

All About Water!

Water is the focus of two upcoming programs offered by Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service. The first program concerns the Laguna Madre and upcoming legislation. The second program is about using hydroponic and aquaponic systems to produce vegetable crops, saving space and water.

On Tuesday, August 14, our Sustainable Ag, Small Farm Committee will offer a program on the current situation with the Laguna Madre, including its reduced salinity and the environmental effects, as well as information on the flow rates proposed in upcoming Senate Bill 3. This program will be provided by Tony Reisinger, Marine Agent, with Texas A & M Extension in Cameron County. Mr. Reisinger has been involved in studies of the Laguna Madre for several years.

This presentation is part of a Sustainable Ag luncheon meeting held at the Echo Hotel in Edinburg, 1903 So. Closner Boulevard (Business 281). The meeting is open to the public. There is no registration fee. A Dutch treat buffet is available at a cost of \$12.00, including tax and gratuity, for those who would like lunch. The meeting starts at 11:45 a.m. with the presentation beginning at noon. No reservations are necessary. For information, contact Texas A & M AgriLife Extension at (956) 383-1026.

Hydroponics and aquaponics are the subjects of a workshop offered by Texas A & M AgriLife Extension and the Sustainable Agronomic Education Association, a non-profit advisory committee of Extension. This workshop is part of the Small Farm workshop series supported by a grant from the National Center for Appropriate Technology through the United States Department of Agriculture - Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA). The program is being hosted by South Texas College at their Mid-Valley Campus in Weslaco, Building G, Lecture Hall 191, and will begin at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Jason Avent, a consultant to producers, will bring a model hydroponic system to demonstrate and will discuss the various systems being used today. "Hydroponic systems have gone through lots of changes in the last ten years and there are many options now, said Avent in a recent interview. Using a hydroponic system not only saves space and water, but the industry has addressed the needs of organic production, as well." Hydroponic systems are utilized by small market producers, as well as larger producers who wholesale produce for distribution to retail outlets.

After the hydroponic system demonstration, Mr. Tom McLemore of Harlingen, will discuss aquaponic systems. Aquaponics are similar to hydroponics with fish added to the production system. Aquaponic systems utilize water from the fish to water and fertilize the plants. This system can be utilized to grow food in a backyard situation or expanded to a larger system for market growers. In some systems the fish can also be harvested, however, this requires further licensing. After this presentation, participants will have the opportunity to board a bus to travel to Harlingen to view an aquaponic system then return to campus. Registration is just \$15.00. Contact Extension at 956-383-1026 for reservations.

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