

THE ROLE OF TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN PRESCRIBED BURNING

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Abstract: Texas Cooperative Extension is the outreach agency for the Texas A&M University System. The Agency's role is to provide relevant, research-based educational programming to the people of Texas. Prescribed burning is part of that programming and several workshops are conducted annually, along with demonstration burns. However, demand is greater than the capacity to deliver programs. Suggestions are made to improve educational programming in prescribed burning.

Introduction

"Extension" means "reaching out," and - along with teaching and research - land-grant institutions "extend" their resources, solving public needs with college or university resources through non-formal, non-credit programs. These programs are largely administered through county and regional Extension offices, which bring land-grant expertise to the most local of levels. And both the universities and their local offices are supported by Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the U.S. Department of Agriculture federal partner.

The Morrill Act of 1862 established land-grant universities to educate citizens in agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts, and other practical professions. Texas A&M University was established in 1876. Extension was formalized in 1914, with the Smith-Lever Act and it established the partnership between the agricultural colleges and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Extension work, according to the Act, was:

- * Developing practical applications of research knowledge.

- * Giving instruction and practical demonstrations of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture.

The name may be new, but Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) has provided informal education to Texans for 87 years. Formerly known as the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the agency's name was changed in July 2001 to better reflect Extension's broad responsibilities in environment and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, youth development, and community development, as well as production agriculture. Texas Cooperative Extension is part of the nationwide Cooperative Extension System and operates, like every state Extension agency, as a partnership between each county government, the land-grant university and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Texas Cooperative Extension also collaborates with public and private organizations and with Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program.

Texas Cooperative Extension offers education that transfers new knowledge and technologies from research, enhances communities and the environ

