

EXTENSION CONNECTION

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 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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@HidalgoAgrilifeExtension



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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 that took place in 2021! We were 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, all officials and partners for all your support of our Extension educational programs for the community. Enjoy our newsletter and please visit our webpage for program information.

Please stay safe and well!

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

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



**PROTECT YOURSELF AND
YOUR COMMUNITY FROM
COVID-19**

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



Family & Community Health

Dr. Andréa A. Valdez, M.P.H.

@AgrilifeExtensionHidalgoFCH



FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY HEALTH

Resolution

at Hidalgo County
Commissioner's Court



**November is
National Diabetes
Awareness Month**



**DINNER
TONIGHT**
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

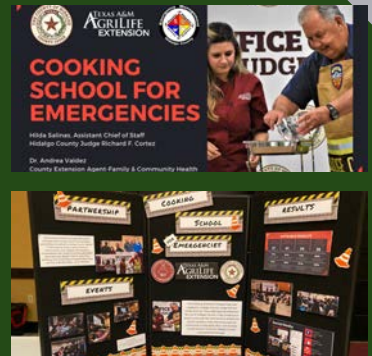


In October, 95 members enjoyed a Trip to the Mediterranean with the Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School to learn about the Mediterranean diet. As part of the Dinner Tonight State Team, Dr. Valdez created a tasty meatball recipe to be shared and added to the Dinner Tonight recipe portfolio.

Cooking School for Emergencies



Hilda Salinas,
Asst. Chief of Staff for
Judge Richard Cortez,
and Dr. Valdez
presented on Cooking
School for
Emergencies and
partnerships at the
**State Urban
Extension
Conference.**



Cooking School for
Emergencies was
highlighted at the **District
12 CEU Conference for
Elected Officials** in
December in Laredo.



Family & Community Health

Joanne Ureste-Armijo, M.S.

@AgrilifeExtensionFamilyResourcesHidalgoCounty



FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY HEALTH

STEP UP & WALK SCALE DOWN & ACROSS TEXAS



The Step Up, Scale Down (SUSD) and Walk Across Texas programs started in October 2021. Participants learned about MyPlate and creating a healthy menu. The 8 Walk Across Texas teams walked 4,958 miles!



The Master Clothing Volunteers sold their items at the McAllen Farmer's Market and some sold \$200-\$450. They also sewed and donated 98 bibs to the San Juan Nursing Home!

**Master
Clothing
Volunteers**



Grilling 101



Edinburg Housing Authority, Edinburg FD, Texas Beef Council, and Superior Health Plan came together to teach residents about fire safety, nutrition, and grilling safety. Each family received a food thermometer and a BBQ grill!

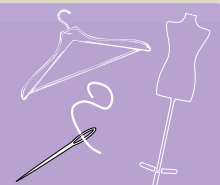


Childcare Conference

Hidalgo and Cameron Extension offices hosted a multi-county Childcare conference with Region 1, Easter Seals, and Superior Health Plan.



A Fashion Show Workshop was held to prepare and encourage Hidalgo County 4-Her's to participate in the upcoming Fashion Show. Fashion Show consists of Buying, Construction, Natural Fibers, and Duds to Dazzle. The youth were able to learn how to read clothing labels and care for their garments.





Agriculture & Natural Resources

Vidal Saenz, M.S.



24th Annual Bull Gain Test & Heifer Development Program

The Annual Bull Gain Test was conducted at Rio Beef Yard. 27 consignors brought cattle in for this event.

74
BULLS ENTERED



22
HEIFERS ENTERED



Private Applicator's Training

Participants at the Private Applicator's Training received 5 hours of training to prepare them to take the licensing exam. Once licensed, they will be able to safely administer pesticides on their farms or ranches.

20



PARTICIPANTS



4-H Swine Validation



Agents and Ag teachers held swine validation in which market hogs are tagged and documented for the 4-Her's to show at the various livestock shows.

50

HOGS TAGGED



34th Annual La Muñeca Field Day

4-Her's took part in the Annual La Muñeca Field Day. Mr. Saenz presented on hay judging and youth participated in a hay judging contest!



150

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Fall Ranchers Program

A multi-county collaboration hosted a Fall Ranchers program which included herd management, nutritional needs of wildlife and outreach of local programs.



60

MULTI-COUNTY PARTICIPANTS



RGV CEU Workshop

A CEU workshop was held for farmers and ranchers to learn about integrated Pest Management of Vectors, Cotton Insect Management and Pesticides used in vegetable production.



65

PARTICIPANTS



4-H & Youth Development

Kathy Rodriguez, M.S.

[f](#) @HidalgoCounty4H



District 12 events

4-Her's competed at the District level Consumer Decision Making and Food Show/Food Challenge competitions! Our Senior CDM team is advancing to State competition!



