Extension Education in Briscoe County

Making a Difference
The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to educating Texans for nearly a century. In 1915, the agency was established under the federal Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, AgriLife Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse populations across the state.

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers, Extension delivers practical research-based knowledge to Texans in all 254 counties. Our expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development. Among those served are the hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension’s 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension for solutions. Its agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on investment to boost the Texas economy. The agency custom-designs its programs to each region of the state, relying on residents for input and for help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension’s impacts on this county and its people:

**Briscoe County – Summary of 2012 Educational Contacts**

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service** is a vital service that offers formal and informal education of the citizens of Briscoe County. Our office provides information to advance agriculture, improve family life, business, and youth development. Educational programs support family life and health, community and economic development, environmental responsibility, agriculture awareness, youth development and leadership. During 2012, the county Extension Staff in Briscoe County:

- Utilized program area committees and our Leadership Advisory Board and Youth Board members to assist in delivering, evaluating and interpreting programs addresses county needs.
- Provided programming to county residents from diverse backgrounds through multiple educational methods such as newsletters, group meetings, and individual contacts.
- Trained and involved youth and adult leaders in a variety of programs to expand our reach and resources.
- Supported 4-H Clubs, with leadership development, programming assistance, and recognition efforts.
- Collaborated with multiple agencies to provide programming and address needs. Some of the collaborators include: Briscoe County Commissioner’s Court, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), FSA, area Cotton Gins and agribusinesses, Silverton ISD, Valley ISD, Happy State Bank, Silverton & Valley Buyers Club, Briscoe County Junior Livestock Show, Silverton Lions Club, Quitaque Lions Club, Caprock State Park, Lake Mackenzie Municipality, City of Silverton, City of Quitaque, Silverton Public Library, Silverton Senior Citizens, Tri County Meals, and Food Bank.
Briscoe County Beef Cattle Nutrition and Range Health
Nathan Carr, County Extension Agent – Agriculture

Relevance:

Briscoe County in 2011 and in 2012 like many Texas counties experienced severe drought. The lack of moisture effected area cattle producers negatively. The drought unfortunately created the overgrazing of forages by livestock/wildlife and that combined with the lack of moisture and extreme heat in the growing season caused there to be die off of grasses. The forages that were present under these conditions had low nutritional value to them for grazing cattle and wildlife. In addition due to the stresses on forages and number of undesirable plants present, and on the increase there was a need for these to be controlled by land owners before they over took pastures.

Nutrition and mineral needs of the cowherd were also deficient due to the lack of quality forages/feedstuffs. Due to the lack of available feedstuffs the body condition of cattle slipped, the nutritional and mineral needs, as well as herd productivity was not at desired levels for many operations.

Response and Results:

Production decisions in the areas of stocking rates of cattle, grassland habitat and health, nutritional and minerals needs of cattle, overall herd health, and budgets/economic outlook was addressed by Texas A&M Agrilife Extension. Response came in the form of educational programs, publications, and producer visits. The county Extension Ag committee met to discuss needs and type of desired programs and demonstrations on numerous occasions to address these production challenges.

The first of the Ag committee meetings was on January 11th. This was followed by producer meetings in following months to address production issues. At the first meeting information on de-stocking the cowherd was presented by Nathan Carr, Briscoe County Extension Agent. It covered which cows were the least productive in the herd, identifying which cows have the greatest additional needed inputs for maintaining their current production levels, and then culling the least efficient and least profitable females from a commercial operation.

In February a Bi-County program was held in Turkey with Hall County Extension Agent Josh Brooks. The Turkey/Quitaque Ag Day covered a number of production topics such as nutrition of the cowherd and future outlooks by Dr. Ted McCollum Extension Beef Cattle Specialist. Industry speakers also covered topics and shared product information at the event.

In March an educational program on range health was conducted. Extension Range Specialist Dr. Charlie Hart shared with group information on range health, controlling undesirable plants, and promoting good range health. Information on ripping was shared and this for many in the audience was a new production technique. This process simply is making a rip in the land. The rip then helps capture any moisture, allows increased vegetation, and helps decrease soil compaction.

At this meeting control of mesquite and other undesirable woody plants was presented. Brant Baugh from Dow Agri-Science shared with group products and methods of how to control these plants. Further
production practices to re-establishing forages in range land were covered by Dr. Hart. This was highly important as 80% program participants stated that there were areas in their grasslands that were barren of vegetation.

