

# EXTENSION CONNECTION

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2021

HIDALGO COUNTY

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

Helping Texans  
Better Their Lives



## What We Do

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a unique education agency that provides research based community education, tools, and resources on a local and statewide level that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and enrich youth.

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## Contact Us

410 N. 13th Ave, Edinburg, Texas 78541  
956-383-1026

[hidalgo@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:hidalgo@ag.tamu.edu)

<http://hidalgo.agrilife.org>

 @HidalgoAgrilifeExtension

 Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Hidalgo County

## Extension Agents

### Andrea Valdez

County Extension Agent- Family & Community Health  
Extension County Administrator

### Vidal Saenz

County Extension Agent- Agriculture & Natural Resources

### Joanne Ureste-Armijo

County Extension Agent- Family & Community Health

### Ashley Gregory

County Extension Agent- Horticulture

### Katarina Rodriguez

County Extension Agent- 4-H & Youth Development

### Melissa De Leon

Extension Agent  
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

### Andrea Torres-Barragan & Karen Cantu

Extension Agents  
Better Living for Texans Program

### Stephanie Bowman

Cooperative Extension Agent-Prairie View A&M  
Family & Community Health

### Romeo Ozuna

Cooperative Extension Agent-Prairie View A&M  
Agriculture & Natural Resources  
(Hidalgo & Starr Counties)

### Rina Castillo

Cooperative Extension Agent-Prairie View A&M  
Community Economic Development

# A Note from the Extension Team:

As we reflect on a most historic year and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Hidalgo County Agents and staff continue to educate the community through various media. As we work to our new normal, we have many great events and programs coming up in 2021! Our 4-H program is gearing up for a busy summer with new leadership trainings for our youth leadership groups! We are happy to partner with Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez on the Cooking School for Emergencies events that will help educate our community on the importance of emergency preparedness as well as how to feed families during storms. We would like to thank Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez, Hidalgo County Commissioners Court, and all officials for all your support of our Extension educational programs for the community. Enjoy our newsletter and please visit our webpage

Visit  
<http://hidalgo.agrilife.org>  
for more events!

for program information.  
Please stay safe and well!

Subscribe to our YouTube  
channel "Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension Hidalgo County"  
for educational videos



## SUMMER Interns

Katherine Saldana, a junior at San Angelo State and Analisa Sanchez, a junior at Texas A&M University, joined us as Summer interns this year. They both learned about Extension Agent responsibilities, the Program Development Model, and assisted with multiple community programs including the Cooking School for Emergencies. At the end of their 10-week internship, they presented to the entire Hidalgo staff and District Extension Administrator, Dr. Ruben Saldana, about the programs they worked on and the value that Extension has in the community. We wish them the best of luck as they finish out their college studies!







## Family & Community Health

Andrea Valdez, M.P.H.

@AgrilifeExtensionHidalgoFCH

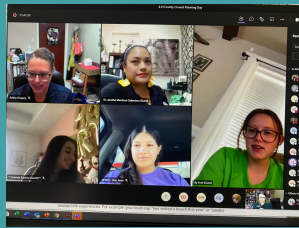


FAMILY AND  
COMMUNITY HEALTH



### Summer = 4-H

Summer is the time for 4-H planning! Our newly installed 4-H County Council officers were treated to a presentation by Dr. Jennifer Culbertson of Hidalgo County Precinct 4 along with workshops on planning, etiquette, and how to hold productive meetings.



### Cooking School for Emergencies

with Hidalgo County Judge Cortez

In partnership with Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez, Hidalgo County Precincts #1, #3, and #4, 3 community events were held to educate on the importance of being prepared during emergencies.



# 9K

TOTAL  
FACEBOOK  
VIEWS



## Family & Community Health

Joanne Ureste-Armijo, M.S.

@AgrilifeExtensionFamilyResourcesHidalgoCounty



FAMILY AND  
COMMUNITY HEALTH



### CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

Multiple partners including the Alton Police Department, Driscoll Health Plan and Texas DOT sponsored a child car seat inspection where **21** child safety seat inspections occurred and 14 new seats were issued to parents. The economic impact for these inspections was **\$29,999**. A second event was held at Angel Wings Child care in Edinburg where 9 new seats were issued.



