



Extension Education in LaSalle County
Making a Difference
2011

*Improving Lives.
Improving Texas.*

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has been dedicated to serving Texans

for nearly a century. The agency was established in 1915 under the Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Extension programs have continued ever since to address the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse rural and urban populations across the state.

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and more than 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 a significant return 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:

LaSalle County – Summary of Educational Contacts

- 101 Enrolled 4H Youth Members
- 7 Enrolled Volunteer Leaders
- 2 4H Clubs- Encinal and Cotulla
- One New Shooting Sports Project Group- 6 members
- Monthly 4H Newsletter
- 6 Educational Programs
- 125 Participants in those programs
- 121 Office Contacts
- 302 Site Contacts Through Visits
- 359 Phone Calls
- 160 Email Contacts
- 947 Contacts Through Group Programs
- 5,491 Contact Hours Through Educational Programming

2011 LaSalle County Rainwater Harvesting Plan

Relevance:

Rainwater harvesting is a cost effective way of utilizing and conserving water in our rural South Texas, where rain itself can be scarce. LaSalle County is in the middle of drought stricken south Texas where there is typically very little rainfall, add to it the “worst drought in Texas’ history”, and you have an extremely dry LaSalle county.

Response:

A rainwater collection system was purchased by the Winter Garden water conservation district as a part of the new office facility for the NRCS in Cotulla (LaSalle County) Texas in 2010. This plan was undertaken by the previous county agent, but will be kept in place by the new agent for the year 2012.

Results:

Due to the lack of rainfall in LaSalle County, there was no data to be collected from this program this year.

2011 General Agriculture and Natural Resources Plan for LaSalle County

Response: Agriculture and Natural Resources will always be the root of the LaSalle county community. Yes, oil and gas has rapidly become the largest economic contributor in the past year, but cattle and wildlife will remain a way of life for this area.

Results: Educational programming in Agriculture is the mission of the Texas Agrilife Extension Service. This past year was a transition year due to the replacement of the former county agent, however, significant strides were made to rekindle relationships and put the committee structure back in place.

2011 LaSalle County 4-H Shooting Sports Plan

Relevance:

In a county with large ranches and hunting as the dominant economic driver, LaSalle County is an extremely rural county with a youth population that enjoys the outdoors. Most outdoor activity centers around the hunting lease, or friends and relatives' ranches. With this background, county youth are around firearms most of the time with little or no formal training in the safety and use of firearms.

Response:

The 4H shooting sports program was introduced in LaSalle county by agent Larry Perez for youth members of the county. The aim of the program (no pun intended), was to have a safe and educational environment so that students could learn how to use a bow or firearms from someone specifically trained to teach this activity. Another objective of this program is to use the shooting sports project to foster life skills through participation.

Results:

To determine whether or not our program was meeting its objectives, an evaluation instrument was prepared and distributed to participants. We looked at three areas and asked questions pertinent to these 3 areas: 1) Personal Development, 2) Knowledge, and 3) Skills, and asked each member: "How have you changed as a result of your involvement in this project?" Using the columns "not at all", "very little", "somewhat", and "greatly", participants completed the survey.

After tabulating the results, one thing was immediately noted...**100 % of all participants greatly increased knowledge and skills.** Results of questions in the personal development section revealed that 100% of participants indicated that their attitudes have changed greatly in the area of shooting sports when it comes to "showing respect for others" and "cooperating with others".

In section 2, where we evaluated knowledge, there were 6 statements and each statement was answered "changed greatly" by every participant. In the last section, skills were evaluated. Once again, every statement was answered with a "changed greatly".

The survey allowed for comments and some are listed here: "I learned to focus"; "the most important thing I learned was safety"; "I learned how to be a team player and work with others", and finally, "The most important thing I learned was how safe you had to be around the shooting sports activities".

I realize that all participants of the LaSalle County shooting sports project were first time shooters and competitors and that questions on this survey are written to evaluate levels of change. So when you have someone that has never attempted a skill, when they learn it or become proficient at it, there will be a "changed greatly" statement. It will be interesting to see the results from the coming year.

Future Plans:

This project will continue and grow to include shotgun and light rifle events.

2011 4H Leadership and Volunteer Development Plan for LaSalle County

Developed by: Lawrence J. (Larry) Perez, LaSalle County Extension Agent - ANR

Response: The hiring of a county agent for LaSalle County a welcome event for the 4H program in LaSalle County. For the first time in many years, a club officer training was held as well as a club manager training. With the addition of shooting sports to the county 4H program, it is necessary to have certified coaches in the specific shooting discipline. In the past, the Encinal and Cotulla 4H clubs elected officers at the beginning of the 4H year in September. This meant that the officers were not familiar with specific job duties, or parliamentary procedure at the time when they needed it most.

Results: The Encinal and Cotulla 4H clubs decided to elect officers in May at the urging of the new county agent so that an officer training could be held during the summer months to prepare them for the upcoming year.

The club officers met as a group, they were given job descriptions, and held a mock meeting to practice parliamentary procedure. As officers were meeting, ideas began to emerge and a LaSalle county council was proposed. Along with the club officer training, a club manager training was held also. Club managers reviewed club charter requirements, 4H fiscal policies and procedures, and were given an overview of the state database and event registration system called 4H connect. LaSalle County hopes to add the shotgun discipline to the shooting sports project group this coming year.

2011 4H Projects and Curriculum Plan for LaSalle County

Developed by: Lawrence J. (Larry) Perez, LaSalle County Extension Agent CEA-ANR

Response: These activities are the actual “hands-on” learning activities in 4H projects. The number of animal projects by members of the LaSalle County 4H far exceed any other 4H project, but quality experience in the show ring is lacking. I began here in LaSalle County the same week as the county livestock show, and I noticed a definite lack of showmanship skills, especially at the junior and intermediate levels.

Results: A goat project clinic was held in Encinal Texas for all LaSalle county 4H'ers interested in showing goats. 17 exhibitors, 11 adults and 2 instructors participated in this clinic. This was in response to a need seen during the 2011 show, and was open to all 4H and FFA students. Increased home project visits were undertaken to try to have a more positive educational experience for the LaSalle county 4H'ers. As a result, two members have won showmanship honors at local prospect shows this year already.

LaSalle County

Staff:

Lawrence J. (Larry) Perez
County Extension Agent-
Agriculture and Natural
Resources

Yvette Rodriguez
Administrative Assistant

Contact Us:
707 Buckley
Cotulla, Texas
78014
Office: (830) 879-4389