



EXTENSION CONNECTION

HIDALGO COUNTY
JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022

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.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A Note from the Extension Team.....2
- Family & Community Health.....3
- Agriculture & Natural Resources.....4
- 4-H & Youth Development.....4
- Horticulture.....5
- Expanded Food & Nutrition Edu.Program.....5
- Extension State Program Highlights.....6
- Prairie View A&M Coop. Extension.....6
- County Supported Staff Programs.....7

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 @HidalgoAgrilifeExtension

EXTENSION FACULTY

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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Extension County Administrator*

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PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

Rina Castillo

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

A NOTE FROM EXTENSION:

This quarter, the RGV Beef 706 program educated local farmers and ranchers on how to improve their production profitability, the Hidalgo County Community Service Agency employees learned about and sampled diabetic friendly recipes in Cooking Well with Diabetes, and Hidalgo County Precinct 3 hosted Texas A&M AgriLife and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension to help potential business owners start their business the right way. It was a busy quarter to finish out 2022, and we look forward to a successful 2023!

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Hidalgo County](#)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

RGV Beef 706 Program

County Extension Agent: Vidal Saenz

The RGV Beef 706 Program is a 3-part series of hands-on sessions focusing on beef quality management and marketing opportunities and is available for beef cattle producers from Hidalgo County and surrounding counties. This program is designed to help producers improve their profitability and have a better understanding of the production process after their cattle enter the feed yard. The 3 sessions covered factors affecting feeder calf value and prices, evaluating market steers for carcass quality and yield grades, and a full day exercise on the fabrication of a beef carcass. Many thanks to the multiple partners of this program: Texas Beef Council, Texas A&M Kingsville and Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program.



COOKING WELL

WITH DIABETES

Hidalgo County Community Service Agency employees took part in the 4 series Cooking Well with Diabetes class. **15 employees** completed 75% of the classes to graduate from the program.



Dr. Andréa A. Valdez, M.P.H.
Family & Community Health

@AgrilifeExtensionHidalgoFCH



The Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors learned about mindfulness from the **Mindful Self** curriculum at their annual Ambassador Summit held in July 2022.



Coming Together for Racial Understanding Promoting Diversity Team Award

National Extension Agents Family & Consumer Sciences Regional and National Award Winner

In August 2022, Dr. Valdez created the Apricot Nut Bar recipe and social media content shared on the Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School website. This recipe was sent to over **10,000 email subscribers**.



Joanne Ureste-Armijo, M.S.
Family & Community Health

@AgrilifeExtensionFamilyResourcesHidalgoCounty

A multi-county Strong People, Strong Bodies graduation was held in July 2022 at South Padre Island to recognize the graduates of the program. Listen to some of the **16 graduates** provide a testimonial of their experience in the program by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME



Every Friday in July, the MCVs hosted a Clothing & Textile camp for youth to teach them beginner sewing skills.

The Master Clothing Volunteers (MCVs) donated **10 handmade quilts** to Uvalde Comfort Quilts in Uvalde, Texas. These quilts were provided to students, parents and teachers affected by the shooting in Uvalde.



Master Clothing Volunteer Program

National Extension Agents Family & Consumer Sciences Regional and National Award Winner





Vidal Saenz, M.S. Agriculture & Natural Resources

RGV Beef 706 Program

RGV agriculture agents held the second session of the RGV Beef 706 program at Rio Beef Yard. Over **40 participants** discussed feed yard performance of cattle and AgriLife specialists evaluated the market steers in the program and consumer preferences of meat quality.

2022 Hidalgo County Grain Sorghum Variety Trial

Six grain sorghum varieties were harvested at the Kotzur farm in Hargill. The results of the trial will be emailed to local farmers and presented at the Cotton & Grain Pre-Plant Conference in January 2023. Special thanks to Pioneer Hi-Bred seed for harvesting assistance during this trial.

Texas Vegetable Growers RGV Summit

Texas A&M AgriLife hosted the vegetable growers summit to discuss legislative updates, ag labor, water, updates on new seeds, chemicals and products for the next growing season. The **45 participants** also received updates on cover crops and variety improvements.

2022 Hidalgo County Cotton Variety Trial

At the McCutcheon's farm in Mercedes, **10 cotton varieties** were harvested in the Hidalgo County Cotton Variety Trial. The cotton was weighed and transferred to a module builder. Results of the trial will be interpreted to the row crop growers and at the Cotton & Grain Pre-Plant Conference in January 2023.



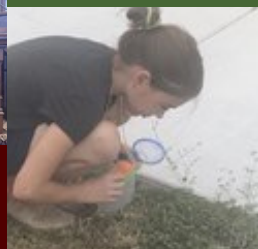
Kathy Rodriguez, M.S. 4-H & Youth Development

@HidalgoCounty4H 



Hidalgo County 4-H Leadership Workshop

The Hidalgo County 4-H County Council officers hosted **50** fellow 4-Her's at the annual Leadership Workshop. This event was held at the San Carlos Endowment Center. This year's theme is **"Illuminate Your 4-H Story"**. The topics for this workshop were public speaking, engagement, perseverance, and parliamentary procedure. All presentations were created and lead by the County Council officers. Thank you to **Hidalgo County Precinct 4 and the San Carlos Endowment Center** for hosting us another year!