### MASTER CLOTHING VOLUNTEERS

The Master Clothing Volunteers (MCVs) constructed **101** drawstring bags for donation to the Rainbow Room, which is an emergency center that distributes free items to children rescued by CPS. The MCVs also held an Instructor Training for their members in which they learned about different learning styles and how to conduct a sewing class. The instructors then taught a sewing class at the Dustin Sekula Library in Edinburg and taught participants how to make a tortilla warmer.



### HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Walk Across Texas program was held this quarter. The Walk Across Texas teams in Hidalgo County walked a total of 960 miles.

# 960

TOTAL  
MILES WALKED







# Agriculture & Natural Resources

Vidal Saenz, M.S.

## Reproduction

### Management Program

In July 2021, the Reproduction Management Program hosted **80** producers and secured \$950 in sponsorships to educate on topics such as herd health management, selecting replacement heifers and how to increase reproductive efficiency and economic impact of open cows.



## Crop Variety Trials

Crop Variety trials were held for Corn, Cotton, and Grain Sorghum. Cooperators included the Ybarra brothers (La Blanca) and Dr. Jacob Pekar from Texas AgriScience, LLC on the grain sorghum trial. All information gathered will be presented at the Pre-Plant conference in January 2022.

## Private Applicators License Training

A Private Applicators License Training was held in July where **20** participants learned about TDA laws and regulations, the proper use of pesticides and rules to protect employees.



## Citrus & Vegetable Integrated Pest Management Meetings

Texas A&M AgriLife researchers presented their outcomes on citrus and vegetable pesticide products to the majority of citrus and vegetable producers in Hidalgo County.



# 4-H & Youth Development

Kathy Rodriguez, M.S.

[f](#) @HidalgoCounty4H



Our 4-H Club Managers were our students for the annual **4-H Club Manager Training!** They were updated on 4-H projects, best financial practices and more!



Our 4-H County Council officers planned and implemented an amazing **Leadership Workshop** for all 4-H youth! They learned about communication, etiquette, 4-H projects and parliamentary procedure!



Our 4-H Clubs attended the **Veterans Park** opening in Linn-San Manuel with **Precinct 4 Commissioner Ellie Torres!** Thank you Commissioner for building such an amazing park in this area!



Two **Food Safety Workshops** were held in preparation for the annual 4-H Food Show & Food Challenge! Our 4-Hers learned how to prepare food safely, knife safety, and to identify different kitchen tools.

**Welcome MS. KATHY!**

**404**

Active 4-H members

**20**

Hidalgo County 4-H clubs

**54**

Adult & Youth Volunteers



**Achievement Night Awards**

Our amazing 4-Hers and adult Volunteers of the Year were honored at the annual **Achievement Night** awards! Congratulations to all the winners on their hard work last year and to the Adult and Partners of the year for your dedication to the Hidalgo County 4-H program!







## Horticulture

Ashley Gregory, M.S.



### Citrus Pest & Disease Training

Critical issues affecting citrus, such as the citrus quarantine for Citrus Canker, were addressed in this training for over **100 people**.



*Master*  
8 WORKSHOPS  
**130+**  
PARTICIPANTS

The Horticulture program, assisted by the Master Gardener volunteers hosted **8 gardening workshops** reaching over **130 people** this quarter. Additionally, a Fall Gardening program in August hosted with the McAllen Public Library was attended by **over 60 people**.

*Gardeners*



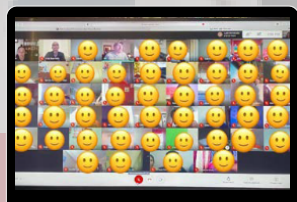
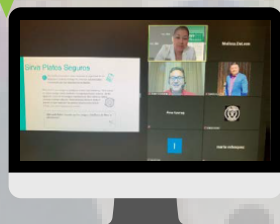
## Expanded Food & Nutrition Program (EFNEP)

Melissa De Leon, M.S.

@HidalgoCountyExpandedFoodandNutritionEducationProgram



EFNEP continues to deliver practical lessons such as building a healthy plate, eating the right number of calories, being active and keeping food safe virtually on a variety of social media platforms to continue to reach the Hidalgo County community.



Helping young families and youth with limited resources!



**432 Adult Enrollment**  
**301 Adult Graduates**

**20,197 Youth Enrollment**  
**19,647 Youth Graduates**

**Nutrition! Food Prep! Food Budget Management! Food Safety!**

# Extension State Program Highlights

## Better Living for Texans Program



Andrea Torres-Barragan, Ph.D.



Karen Cantu, B.S.