Community Service



This quarter our 4-Her's helped collect three 30-gallon bags at RGVLS for One Day 4-H and painted Christmas socks for a local nursing home!



404

Active 4-H members

25

Hidalgo County 4-H clubs

54

Adult & Youth Volunteers



Food Show/ Food Challenge

Our County 4-H Food Show/Food Challenge was held at Morris Middle School with our 4-Her's making healthy dishes and showing off their interview skills!





Horticulture

Ashley Gregory, M.S.



Newly graduated
Master Gardeners

Master

The Master Gardeners hosted 7 horticulture workshops at the Master Gardener Educational Garden. The Annual Fall Plant Sale raised over \$6000 to go back to providing horticulture education in the community.

Gardeners



We partnered with Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez to film an episode of "County Matters" to provide educational information on how to best protect plants from freezing temperatures.



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!

172 Adult Enrollment
141 Adult Graduates

13,168 Youth Enrollment
10,848 Youth Graduates

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

Extension State Program Highlights

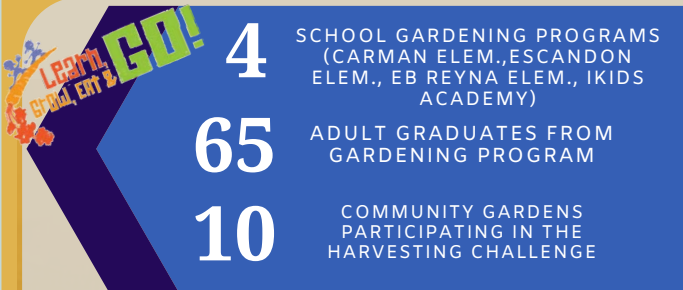
Better Living for Texans Program



Andrea Torres-Barragan, Ph.D.



Karen Cantu, B.S.



SESSIONS

73 61 Adult and 12 youth sessions; 52 virtual sessions

PARTNERS

IDEA Weslaco Pike, Las Palmas Community Center, Edcouch-Elsa ISD, ARISE Las Milpas, ARISE Hargill, Donna ISD, McAllen ISD, Mission CISD, La Joya ISD

GRADUATES

118 ADULT GRADUATES

FRESH START
to a healthier you



Growing & Nourishing Healthy Communities



Roy Custodio, M.P.H.



Ricardo Carranza, M.S.

New Highlights

- Safety guidelines implemented at the community gardens
- Assist maintaining existing gardens
- **10** community gardens competing in the harvesting challenge



Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program



Family & Community Health Stephanie Bowman, M.S.

*Thank!
You!*



Stephanie Bowman will be moving to a CEP 4-H position in neighboring Cameron County. We thank her very much for her service, hardwork, and dedication to educating the citizens of Hidalgo County! We will miss her and wish her all the best!



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Romeo Ozuna, B.S.

Serving Hidalgo/Starr County

FALL RANCHERS PROGRAM

Multi-County Program

8

HIDALGO COUNTY PRODUCERS

The Fall Ranchers Program educated socially disadvantaged and limited resource producers on special topics such as Deer Management Nutrition and Herd Health Management.

Special thanks to all the partners of this program: Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Texas/Mexico Border Coalition, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, local farmers & agribusinesses, Texas Farm Bureau, Medina Electric Company and VTx.



Community Economic Development

Rina Castillo, M.P.A.

Partnerships & Trainings

City of Mercedes

Homebuyers Education
FSA Loans

City of Alamo

EverFI training-Building
Supportive Communities

Mercedes Chamber
of Commerce

Exploring your Market
Advanced Legal Tips for Small
Businesses



Hidalgo County Supported Program Staff



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

Family & Community Health Programs



164

TOTAL
PARTICIPANTS

MEMORY
WORKSHOPS



Budgeting



Child Health
& Safety

Partners: Proyecto Desarrollo Humano,
Hidalgo County AmeriCorps, Alton
Recreation Center, Cavazos Elementary
(Mission CISD), Escandon Elementary
(McAllen ISD), Jackson Elementary (McAllen
ISD), Tabasco Elementary, Caceres
Elementary (Donna ISD), ARISE: Las Milpas,
Zapata Elementary (La Joya ISD), Mayor Joe
V. Sanchez Library.



Program Coordinator
Linda Ramirez

READING IS FUN!



390 Graduates

Weslaco Housing Authority, Mercedes
Housing Authority, Elsa Public Library,
McAllen Housing Authority



Graduates **120**

McAllen Housing Authority,
Lark Community Center, La
Reina Apartments (La Villa)

Sun Safety

25 Participants

La Reina Apartments
(La Villa)



Hidalgo County Support Staff

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

(L-R)

