16 youth and 2 Adult Chaperones attended District 11 4-H Crossroads in College Station, TX
- 1 Texas 4-H Fashion & Interior Design Ambassador
- 3 Texas Youth Livestock Ambassadors
- 1 District 11 4-H Council Officer
- 1 senior 4-H member received a Texas 4-H opportunity scholarships in the amount of \$20,000.
- 20 youth participated in the District Recordbook Contest
- 165 Youth and adults in attendance at the annual awards banquet which was held outside
- 3 youth participated in the State Recordbook Contest
- 1 State Recordbook 2nd place winner, 1 State Recordbook 3rd place winner, 1 State Recordbook 5th place winner
- 85 youth and 20 Adults participated in One Day 4-H efforts across the county

## Summary & Acknowledgement

Results indicate that the 4-H program is greatly appreciated and very important to the Youth and Community of Wharton County. Plans are to continue working with volunteers, youth and the community to make the Best Better!

## Future Programming

Goals for the future:

- Increase Participation
- Provide more opportunities for Team Building and Socialization across the county



For more information:

**Laura Reyna**

4-H & Youth Development  
Wharton County

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## RELEVANCE

Council officers in Austin, Calhoun, Fayette, Karnes, Victoria, Wharton, and Washington counties are taught leadership skills in a variety of ways but they all share a common goal to develop a successful county council leadership program that works effectively.

These council officers provide county-wide leadership to our 4-H programs. Their success as council officers relies on the training and skills that Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Agents provide. Over the years, we have noticed that as the times have changed and new technologies have been introduced, the level of leadership skills in our youth have regressed. Some of the issues to be addressed include public speaking, methods of communication, identifying learning styles, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, and more specifically, learning parliamentary procedures and effective leadership techniques.

## RESPONSE

In response to the observations mentioned above, participating counties and the Adult Leaders Association in each county were engaged in the program development process. Prestige Leadership Conference (PLC) is a multi-county effort that was offered to the 2021-2022 County Council Officers of each participating county. The goals of the program were: 1) to prepare the council officers for the leadership positions that they have been elected to; 2) to enhance the participants' knowledge of their officer responsibilities and parliamentary procedures; 3) to introduce the participants to participants from other counties in an effort to promote networking, partnerships, and to enhance their social skills; 4) to broaden participants knowledge of project areas offered through the 4-H program; 5) to provide career exploration; and 6) offer a reward for our council officers. PLC was a two-day camp that was held on the Campus of Blinn College in Brenham, Texas. Blinn College served as a major sponsor of the event.

### PLC activities included:

- Lessons on leadership, communication, teamwork, and decision making
- An overview of duties and responsibilities of officers
- Planning the 4-H year
- Organizing and conducting meetings and writing and handling motions
- Participate in a Mock 4-H Meeting
- Tour of Blinn College Ag Sciences Department
- Career Exploration
- Hands on learning experiences



## VALUE STATEMENT

### FACTS

4-H has a rich history in Texas. Since 1908, youth have been gaining valuable life-skills through hands-on activities taught and supported by caring adult volunteers and Extension Agents.

**4-HERS ARE NEARLY**

**4X**

**MORE LIKELY**

**to actively contribute to their community**

??

**4-H members are lead by the 60 County Council Members**

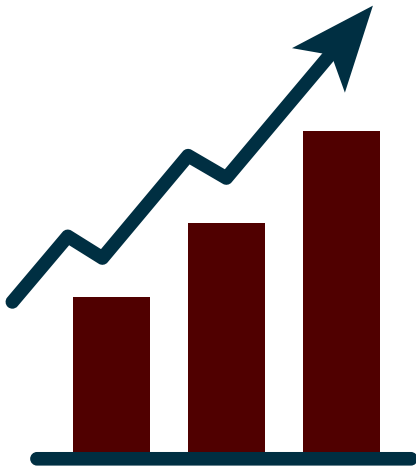


## Evaluation Strategy

A knowledge gained and behavior changed survey was completed by each participant immediately after the conclusion of the Prestige Leadership Conference.