Additional programs in the spring and summer covered varieties of hay-grazer and a result demonstration was conducted. The demonstration evaluated the quality of one field of hay grazer at different stages of maturity. Samples were taken and showed little difference between hay bailed one month earlier than the standing forage left and grazed. Furthermore, an educational program covering different types of minerals and what was most effective mineral for cow needs at that specific time was conducted.

Producers were also reached through newsletters, mail outs, and farm visits. Timely information such as effectively grazing wheat, understanding Expected Progeny Differences, rotational grazing strategies, and more was covered in these educational outlets.

Additionally in evaluations from the programs producers stated in a retrospective post (1 to 5 scale) their level of knowledge increased on average 2 points regarding how to control undesirable plants in range/pasture land. All participants said they now have a greater understanding of what products to use and when in controlling intrusive plants.

At that time (March) on evaluations many producers stated their overall cow herd was in a body condition of 4 or better but were greatly concerned with keeping them in a good useful condition. They also stated that from information gained they had made de-stocking decisions. The producers that responded said they have culled from 0% to 25% of the mature cow herd.

**Acknowledgements:**

The Briscoe County Extension Ag Committee, Briscoe County Commissioners Court, Josh Brooks CEA-Ag Hall County, Dr. Ted McCollum Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Dr. Charlie Hart Extension Range Specialist, Brant Baugh Dow Agri-Science, Otto Lehmbeg & Dr. Kelley Sanders of Land O'Lakes, Wes Stribling of ADM, and Dr. Calvin Trostle Extension Agronomist.
Ready, Set, Exercise

Briscoe County

Relevance

Walk Across Texas! is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas! is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Service.

Statistics show that:

- 27 percent of Texans are obese
- 29 percent of American adults are not physically active at all
- Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- Texas ranks 9th in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 13th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 7th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications.
- Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of deaths and 75 percent of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- With regular physical activity, 58 percent of people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

Response

The Briscoe County Family and Consumer Science Committee met to discuss needs in the community. Physical fitness and exercise was a topic of concern among both committee members. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Briscoe County developed a program plan and offered Walk Across Texas! to residents of the county. The Walk Across Texas! program was designed to help establish the habit of regular physical activity. For eight weeks, teams of eight people or individuals walk 830 miles across a map of Texas. A Kickoff event was held at Silverton. Weekly texts and emails were sent out to participants for encouragement to continue through the program. Newsletters were provided to participants to discuss the importance of pedometers, proper exercise, eating a healthy diet and drinking a proper amount of water. News articles also were featured weekly in the 3 local papers educating readers on the importance of regular exercise and to keep up with the progress of the teams competing. A weekly radio program was also used to educate listeners on health and physical activity.
Results
Briscoe
Briscoe County had 1 team consisting of 8 adults participate in the program. The team reached their goal of 830 miles or more. All together the team accumulated a total of 1,256 miles.

Economic Impact
Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can permanently or temporarily delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in 58 percent of people. Over the lifetimes of the 28,512 team participants in Walk Across Texas statewide in 2010, it is estimated that 3,800 could prevent the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity. Annual health-care costs for people without diabetes are estimated between $2,560 and $5,642 and at $13,243 for people with diabetes. Including the cost of lost wages, the total potential economic impact for the 2010 team participants is approximately $192 million.

Caloric Impact
The total number of miles walked for Briscoe County participants was 1,256 miles. When comparing how many calories have been burned during this challenge, the number is significant. On average if 90 calories were burned for every mile walked so far, the total number of calories burned over the last 8 week throughout the challenge would be around 113,040 calories, that’s amazing.

Participants Comments
*Walking with a team motivates me to get out and do my part! * Wearing a pedometer keeps me accountable for the steps I take throughout the day * Walk Across Texas! gets me into a habit of walking so that I continue and reach the goals I set for myself * I can have fun while exercising!

Acknowledgements
A special thanks goes out to Briscoe County FCS Committees and Briscoe county residents for all of their support, assistance, and participation in the Walk Across Texas! program. Also thanks to the local newspapers and radio for their support and coverage of the program.

For more information contact: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Briscoe/Hall County Extension Agent
Molly Forman Family and Consumer Science
806-259-3015 Hall Office
806-823-2252 Briscoe Office

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Texas Proud of Texas Ag
Nathan Carr, County Extension Agent – Agriculture

Relevance:

Texas, and American farm and ranch families—as well as modern agriculture—feed the world. Texas Proud of Texas Agriculture is a program to help inform consumers and policy makers to understand the importance of agriculture and its impact on Texans, Americans, and the world.

