



Extension Education in Willacy County

Making a Difference

2016

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The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has 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.

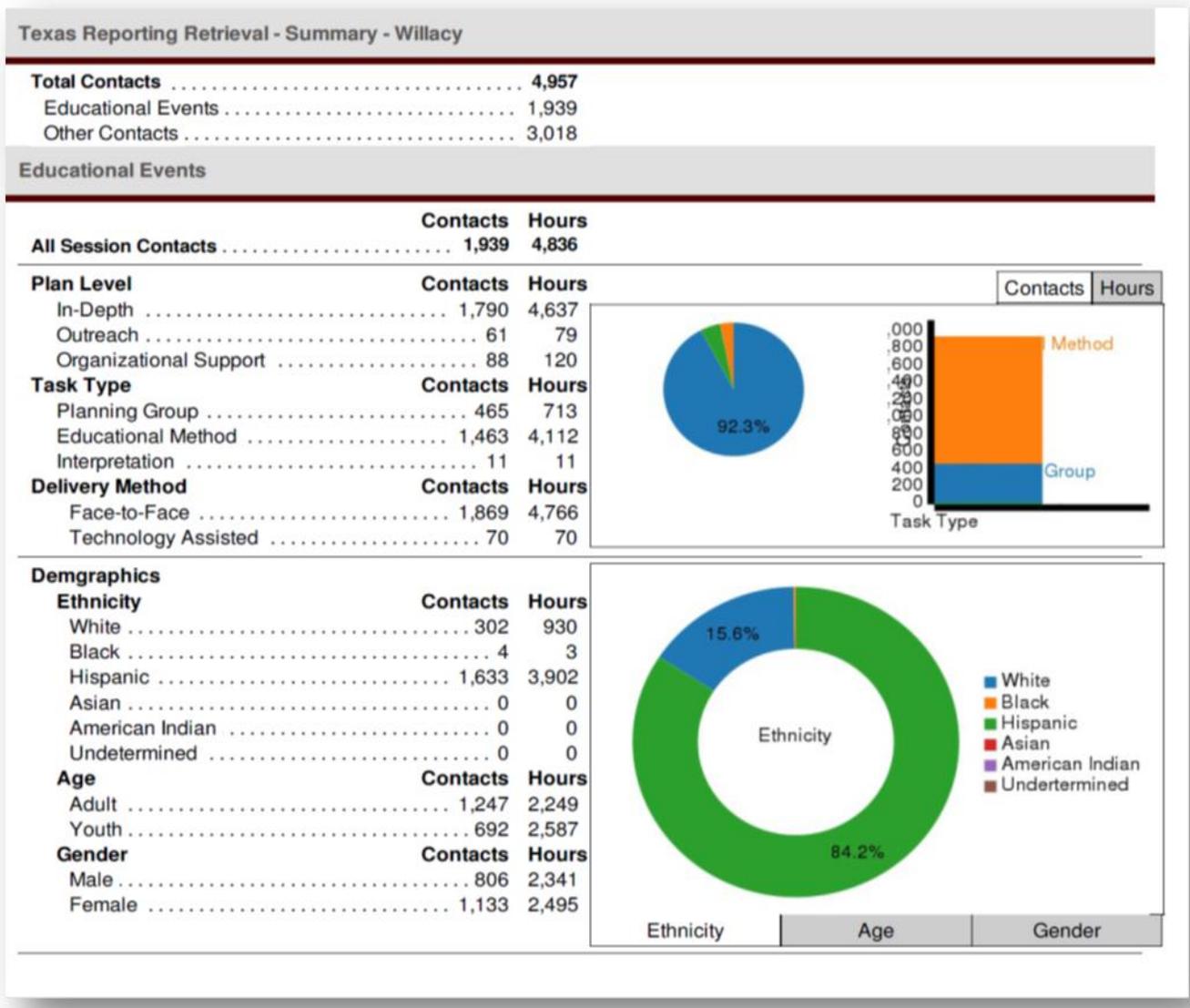
In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development. Among those served are hundreds of

Willacy County – Summary of 2016 Educational Contacts

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE Providing Solutions

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.



RGV Sustainable Agriculture Production, 2016

Rolando R. Zamora, Extension Agent CEP- Agriculture & Natural Resources

Relevance

The primary purpose of this plan is to identify and to enhance the delivery of technical assistance, and education efforts to socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers and ranchers. This plan will address a wide range of activities i.e. small farm production such as; beef production, financial management, marketing, and technical assistance under USDA programs. Through these efforts and support of stakeholders, families will improve the well-being of their agriculture production.

Response.