## RESULTS



### LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE INCREASE:

- 60% increase in knowledge level of different communication strategies.
- 75% increase in knowledge of the purpose and principles of parliamentary procedures.
- 52% increase in knowledge of teamwork.
- 75% increase in understanding of the roles and duties of all 4-H officer positions.
- 77% increase in knowledge of how to build an agenda.

### BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

- 98% more confident in serving in a leadership role.
- 92% know how to be an effective communicator and good listener.
- 96% have developed and improved their teamwork skills.
- 94% can effectively participate in a business meeting using correct parliamentary procedure.
- 100% believe that what they learned has given them the ability to make better leadership decisions.

## Summary & Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the County Extension Agents who coordinated PLC, Blinn College for sponsoring the event and providing professors, presenters, shirts, supplies, and the facilities. We would also like to express our thanks to Dr. Bryn Behnke and Mr. Brice Mund and their staff for their support and leadership.



## Future Programming

Goals for the future:

- Increase Participation
- Travel to Texas Tech for a 3 day event
- Train and utilized offices during Northern 4-H Academy (Club Officer Training)

For more information:

**Laura Reyna**

4-H Youth Development  
Wharton County

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## RELEVANCE

Cumulatively speaking, Texas is the undisputed leader in 4-H and FFA livestock participation. Despite the numerous opportunities offered throughout the Texas 4-H program, there are more members involved in the raising and exhibition of livestock projects than any other project offered. While thousands of these livestock projects may be exhibited in major shows, the most common level of participation is found to be at the local county level.

Not only can a livestock project introduce youth to the industry they may become passionate about, but it can also teach them:

- Responsibility
- Time Management
- Sportsmanship
- Money management
- Goal Setting
- Morals & Ethics
- Confidence

In order for families to be successful with their newly acquired projects, they need to be equipped with substantial educational information. Ideally, a novice family would obtain all the necessary information regarding selection, facilities, feeding, daily care, and health management before purchasing an animal. Once equipped with the basic requirements of their project, mentors and industry leaders would then be able to help families fine tune the details of their projects in order to be as successful as possible at their target show. Ultimately, by arming youth with accurate information relatable to their skill level and introducing families to industry leaders and mentors, the chance of an exhibitor struggling with their project and ultimately abandoning the youth livestock project and the 4-H program in its entirety diminishes greatly.

## RESPONSE

In response to the observations mentioned above, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Austin, Bureson, Colorado, Fayette, Wharton, and Washington Counties partnered together to establish the Train Like a Champion Multi-Species Livestock Clinic (TLC). The ultimate goal of TLC is to provide educational resources on multi-species livestock projects spanning from the preparation stages to the final show days. The TLC Clinic series offered programs that covered the following topics:

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|---------------------|------------------------|
| • Selection         | • Grooming             |
| • Daily Care        | • Exercise Programs    |
| • Health Management | • Goal Setting         |
| • Nutrition         | • Show Day Preparation |
| • Facilities        | • Showmanship          |

### Target Audience

- Novice families exhibiting livestock projects including:
  - Market Steers
  - Market Lambs
  - Halter Heifers
  - Market Goats
  - Commercial Pen Heifers
  - Rabbits
  - Broilers
  - Turkeys

## VALUE STATEMENT

### This Barn is My Classroom

To be successful, livestock project families require substantial educational support beginning at the local level. County Extension Agents are tasked with directly providing or facilitating the educational resources needed to best prepare youth to exhibit livestock.

**OVER  
50,000**

youth engage in an animal project to gain research supported life-skill development



Supporters of these youth invest nearly

**\$100 MILLION**

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## Response Example

### Classroom Clinic

To ensure youth would be armed with accurate information before beginning their projects, a classroom style clinic was planned for January. Due to COVID-19, this educational experience was moved to a virtual platform. This clinic focused on fostering relationships with leaders in their respective fields, setting goals, and providing guidance to families on the initial processes associated with their animal projects.