The goal is to communicate with a public that has not heard enough from farmers, ranchers, FFA and 4-H members. The answer—whether you live in town or country—is to tell the credible, proven and honorable story of Texas agriculture, and that's what Texas Proud of Texas Agriculture is all about.

Response and Results:

Briscoe County is a rural county but, there is still needs to educate the citizens on were their food and clothing originates from. The Briscoe County Extension Youth Board and the county Ag Committee both identified the need for greater agriculture education. The primary focus was to educate youth about agriculture and secondly promote the values and ideals of rural and agriculture life to the public.

In January the ideal of initiating this process got started and a spring meeting with the Ag Committee and new Silverton Ag-Science teacher followed to further discuss the program. Even so the program did not really take wings until the fall. The Silverton ISD 7th period Ag-Science class and their teacher Mr. Daugherty were involved with Texas Proud of Texas Agriculture program. The class was asked if they wanted to participate in these educational event/activities an overview was shared with the group by county Extension agent Nathan Carr.

In September the first meeting to provide an overview of Texas Proud of Texas Ag Program in promoting agriculture was conducted. The 7th period class is primarily juniors and seniors. They stated they highly interested in writing articles for the paper promoting agriculture and in helping out at “Ag Day” type events. Ag Day is an educational event for elementary students. The students go through sessions learning about a different facet of agriculture at each station.

The two major highlights the students were involved with was the writing of essays to be shared with media outlets and the “Ag Day”. The students wrote essays which promoted 4-H and FFA and promoted food and fiber production. Many showcased how agriculture was prominent in our community and how it was utilized in our daily lives by the food we eat and the clothes we wear. They also shared the leadership and personal growth they get from their involvement in 4-H and FFA.

The second major highlight came from these students aiding and promoting agriculture on the Ag Day on November 1st. The youth were involved with sessions, logistics of groups, and giving guidance to the event. Youth presented on agriculture production such as sheep and goats, aided in farm safety, and additional sessions.

The 7th period students at the conclusion of the Ag Day were asked to complete evolutions to measure their knowledge level and their enjoyment of the program. The eleven students all stated in some form they would
continue promoting agriculture and rural life to others. They all stated will be advocates on sharing how the food our farms and ranches produce is some of the safest in the world and how they feed the world.

Many of the 7th period students were also members of the Briscoe County Youth Board, and they also helped out with the Hatching in the classroom activity. This activity taught elementary students science and life skills. This activity included weekly updates with student on the status of the embryo of the eggs development. The class had an incubator with eggs in it with goal of hatching at the conclusion of the program. Silverton teachers along with students were highly involved in this activity. As well entire county Extension staff taught and gave guidance in this event as well as the Ag Day.

The students all stated they were pleased with the activities. They reported they gained greater knowledge in the areas of animal science, water conservation, cotton production and the process from field to the apparel they wear. Many of the students stated they desired continued education of agriculture and leadership. Specifically youth desired greater knowledge and activities on tractor and farm safety, and leadership opportunities.

Acknowledgements:

Briscoe County Ag Committee, Briscoe County Youth Board, Silverton ISD and FFA, Mr. Daugherty Silverton Ag-Science Teacher, Mrs. Comer Silverton Elementary teacher, Mrs. Francis Silverton ISD Principle, area county Extension agents and volunteers with the Ag Day, Texas Proud of Texas Agriculture website, Molly Forman – Briscoe/Hall Counties Family and Consumer Science Agent.
Take A Stand:
Bullying Prevention and Conflict Management
Silverton Elementary School-Briscoe County

Relevance
Bullying can be defined as the use of one's strength or status to intimidate, injure, or humiliate another person of lesser strength or status. Bullying can be categorized as physical, verbal, or social. Nearly 1/3 of students surveyed report they experience bullying, either as a target or as a perpetrator. More than 16 percent said they had been bullied at least occasionally during the current school year. Eight percent reported bullying or being bullied at least once a week. The frequency of bullying was higher among 6th-through 8th-grade students than among 9th- and 10th-grade students. Children who reported they were bullied, reported more loneliness and difficulty making friends. Those who did the bullying were more likely to have low grades, smoke, and drink alcohol. (Source: “Bullying Behavior Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association with Psychological Judgment” Journal of American Medical Association, April 25, 2001.)