As a Cooperative Extension Program agent transitioning from Community & Economic Development into this new AgNR position on July 1, 2016 I worked on identifying issues and provided educational programs to teach individuals and agribusinesses about the knowledge and skills needed for building sustainable communities and develop new community leaders that can effectively lead organizations to increase financial growth. A series of educational workshops and one-on-one sessions have been provided to plan on increasing knowledge and attitude of agriculture producers by making them aware of programs that can help them compete in today's economical industry while concurrently minimizing negative impact on the environment. We identified producer's interests that will benefit from our services and offer programs that will address their specific production concerns.

The following educational activities were organized by the effort of volunteers and members of the Rio Grande Valley area committee to achieve the objective.

- I have been the acting chairman of the RGV Livestock Show's Open Heifer Pen Show since 2014 where I have assisted cattle business owners in marketing their livestock to increase their business profitability. This event provides an opportunity for livestock owners to exhibit breeding heifers to compete and showcase their cattle to other potential buyers. Cattle owners are seeking better opportunities to increase profit and production. In 2016, we have increased the number of consigners by 30%. Through surveying consigners, the number of cattle sold through silent consignment has increased. The RGV Livestock Show is providing our committee more support by increasing premiums and adding more space to hold the event for the 2016-2017 year.

V A L U E

Crop and Forage Production Education



Extension programs in crop production promote best practices that lead to reduced irrigation, safer pest management, and improved profitability of agricultural enterprises. This benefits Texas as a whole by contributing to the quality and quantity of water resources and enhancing both agricultural competitiveness and rural economies.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Since June of 2016, I was able to provide technical loan outreach with two clients that were interested in USDA loan opportunities. I worked with these clients from the Willacy County area by directing them to the USDA Farm Service Agency or meeting with Mr. Vidal Saenz, Farm Loan Advisor with the Cooperative Extension Program to work on the loan application package process.
- For the third year, I planned and organized the 2016 Youth Agriculture Literacy Program. This year we changed the name of our program to the 2016 Wild in Willacy Youth Agriculture Field Day. This event taught 4th grade students the concept about our agriculture commodities in our area and where they come from. I raised over \$2,000 from local businesses and brought 25 volunteers together to teach 300 students about agriculture entrepreneurs and career opportunities. We explained how jobs tie into universities where they can attend to further their education in these areas. Teacher's evaluations showed that 95% of students better understand how our food gets from farm to table.
- I collaborated with the county extension agriculture agent from Starr County to host the Fall Ranchers Program. We had over 70 producers in attendance with topics ranging from drone technology in agriculture, diversification in agriculture agribusinesses where I worked with business owner on conducting the presentation and property tax valuations & agriculture exemptions. These topics were planned by the agriculture committee of Starr County.
- I collaborated with county extension agents and the Rio Grande Valley Beef Development Association in hosting a beef development program in October 2016. This program provided an opportunity for beef producers to learn about the performance of their cattle to make wise decisions towards the genetics in their breeding process. Many of these producers have shown on evaluations that they get great results towards the information we provide. These consigners return every year for this program.
- I collaborated with the Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension Service to host the Soil Health and Irrigation Conservation Workshop on August 24, 2016 to present research-based information to agricultural producers on the technology of soil and water management, funding opportunities and financial technical support for farming operations. USDA personnel were on hand to provide outreach on their programs as well.
- I have been working with committee volunteer of the Healthy People of Willacy County garden project to continue on the progress of gardening in a donate one acre lot provided by local physician with-in the city of Raymondville, Texas. I have established a garden committee to address needs and focus on making decisions to keep the garden active by providing healthy food for locals. Educational classes were provided to members on growing practices and nutritious ways to prepare vegetables.
- For the 2016 year through youth programming in Willacy County, I was the contact person who led the validation program through the county. I was the chairman of the steer committee and goat & sheep committee. I held planning meeting and submitted all forms needed to be received at state office.

Collaborators. The following groups assisted with resources to make this program possible:

- Healthy People of Willacy County Coalition
- USDA Farm Service Agency Starr County
- Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show
- Rio Grande Valley Beef Improvement Association

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Summary

Through the support and guidance of agencies involved, we were able to provide the necessary educational programs for participants to apply skills and knowledge gained to better their financial goals. 96% of participants showed an increase of knowledge gained in support of programing. I will be working with program area committees within the Rio Grande Valley area in 2017 to continue to address sustainable agriculture producer's needs.



Through youth and adult educational programs in gardening in the community, we were able to increase awareness by providing healthier foods for families. These programs provided physical activity, better eating habits, and a healthier lifestyle change.



Collaborating with neighboring counties to host events such as the Spring Ranchers Program that educated beef cattle producers on diversification of rangeland opportunities and new technology practices were a few of our outreach programs.

Friend to Friend In-Depth Willacy County, 2016

Perla M. Flores, Extension Agent – Health and Rosa I. Guel, Extension Program Specialist

The *Friend to Friend* program’s purpose is to encourage women to get regular mammograms and Pap tests for the early detection of breast and cervical cancer, when the disease is most curable.