- Virtual Classroom reached a live audience of 75 and recordings were made available to Agents
- 59 attendees completed the surveys emailed out after each clinic

### Clinic and Prospect Show

At a midway point for most of the participants projects, TLC provided an opportunity to evaluate project progress and better prepare families on show expectations by hosting a prospect and showmanship show along with a clinic at the Austin County Fairgrounds in July. Through the clinic, families were taught what to expect at their target show, and how to prepare their animals for the highest level of success. Afterwards, the youth participants were able to gain valuable show ring experience through exhibiting their projects in a prospect show and receiving feedback from industry professionals.

- The TLC Hands-On Clinic hosted over 50 participants
- 41 survey evaluations were completed after the clinic and showmanship contests

## Evaluation Strategy

A knowledge gained and behavior change survey was completed by each participant immediately after the conclusion of each portion of Train Like a Champion (Virtual Classroom Clinic & The Hands-On Clinic and Prospect Show)

## RESULTS

Results from each clinic showcased that participants felt the information presented to them was easy to understand and helped improve their knowledge and understanding of their projects.

- Level of Understanding Increase: 29 of 41 (70%) of participants had an increase in understanding of how proper showmanship techniques can impact placing of their animal
- Intention to Adopt: 41 of 41 (100%) will work at home to improve showmanship skills
- **Over 50%** of participants anticipated benefitting economically as a direct result of their attendance
- **92% (54 of 59)** attendees better understand the criteria they need to use when selecting and evaluating their project
- **95% (56 of 59)** plan to ensure their project is on a high quality and balanced feed ration
- **94% (49 of 52)** Plan to establish or have established a working relationship with their veterinarian
- 57 of 59 (97%) learned the proper facilities and the basic daily management tasks that must be performed for their project's success

## Acknowledgements

The TLC Committee would like to express gratitude to the numerous extension specialists, industry professionals, FFA advisors, and neighboring agents that assisted in providing educational experiences to our youth and contributed to the success of the TLC program.

The Train Like a Champion Committee is composed of the following County Extension Agents: Kailyn Capps (**Austin**), John Grange (**Burleson**), Laramie Kettler (**Colorado**), Kayla Kaspar (**Fayette**), Scott Willey (**Fayette**), Allyson James (**Washington**), and Laura Reyna (**Wharton**).

## Future Programming

Goals for the future:

- Reach a broader audience and conceptually grow the program by incorporating additional counties and utilizing the agents that were added to the program that may have innovative proposals
- Increase marketing efforts to novice families with the purpose of increasing attendance and participation in the TLC program

For more information:

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## RELEVANCE

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential by promoting positive youth development through participation in animal projects, community service projects, family and consumer science projects and leadership projects just to name a few. In Wharton County we have individuals that are involved in every different aspect of the 4-H program. By involving these youth in the many different projects and activities they are able to experience positive youth development that helps to prepare them for their futures.

## RESPONSE

### Target Audience

4-H Youth participants, ages 8-18, in Wharton County who strive to help the community and prepare for the future.

Wharton County currently has a very strong 4-H Program. Covid in 2021 did not stop us, our numbers were down but we continued to have strength in what we did. We continue to work on nurturing the relationships with 4-H members, their families, and those who support the program. By doing so we were able to increase enrollment and participation. It is also important to provide quality contest and programs that our members enjoy participating in. By providing adequate training for our adult volunteers this allows us to empower them to help us lead our youth. A training was held for club managers and volunteers, they were able to learn the different aspects of the 4-H program and given the tools needed to run a successful 4-H club. We also hosted virtual opportunities to learn about the 4-H program as well as hosting a virtual recordbook workshop. Setting our 4-H members up for success is another way that we can continue to retain members.

A big part of 4-H is working with and helping the community, One Day 4-H has given our 4-H clubs an outlet to do this during National 4-H week. We held a county wide community service project where our 4-H members gave out free water and snacks at local community events to thank our community and promote our message. Our clubs also did a wonderful job coming up with their own One Day 4-H service opportunities. We also host a community service project each month during the County Council Meetings, our youth truly see the impact that they can have by helping others in numerous ways. Youth participants have learned that through their community service efforts they are directly helping our community, in turn this helps promote their positive youth development.