Moreover, the Texas legislature feels that conflict management and bullying are important for schools to address, and have passed mandates through House Bills 283 and 121 and Senate Bill 136. Specifically, House Bill 283 requires a school district’s discipline management program to include prevention of and education concerning unwanted physical or verbal aggression, sexual harassment, and other forms of bullying in school, on school grounds, and in school vehicles. Locally, bullying has been reported as a concern from school faculty and administration.

Response
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service developed a partnership with the Texas Rural Mediation Services (TRMS) to write a curriculum to address bullying and conflict management. “Take a Stand” is a curriculum that targets three age groups: 3-5 grades, 6-8 grades, and 9-12 grades. The curriculum includes five themes or topics for each level: Conflict Management/Bullying; Communication; Etiquette; Teamwork; and Cultural Awareness.

Forty one 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students at Silverton Elementary School participated in the Take a Stand program. The program was organized and implemented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The first lesson, Keep Your Cool (Conflict Resolution and Bullying) focused on understanding signs of anger in themselves and others and learned how to control their anger and understanding the consequences of violence. Lesson two, Walk In My Shoes (communication) helped the students effectively explain their own point of view and listen to another person's point of view and to solve problems through talking and listening to each other. Lesson three, A Manner of Speaking (Etiquette) taught the students 10 basic manners kids should use to show respect and how to show respect through writing thank you notes. Lesson four, Get in the Game! (Teamwork) focused on understanding the importance of teamwork and how to be a good team member. The last lesson, You + Me= Harmony! (Cultural Awareness) discussed ways we are alike and different and taught the students to appreciate the traditions, customs, and gestures of other cultures.

Prior to the first lesson, a letter explaining the program was sent to all students' parents. Each lesson features a “power phrase” to help students remember what they learned. They receive a handout with the power phrase and other information for each lesson that they can review with their parents to help them practice these important life skills.
Results
According to the evaluation surveys, students reported the following behavior changes as a result of their participation in the “Take A Stand” program.
86% will respect others;
86% will work with others to make decisions;
82% will listen to others points of view;
80% will practice good manners;
76% will be a good team member when working with a group;
74% will respect customs and traditions of others;
72% will explain their points of view to others;
72% of the students will accept and understand the consequences of violence;
65% will recognize signs of anger in themselves and others and know how to control it;
60% will compromise to solve a conflict;
58% will identify ways people are alike and different.

Participants’ written responses when asked “What was the most important thing you learned in the Take A Stand program”:
*Be nice to others and self control. *To share my things with others. *Teamwork. *To respect others and work together. *To respect others. *You never have to be rude to other people. *How to control my anger and how to feel happy even if I am angry. *How to control my anger better and save myself from getting into deep trouble for getting mad and not controlling my anger. *How to count to 10 when I get angry to help calm down. *To respect others, think of everyone else, and stand up for others. *We should be kind and respectful to everyone, but also ones with different customs and traditions. *Being cool is the way to choose. *How to control my feelings and to respect others. *Do not yell at others. *How to not get mad and how to share more. *Not to bully others. *Not to start fights or violence. *Try to stop an argument and work out your problems. *Respect others and you will be respected. *Listen to others point of views. *Treat others the way you should be treated. *Good manners are important. *To use manners forever.

Because bullying tends to occur in junior high, students who are introduced to respect, etiquette, tolerance, empathy, and teamwork in elementary school may reduce the number of bullying incidents in later years. Experts agree that bullying has more to do with an imbalance of power, or rather perceived imbalance of power, rather than simply aggressive behavior. Teaching youth to respect the customs and traditions of others, and becoming aware of and accepting the differences of others can be an essential element to reducing bullying incidents. The research also shows that adults do not always recognize and intervene in bullying situations, and for this reason, students must be equipped to handle situations in a reasonable and responsible manner. The “Take A Stand” program also sends the message to the community that bullying is not an acceptable behavior or part of “normal” childhood behavior.

For more information contact: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Molly Forman - Family and Consumer Science
Hall County Office 806-259-3015 / Briscoe County Office 806-823-2522
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4-H and Youth Development

4-H Photography – Briscoe County

Relevance

Photography is the practice of capturing an image for personal, professional, or commercial purposes. According to the Bureau of Statistics, employment of photographers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2016. Photographers can expect keen competition for job openings because the work is attractive to many people.