Relevance

- Regular screening significantly increases the likelihood of finding cancer early, when treatment is more often successful.
- Women living in rural areas of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Pap test within the past two years.
- Mortality is higher for rural women because of later diagnosis.

Response

- This project’s goal is to decrease breast and cervical cancer morbidity and mortality for women living in rural Texas counties by improving screening rates and early detection of cancer.
- Through a grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), funding was provided for screenings and transportation for uninsured and underserved women in need of services.
- The county Extension agent, regional cancer prevention specialist, and patient navigators plan and implement a *Friend to Friend* event. Women attending are given the opportunity to sign a commitment card to obtain a mammogram and/or Pap test within the next year and the option to complete a help request form for assistance in obtaining screening services.

Impact of the Program

- 36 counties held *Friend to Friend* events throughout Texas in 2016.
80 women attended the *Friend to Friend* events on August 25, 2016 at the United Methodist Church in the city of Raymondville, Texas.

Demographics of women who attended the events:

- Median age was: 49.
- Ethnic breakdown:
 - African American: 0 %
 - American Indian/Native American: 0 %
 - Asian/Pacific Islander: 0 %
 - Latina/Hispanic: 93.6 %
 - White: 1.3 %
 - Multiple race/ethnicity: 2.6 %
 - Other/missing: 2.6 %



HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

Family and Consumer Sciences

- 10 total volunteers assisted at party/events.
- A Health Professional and a Breast Cancer Survivor urged women to obtain a mammogram/Pap screening at the events.
- At the end of the event 79.6 % of women, aged 40 or over, correctly identified the need for a mammogram screening every year.
- 77 Women requested help to navigate screening and diagnostic services.
- 28 Clinical sites contracted statewide for screenings, diagnostics, radiologists and lab services.
- 129 Mammogram screenings and 12 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
- 108 Pap screenings and 6 diagnostics were paid for through CPRIT funds.
- Women were referred to other available sources for Breast and Cervical screenings and diagnostics.

Success Stories

“This program was beneficial as we learned how to get a mammogram/pap screenings, even when there was no money or insurances for us to get these services.”



“¡Sí, Yo Puedo Controlar Mí Diabetes!” In-Depth Willacy County, 2016

Perla M. Flores, Extension Agent – Health

¡Sí, Yo Puedo Controlar Mí Diabetes! (Sí, Yo Puedo) is an evidence-informed, culturally competent educational program targeting low-literate Hispanic/Latinos with diabetes. The curriculum is predicated on the American Diabetes Association’s national standards of care and employs the Social Cognitive and Self-regulation theories as its foundational support. Empowerment is an overarching theme of the program, and, to this end, *Sí, Yo Puedo* aims to equip participants with knowledge and lifestyle skills to better control their diabetes.



HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

Relevance

- Diabetes cost Texas more than 12 billion dollars.
- Texas Hispanic/Latinos 45 to 64 years of age are disproportionately affected by diabetes prevalence (11.0 percent) than their White, non- Hispanic counterparts (16.8 percent.)
- In 2007, mortality rates were more than double among Texas.¹ Hispanic/Latinos (40 per 100,000) than Whites, non-Hispanics (19 per 100,000.)
- Among persons with diabetes, a higher proportion of Texas Hispanic/Latinos (32.5 percent) could not see a doctor in the last 12 months due to cost compared to Whites (16.5 percent.)

Response

- Proper management is critical to minimize the potential negative effects of diabetes.
- Self-management education is the cornerstone for diabetic care and vital for blood glucose control.
- Recognizing the need for a culturally-relevant type 2 diabetes self-management education targeting
- Texas Hispanic/Latinos *Sí, Yo Puedo* was developed to address this gap in health programming.

Results

In 2016, 13 individuals enrolled in *Sí, Yo Puedo* classes delivered in Willacy County, Texas. Four participants successfully completed pre- and post-test surveys.

The findings below summarize the impact of the *Sí, Yo Puedo* program. Demographic characteristics are based on all registered participants, and outcome indicators are based on pre- and post-test findings. Outcome indicators include diabetes knowledge, self- care behaviors, self-efficacy, health status and HbA1c values.

- Demographic characteristics: 91% (N=10) of the participants were female. The average age was 57 years, and 82% (N=9) of the participants were Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 45% (N=5) of participants reported having less than a high school diploma. Sixty-four percent (N=7) of the participants

Family and Consumer Sciences

reported having a yearly income under \$20,000. Sixty-four percent (N=7) of participants reported not having medical insurance. Fifty-five percent (N=6) of participants reported never having received any diabetes classes.