## VALUE STATEMENT

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities

## 4-H'ERS EXCEL

- NEARLY 4X MORE LIKELY TO MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES
- ABOUT 2X MORE LIKELY TO BE CIVILLY ACTIVE
- NEARLY 2X MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN SCIENCE PROGRAMS DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
- NEARLY 2X MORE LIKELY TO MAKE HEALTHIER CHOICES



# RESULTS

- 364 members enrolled in Wharton County 4-H
- 48 Adult volunteers enrolled on 4-H Connect
- 17 Community Clubs, 1 project club, 1 county club and 1 Parent Adult Leaders Association
- 18 Adult Volunteers participated in Volunteer/Club Manager workshop
- 150 attendees to the Annual Awards Banquet
- 40 Youth participated in County Food Show
- 72 Youth participate in the County Food Challenge
- 26 youth participated in the District Food Show
- 4 Teams/16 Youth participated in District Food Challenge.
- 17 youth exhibitors participated in San Antonio Livestock Show, Houston Livestock Show, and Rodeo Austin, State Fair of Texas, and Heart O' Texas Major Livestock Shows.
- 1 Dairy Judging Team and 2 Livestock Judging Teams
- 24 individuals participated in Recordbook training
- 37 youth participated in the County Photography Contest, submitting 225 pictures
- 35 youth participated in County Roundup
- 8 youth entered the County Fashion Show
- 2 youth entered the County Fashion Story Board Contest
- 17 youth/5 teams entered the Duds to Dazzle Contest
- 48 pictures advanced to the District Photography Contest
- 9 youth with 15 photos participated in State Photography Contest
- 5 youth participated in the District Horse Show
- 30 youth participated in the County Recordbook Contest
- 8 youth and 5 Adults participated in State 4-H Roundup
- 6 youth attended District 11 4-H Leadership Lab in Bastrop, TX
- 22 youth attended Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Kitchen Camp
- 14 youth attended Wharton County 4-H Kids in the Sewing Room Camp
- 8 County Council Officers attended Prestige Leadership Conference in Brenham, TX
- 4 youth attended Junior Leadership Lab in Rockport, TX
- 16 youth and 2 Adult Chaperones attended District 11 4-H Crossroads in College Station, TX
- 1 Texas 4-H Fashion & Interior Design Ambassador
- 3 Texas Youth Livestock Ambassadors
- 1 District 11 4-H Council Officer
- 1 senior 4-H member received a Texas 4-H opportunity scholarships in the amount of \$20,000.
- 20 youth participated in the District Recordbook Contest
- 165 Youth and adults in attendance at the annual awards banquet which was held outside
- 3 youth participated in the State Recordbook Contest
- 1 State Recordbook 2nd place winner, 1 State Recordbook 3rd place winner, 1 State Recordbook 5th place winner
- 85 youth and 20 Adults participated in One Day 4-H efforts across the county



## Summary & Acknowledgement

Results indicate that the 4-H program is greatly appreciated and very important to the Youth and Community of Wharton County. Plans are to continue working with volunteers, youth and the community to make the Best Better!

## Future Programming

Goals for the future:

- Increase Participation
- Provide more opportunities for Team Building and Socialization across the county



For more information:

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## RELEVANCE

Council officers in Austin, Calhoun, Fayette, Karnes, Victoria, Wharton, and Washington counties are taught leadership skills in a variety of ways but they all share a common goal to develop a successful county council leadership program that works effectively.

These council officers provide county-wide leadership to our 4-H programs. Their success as council officers relies on the training and skills that Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Agents provide. Over the years, we have noticed that as the times have changed and new technologies have been introduced, the level of leadership skills in our youth have regressed. Some of the issues to be addressed include public speaking, methods of communication, identifying learning styles, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, and more specifically, learning parliamentary procedures and effective leadership techniques.