The Hidalgo County 4-Her's were active this summer! Hidalgo County 4-H was represented by **2** 4-Her's (Gabriella Ramirez and Emma Garza) at **Texas 4-H Congress** in Austin. At the **Food Show Workshop**, **43** 4-Her's learned how to measure wet and dry recipe ingredients and **23** 4-Her's went on a bug hunt in our first **Entomology Workshop**!

Summer Happenings



Ashley Gregory, M.S.
Horticulture

Master Gardener Workshops

The Hidalgo County Master Gardeners hosted many workshops this quarter including hypertufa, composting, Fall veggie gardening, rainwater harvesting, Fall veggie container Gardening, and proper tree selection and planting. All workshops were attended by over 15 community members each for a total of **169 participants**. Thank you to **Hidalgo County Precinct 2** for providing the educational space and housing the Master Gardener Educational Garden.

In July, the RGV Small Acreage Committee hosted a Citrus Pest and Disease program in partnership with USDA-APHIS at the District 12 Extension and Research Center in Weslaco. **30** participants learned about new updates to citrus pests in our area.



Melissa De Leon, M.S.
Expanded Food & Nutrition Program (EFNEP)

@HidalgoCountyExpandedFoodandNutritionEducationProgram 

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Hidalgo County helps families and youths with limited resources – those most at risk who suffer from hunger, food insecurity and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical lessons in:

- Building a Healthy Plate
- Keeping Food Safe
- Meal Planning
- Shop on a Budget
- Being Active
- Encouraging Family Mealtime at Home

488 Adult Enrollment
380 Adult Graduates

11,242 Youth Enrollment
9,305 Youth Graduates

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





Better Living for Texans Program



Andrea Torres-Barragan, Ph.D.



Karen Cantu, B.S.



Ricardo Carranza & Roy Custodio, Program Assistants

Gardening

While the gardens get plenty of sun during the summer months, those months are prime preparation time! **20** teachers and principals participated in a virtual Teacher Training while **35** teachers from Mims Elementary attended the in person training. Over **1,200 cool season vegetable seedlings** were grown to distribute to the school gardens. The adult gardening program has **78 participants** and 6 schools and 2 learning centers have over **450 youth participants** in the youth gardening program.

Nutrition

BLT nutrition programs partnered with Mercedes Recreation Center (**32** youth graduates); Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Public Library in Weslaco (**9** participants) to offer the Choose Healthy Program and a MyPlate presentation. In September, **3 Walk N Talk programs** began at Edinburg CISD CATS Center, A.P. Solis Middle School and ARISE Las Milpas where participants received nutrition education while taking a peaceful walk!



Rina Castillo, M.P.A.
Community &
Economic Development



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AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

How to Start a Business the Right Way

In partnership with **Hidalgo County Precinct 3** and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a presentation assisting new and existing small business owners develop their management skills through business planning, financing and marketing was held in Mission for **52** participants.

Program Promotion

The Prairie View A&M University- Community and Economic Development Unit serves as a resource and assistance center for limited resource families and individuals in pursuit of increasing their standard of living through entrepreneurship, community program participation, home ownership, workforce development and government assistance programs. This quarter, a introduction of services were presented at South Texas Affordable Housing (**7** participants-staff), Mayor Joe Sanchez Public Library in Weslaco (**17** participants), Workforce Solutions (**12** participants-staff), Grow 'n Growers Farmer's Market in McAllen (**36** participants), ARISE Hargill (**11** participants), Small Cities Coalition (**21** participants), Hidalgo County Precinct 3 (**7** participants-staff), and Hidalgo County Emergency Management (**6** participants-staff).



Financial Literacy

In August, **23** Hidalgo County Head Start staff members learned how to identify the characteristics of an effective budget, the stages of budget planning, and how to distinguish between budget types.

Hidalgo County Supported Staff



Elzie Martinez, B.S.

Program Assistant-
Family & Consumer Sciences

Community Programs

Our Family & Community Health Community Programs had multiple partnerships this quarter utilizing our many program topics such as **Budgeting (78 participants)**, **Medication Management (105 participants)**, **Goal Setting (106 participants)**, **Is Your Child at Risk for Diabetes (181 participants)**, **Women's Health (127 participants)** and **Diabetes (110 participants)**. Our partners included **Edinburg CISD C.A.T.S Academy, ARISE Hargill, Mayor Joe Sanchez Library, Proyecto Desarrollo Humano, Buckner, AmeriCorps – Hidalgo County, and Hidalgo County Head Start Program**. This quarter, a total of **1,033** educational contacts were made through these programs.



Hidalgo County Support Staff

Elena Almendarez,
Administrative Assistant II
Luz Sena,
Administrative Assistant I
(L-R)

251
Office Visitors

July-September 2022

The members of Texas A&M Agrilife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M Agrilife, the Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.