



AgriLife Extension
South Region



**South
District
12**



Making a Difference... ...in Jim Wells County

District Extension Newsletter for Commissioners' Courts in South Texas



Rogelio Mercado
Agriculture & Natural Resources

In 2007, Texas Cooperative Extension celebrated the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent and of the Texas 4-H Program. In 2008, we launched a new initiative that included a name change to AgriLife Extension. I want to thank you for your continued support of the Extension and its many programs. I hope you find this newsletter helpful in updating you about the difference that Extension education is making in Jim Wells County and the public benefits these differences mean economically, socially, and environmentally to the community. We feel strongly that these preventive, educational approaches to community issues provide present and long term value to the County and its residents. Again, thank you for your support and please call whenever we may be of service.

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña
District Extension Administrator



Nora S. Acevedo
Family & Consumer Science

Supporting Agriculture and Natural Resources



Barbara Wymore
4-H & Youth Development

Agents Rogelio Mercado, Sam Gavito, Sonny Perez and Larry Perez (CEA-Ag., Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks and Jim Hogg Counties, respectively) coordinated a Water Quality Screening Workshop in San Diego on April 28 - 30, 2008. Mr. John Smith from Texas A&M Soil and Crop Sciences Department, traveled to conduct the screening. The screening was held at the San Diego Municipal Utilities District. Eighty-five water samples were collected and submitted for screening from water wells in the four county area. The samples were tested for soluble salts, arsenic, nitrates and fecal coliform (bacteria). The average nitrate level in the water samples was 3.224 ppm with a range of 0 to 50 ppm. The average arsenic level was 0.364 ppb with a range of 0 to 11 ppb. Salinity averaged 778.54 ppm with a range of 10 to 3,970 ppm. Thirty-four of the samples (40.00%) tested positive for bacteria in general. Fourteen out of the 85 samples (16.47%) tested positive for the Fecal Coliform Bacteria. Very few wells were considered problem wells with nitrates, arsenic and salinity. However, the incidence of fecal coliform is an issue which demands attention. Agents decided to coordinate an effort to conduct one on one education with these well owners to perform best management practices which will assist them in cleaning their wells. Agents will coordinate a second screening or testing to ascertain changes in the presence of the bacteria in 2009.



THE TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH &
EXTENSION CENTER AT WESLACO

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña
District Administrator
2401 E. Highway 83
Weslaco, Texas 78596
956.968.5581
rjsaldana@ag.tamu.edu
<http://southtexas.tamu.edu>

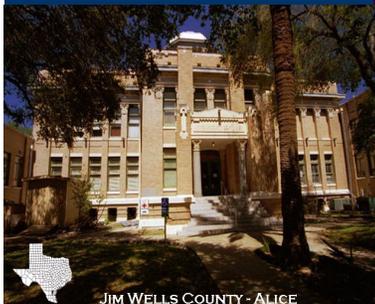
2008 Educational Outreach

Education in Group Settings	
Number of Sessions	237
Number Contacts	13,463
Hrs Instruction	10,217
Education for Individuals	
Office Visits	360
Site Visits	254
Phone Consultation	497
Mail/Email	224
By Volunteers	195

Visit us at:
<http://jimwells-tx.tamu.edu>

2008 4-H Enrollment

Club Members	262
School Enrichment	1,559
Special Interests	462
Total Enrollment	2,283



JIM WELLS COUNTY - ALICE

Family & Consumer Sciences

Approximately 13% of the Jim Wells County population is over the age of 55. Increased life expectancy has created a need for a healthier lifestyle to reduce the risk for chronic disease and illnesses. Two-thirds of all illnesses are related to lifestyle choices such as poor eating habits, insufficient exercise, obesity and the lack of responsibility for individual health. With effective education, Jim Wells County seniors can learn to eat healthier, increase their physical activity, and become proactive in the responsibility of preventive health care. By practicing a healthy lifestyle, a significant improvement in health status and subsequent reduction in medical costs can be achieved. Focus for the 2008 Family and Consumer Science Outcome Program was "Eat Smart" which was a twelve lesson series about dietary and health recommendations for heart health. Understanding risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease and how diet and a healthy lifestyle can help heart health was the main goal of the program. Participants were recruited from the Community Action Health Clinic, REAL and Senior Citizen Centers. The "Eat Smart" series was conducted with an average of 22 seniors in attendance. Agent Nora Acevedo was able to establish a great relationship with the group. Acevedo either presented the lessons or had guest speakers from local health agencies conduct the presentations. As a result of this program, a male participant went to the doctor for his first physical ever. Consequently, the doctor found that he needed to place a pacemaker to assist his heart. Without it, he



Family Fun Day in Jim Wells County

4-H & Youth Development

In 2005, Agent Barbie Wymore initiated a 4-H Travelers Group. The goal of the group was to allow 4-H members and leaders to see different parts of America in an educational setting. To date, this group has traveled to Washington D.C. and New York City in 2005 and 2007, Los Angeles, California in 2006, and Los Angeles and San Francisco, California in 2008.

At the beginning of the year, 4-H members establish a site of where they would like to travel to. Wymore contacts a travel agent and receives a tentative itinerary and travel costs. 4-H members then prepare a plan of action in order to raise monies to fund their trip. 4-H members research points of interest that the group will visit on the trip and then each member prepares and delivers an educational talk to the group on that particular site. Once the fund raising is complete, the group is ready to go. Trips are generally made in the middle of summer and the group enjoys them tremendously. This has been a great opportunity for young people to learn about various locations across the United States and also to visit them in person. In the past 4 years, 37 4-H members and 23 adult leaders have participated in this group, raising a total of \$57,682.34 to fund their trips.



Ag. Fair is hosted at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds and education over 750 youth on issues of agriculture and natural resources.