## RESPONSE

In response to the observations mentioned above, participating counties and the Adult Leaders Association in each county were engaged in the program development process. Prestige Leadership Conference (PLC) is a multi-county effort that was offered to the 2021-2022 County Council Officers of each participating county. The goals of the program were: 1) to prepare the council officers for the leadership positions that they have been elected to; 2) to enhance the participants' knowledge of their officer responsibilities and parliamentary procedures; 3) to introduce the participants to participants from other counties in an effort to promote networking, partnerships, and to enhance their social skills; 4) to broaden participants knowledge of project areas offered through the 4-H program; 5) to provide career exploration; and 6) offer a reward for our council officers. PLC was a two-day camp that was held on the Campus of Blinn College in Brenham, Texas. Blinn College served as a major sponsor of the event.

### PLC activities included:

- Lessons on leadership, communication, teamwork, and decision making
- An overview of duties and responsibilities of officers
- Planning the 4-H year
- Organizing and conducting meetings and writing and handling motions
- Participate in a Mock 4-H Meeting
- Tour of Blinn College Ag Sciences Department
- Career Exploration
- Hands on learning experiences



## VALUE STATEMENT

### FACTS

4-H has a rich history in Texas.

Since 1908, youth have been gaining valuable life-skills through hands-on activities taught and supported by caring adult volunteers and Extension Agents.

**4-HERS ARE NEARLY**

**4X**

**MORE LIKELY**

**to actively contribute to  
their community**

??

**4-H members are lead by the  
60 County Council Members**

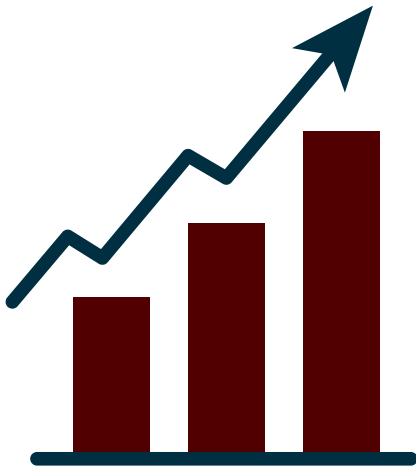


## Evaluation Strategy

A knowledge gained and behavior changed survey was completed by each participant immediately after the conclusion of the Prestige Leadership Conference.



## RESULTS



### LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE INCREASE:

- 60% increase in knowledge level of different communication strategies.
- 75% increase in knowledge of the purpose and principles of parliamentary procedures.
- 52% increase in knowledge of teamwork.
- 75% increase in understanding of the roles and duties of all 4-H officer positions.
- 77% increase in knowledge of how to build an agenda.

### BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

- 98% more confident in serving in a leadership role.
- 92% know how to be an effective communicator and good listener.
- 96% have developed and improved their teamwork skills.
- 94% can effectively participate in a business meeting using correct parliamentary procedure.
- 100% believe that what they learned has given them the ability to make better leadership decisions.

## Summary & Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the County Extension Agents who coordinated PLC, Blinn College for sponsoring the event and providing professors, presenters, shirts, supplies, and the facilities. We would also like to express our thanks to Dr. Bryn Behnke and Mr. Brice Mund and their staff for their support and leadership.



## Future Programming

Goals for the future:

- Increase Participation
- Travel to Texas Tech for a 3 day event
- Train and utilized offices during Northern 4-H Academy (Club Officer Training)

For more information:

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# Extension Education in Wharton County

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## Personnel

Corrie Bowen  
*County Extension Agent*  
*Agriculture and Natural Resources*

Kate Crumley  
*Extension Agent*  
*Integrated Pest Management*

Laura Reyna  
*County Extension Agent*  
*4-H and Youth Development*

Lori Schindler  
*County Extension Agent*  
*Family & Community Health*

Kashara Bell  
*Extension Agent*  
*Cooperative Extension Program*  
*Family & Community Health*

Braxton Mitchell  
*Extension Agent*  
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