- There was a small change in diabetes knowledge, **pre-test 8 M** (out of 10) and **post-test 9 M** (out of 10.)
- Self-efficacy scores improved with participants reporting increases in their confidence to engage in diabetes self-care behaviors: **pre-test 2.3 M** (out of 4); **post-test 3.7 M** (out of 4.) (Scale: 1 = I don't feel sure; 4 = I feel very sure.)
- Out of a total score of 44, diabetes self-care scores reveal that participants improved in performing routine health behaviors to better manage their diabetes: **pre-test mean score 21** and **post-test 33.5**.
- Health status scores improved in their perceived health status: **pre-test 4.5 M** (out of 5) and **post-test 3 M** (out of 5.) (Scale: 1 = excellent to 5 = Poor.) A lower mean score indicates improvement in health status scores.
- Average HbA1c scores improved from **baseline 9 M** to **3-months post-intervention 7.1 M** of the four paired participant scores. A 0.5% reduction in A1c scores significantly decreases diabetes complications

Future Plans

Overall, 2016 evidence demonstrates that Sí, Yo Puedo enhances participants' diabetes self-care behaviors. This program lends support to the benefits of a culturally competent diabetes self-management education program targeting lower literate, Spanish-speaking Hispanic/Latinos with diabetes. Given the high rates of diabetes among Hispanic/Latinos, Sí, Yo Puedo is a strategy to address this problem in Willacy County, Texas.

Acknowledgement

I would like to recognize Elyssa Davis, Health Specialist, Cameron/Willacy, Lilian Meszquida, FCS Agent-Cameron, and Ninfa Peña-Purcell, PhD, MCHES who collaborated in making this program a success in Willacy County.

Success Stories

Eat properly, consult your doctor, avoid stress, check teeth and feet daily. How to control myself and not drink sodas or sweets. . .
 Lost lots of weight



Audiences members in diabetes classes learning about physical activity

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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Making a Difference in Willacy County
2015-2016

Annual 4-H Program Summary

County 4-H Youth Involvement

- 1 Chartered Community Clubs
- 36 Members Enrolled in 4-H Clubs
- 0 Youth Reached through Community-based Programs
- 594 Youth Reached through School-Based Enrichment Curriculum

Total Youth Reached

630



County 4-H Leadership, Advisory, and Support Organizations

- 9 Youth Board Members attended 3 Meetings
- 9 County 4-H Council Members attended 3 Meetings
- 12 Adult Leaders/Parents Organization Members attended 4 Mtgs

of Youth Attending

<u>Participation in County 4-H Events</u>	
D12 4-H Recordbooks	9
D12 4-h Shooting Sports	2
D12 4-H Food Show	1

<u>County Participation in District Events</u>	
D12 4-H Leadership Lab	10
D12 4-H Roundup Presentation	9
D12 4H Livestock Judging	7
D12 4-H Shooting Sports	2

<u>County Participation in State/National Events</u>	
Texas 4-H Recordbook Judging	2

<u>Most Popular Club Projects in the County</u>	
Beef Cattle	14
Swine	8
Leadership	8
Goats	7
Photography	2

<u>Most Popular Curriculum in the County</u>	
Food & Nutrition	594
Kids & Kows & More	290

County 4-H Volunteer Support

- 9 Registered & Screened Volunteers Supporting Clubs
- 1 Club Managers, Co-Managers, and Project Leaders
- 1,000 Hours Contributed by Volunteers in Support of Clubs

Livestock Show Premium Sale Proceeds*

\$300,000

Includes all projects (4-H and FFA)

Value of Volunteer Time Supporting 4-H

\$23,070



d124-h.tamu.edu

willacy.agrilife.org

southtexas.tamu.edu

County 4-H Leadership & Personal Development Programs

- 5 Attended State-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 14 Attended District-level Leadership & Personal Development educational or competitive events
- 10 Attended District Leadership Lab
- 3 Received 4-H Scholarships valued at a total of **\$12,000**

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

- 6 County 4-H Record Book Training

Significant Leadership & Personal Development accomplishments from county Events & Activities

County 4-H Agriculture & Natural Resource Programs

- 43 Livestock Projects (all species)
- 43 Participated in County Livestock Shows
- 9 Attended State-level Livestock Shows
- 0 Attended District-level Agriculture & Natural Resources educational or competitive events
- 4 Youth Trained through "Quality Counts" Program

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

- 7 4-H Livestock Judging Training
- 6 4-H Record Book Training

Significant Agriculture & Natural Resource accomplishments from county Events & Activities

County 4-H Family & Consumer Science Programs

- 0 Attended State-level educational or competitive events
- 0 Attended District-level educational or competitive events
- 0 Attended County-level educational or competitive events

Local Training Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Significant Family & Consumer Science accomplishments from county Events & Activities

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Willacy County

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