Demand for portrait photographers should increase as the population grows. Moreover, growth of Internet versions of magazines, journals, and newspapers will require increasing numbers of commercial photographers to provide digital images. The Internet and improved data management programs also should make it easier for freelancers to market directly to their customers, increasing opportunities for self-employment and decreasing reliance on stock photo agencies. As a result, employment of photographers is expected to grow 10 percent over the 2006-16 projection period, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

Photographers can expect keen competition for job openings because the work is attractive to many people. The number of individuals interested in positions as commercial and news photographers usually is much greater than the number of openings. Salaried jobs in particular may be difficult to find as more companies contract with freelancers rather than hire their own photographers. Those who succeed in landing a salaried job or attracting enough work to earn a living by freelancing are likely to be adept at operating a business and to be among the most creative. They will be able to find and exploit the new opportunities available from rapidly changing technologies. Related work experience, job-related training, or some unique skill or talent—such as a background in computers or electronics—also improve a photographer’s job prospects.

Median annual wages of salaried photographers were $29,440 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between $20,620 and $43,530. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $16,920, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $62,430. Median annual wages in the photographic services industry, which employed the largest numbers of salaried photographers, were $26,160.

Response

The Briscoe County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent met with 4-H leaders and District Photography committee to plan different projects, camps, and programs for the 4-H photography project this year.

By providing a quality photography project in Briscoe County, youth will be able:

- To develop life skills in composition, light, story line, posing, and awareness.
- To use photography as a meaningful communication tool in their lives.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H and use photography to promote and strengthen the 4-H program.
- To be aware of career opportunities in the photography industry.
Results: The success of the project was measured through camps, contest, and personal input gathered from participants and leaders in Briscoe County as well as across the district. Project meetings and workshops were held throughout the summer. This year the Briscoe and Hall County Photography project had a total of 10 youth participating in project meetings, camps, and contests.

Briscoe County 4-H youth were also able to enter photos in the 4-H County, District, and State Contests and also the 4-H County Community Choice Contest. 4-H photos were also displayed at the Briscoe County 4-H Banquet. Throughout these contest Briscoe County youth received blue and red ribbons, Judges Choice, and Community Choice awards.

The District 1 4-H Photography Contest has been dramatically growing the last few years. Last year the contest grew with a total of 530 Junior, Intermediate, and Senior entries. Briscoe County 4-Hers provided 35 of the photography entries at the District level.

District 1 4-H Photography Camp was held at the Botanical Gardens. There were 50 youth and 20 adults from across the Panhandle that attended the camp. The campers started their day at attending sessions. Sessions included food photography, best of show, ten tips to great photography and much more. The youth walked around the botanical gardens getting shots getting pictures of the beautiful landscape, flowers, and the waterfall. This was a great day and learning experience for all youth and adults! Briscoe had 4 participants.

Importance: The youth involved were able to learn how to use the camera successfully and take pictures in many different environments. The youth explored different user friendly photo editing programs. Throughout the photography project, youth are able to learn how to use the camera properly. As they continue taking photos, they are able to see the improvements they are making by using different angles and shots. Also they understand that there is a large photography industry and a number of photography careers available.

Comments from Youth: I am glad I learned how to edit photos. The Botanical Gardens were a beautiful photo shoot! – I loved going to the cave and getting to take photos at Salt Creek Ranch! – I got my 1st Judges Choice Award at District! – My picture that won the 4-H Community Choice Award was featured in full color in the local newspaper.

Goals for 2013: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Briscoe County will continue the Photography Project with 4-H youth in Briscoe. Also the District 1 Photography Committee will continue to host the District 1 Photography camp.

Acknowledgements: A special thanks goes out to Briscoe 4-H Leaders and Parents and District 1 Photography Committee.

For more information contact: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Molly Forman - Family and Consumer Science
Hall County Office 806-259-3015 / Briscoe County Office 806-823-2522
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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Briscoe County

Staff

Nathan Carr
County Extension Agent
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Molly Forman
County Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences

Estella Juarez
Secretary

Contact Us
Briscoe County
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
P.O. Box 730
Silverton, Texas 79257

Phone: 806-823-2521
Fax: 806-823-2359

Website://briscoe-tx.tamu.edu
e-mail: Briscoe-tx@tamu.edu