56  
95  
500

GRADUATES FROM  
GNHC VIRTUAL LESSONS

GRADUATES FROM  
PRESERVING THE HARVEST  
SERIES

CHILDREN IN VIRTUAL LEARN,  
GROW, EAT, GO SERIES

GARDEN CHALLENGE WINNERS TOOK HOME THE  
GOLD FOR GARDENING IN THE GROUND, IN POTS,  
RAISED BEDS AND BEST COMMUNITY GARDEN.



First place winners in the Home Garden category



Arise Las Milpas, Know & Show  
Sombbrero

47

CHOOSE HEALTHY  
PROGRAM GRADUATES

34

A FRESH START TO A HEALTHIER  
YOU GRADUATES

PARTNERS: CITY OF ALTON, LARK  
COMMUNITY CENTER, MAYOR JOE V.  
SANCHEZ LIBRARY OF WESLACO, LA JOYA  
ISD, DONNA ISD, ARISE LAS MILPAS,  
EDCOUCH-ELSA ISD, LAS PALMAS  
COMMUNITY CENTER, SEKULA MEMORIAL  
LIBRARY, IDEA WESLACO



## Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities



Roy Custodio, M.P.H.



Ricardo Carranza, M.S.

### New Highlights

- Safety guidelines implemented at the community gardens
- **The Garden Challenge** engaged residents to create their own gardens and showcase them!
- **First Place Community Garden:** Casa de Amigos
- **First Place Community Garden:** First Presbyterian Church Garden






# Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program



## Family & Community Health

Stephanie Bowman, M.S.

@PVAMUFamily&CommunityHealth-HidalgoCounty 

**HEROES  
&  
HEALTH**

The Boys & Girls Club of South Pharr and Boys & Girls Club of Mercedes youth were taught about diet and activity related behaviors in this 8 session series!

**734**  
TOTAL  
CONTACTS

Multiple partners, such as the Mesquite Terrace Apartments, Hidalgo County Headstart and Bebo's Angels, took advantage of the **Manage Your Stress** program and the **Three Keys to Successful Savings** Programs!

**STRESS  
AND  
SAVING  
PROGRAMS**



## Agriculture & Natural Resources

Romeo Ozuna, B.S.

Serving Hidalgo/Starr County



**HORN FLY  
DEMONSTRATION**

**90** heads of cattle from Starr & Hidalgo County were treated for Horn Fly



**80**

participants were updated on livestock issues



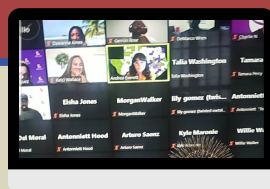
**LIVESTOCK  
PRESENTATION**



## Community Economic Development

Rina Castillo, M.P.A.

The new BID Academy teaches the essential business skills and effective strategies for small businesses that work with government agencies. For 2020-2021, **48** businesses from 5 counties, including Hidalgo, participated in this 9 week program!



With partnerships from the Houston Furniture Bank, local business owner Eli Rodriguez, and **Precinct 1 Commissioner David Fuentes**, **45** families affected by recent floods received free furniture including mattresses, couches and chairs!



**Welcome  
TO  
EXTENSION  
RINA!**



# Hidalgo County Supported Program Staff



Program Assistant-  
Family & Consumer Sciences  
Elzie Martinez, B.S.

## Family & Community Health Programs

GREEN  
LIVING



MEMORY  
WORKSHOPS



350

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

GOAL  
SETTING



FALL  
PREVENTION



Partners: Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Library, Edcouch Housing Authority, Weslaco Housing Authority, San Juan Housing Authority, Edinburg Housing Authority, Pharr Housing Authority, Mis Amigos de Weslaco Adult Day Care, Progreso Community Center, Alton Senior Citizen Center, Mis Amigos Adult Day Care Edinburg, La Joya I.S.D., ARISE Las Milpas, and Proyecto Desarrollo Humano



Program Coordinator  
Linda Ramirez

## READING IS FUN!



266

PARTICIPANTS

The Families Reading Every Day (FRED) and Sun Safety programs were held in Alton Community Center and ARISE locations.

The FRED program encourages literacy and parents reading with their kids. The Sun Safety program educated protective measures against skin cancer and how to protect ourselves from the Summer heat.



## Hidalgo County Support Staff

Elena Almendarez,  
Administrative Assistant II  
Luz Sena,  
Administrative Assistant II  
Sonia Garza,  
Administrative Assistant III

(L-R)

