



**Extension Education in Swisher County**  
*Making a Difference*

Improving Lives.  
Improving Texas.

The Texas A&M  
AgriLife Extension  
Service has been  
dedicated to  
educating Texans

for nearly a century. In 1915, the agency was established under the federal Smith-Lever Act to deliver university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, AgriLife Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, serving diverse populations across the state.

Through a well-organized network of professional educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers, Extension delivers practical research-based knowledge to Texans in all 254 counties. Our 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 the hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

Texans turn to Extension for solutions. Its agents and specialists respond not only with answers, but also with resources and services that result in significant returns on investment to boost the Texas economy. The agency custom-designs its programs to each region of the state, relying on residents for input and for help with program delivery. Here are just a few highlights of Extension's impacts on this county and its people:

## Swisher County – Summary of 2012 Educational Contacts

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### *2012 Educational Results*

#### Educational Programs & Contacts:

Programs presented:	443
Contacts:	35215
Individual contacts: (Office & Site Visits, Phone calls)	14637

#### Mass Media Education:

News articles:	127
Newsletters distributed:	4326

#### Volunteer Involvement:

Volunteers trained:	153
Volunteer hours:	5427
Reached by volunteers:	1395

#### 4-H Participation:

4-H Enrollment:	119
Curriculum Enrichment:	962

## **Swisher County- Cropping & Livestock Systems with Reduced Water in 2012**

### RELEVANCE

Crop and livestock production generate over \$150 million in annual gross income in Swisher County and both are completely dependent upon the underground water of the Ogallala aquifer. There are three cattle feed yards that finish 200,000 plus cattle per year, with potential for over 100,000 stocker cattle, and over 3,000 mother cows for beef production. In addition, there are over 100,000 acres of irrigated cropland, with cotton, corn, and wheat being the primary crops. Declining ground water levels in the range of 1.5 to 5 feet per year, pumping regulations of irrigation water (currently 15 inches/acre), and the lowest annual rainfall in 60 years continue to be key concerns for agriculture in Swisher. With little or no fossil fuel production, no wind energy at this time, and very limited manufacturing, agriculture being profitable is critical.

### RESPONSE

Because of the diversity of Swisher County agriculture, the TCCF and County Ag Committee strongly indicated a need for a systems approach and education that could help deal with the issues. They determined irrigation efficiency, knowledge of water use regulations, soil moisture monitoring technology, weed management, and tillage and rotation practices that include livestock were some of the immediate programming needs.

Following are the educational activities completed:

Swisher Ag Day on December 13, 2011 with 85 producers attending (not included in previous year because this event occurs just prior to deadline of this outcome summary).

\*key topics were cropping systems with less water, irrigation management for reducing risk

Risk Management/Marketing Workshop on January 24, 2012 with 20 attending.

\*key information presented on crop insurance and marketing for 2012.

Cattle/Range Management meeting at Tulia Livestock Action on March 28 with 15 producers.

\*nutrition, culling criteria, health care to aid in the efficient use of pastures during a drought

Spring Ag Conference on April 4 with 29 producers attending.

\*improved water use efficiency through irrigation timing, crop rotation, weed control

Result demonstration verifying chemical resistant weeds are official in Swisher County.

\*prepared handout that was placed at all four gins and ag businesses; presented information at Bi-county Cotton Tour and 2012 Swisher Ag Day

Bi-County Cotton Tour held October 2 with 31 farmers attending.

\*viewed varieties with best response to irrigation. Discussed water conservation district rules.

RACE Irrigated Cotton Trial conducted with producer near Kress with 8 select varieties.

\*yield and quality data shared with producers and gins

Range/Pasture Tour held October 18 with 39 producers attending.

\*information on saving drought inflicted pastures, stocking rates, weed control.

Water management education using soil moisture probes- worked with 1 producer to better understand water uptake and more efficient use of irrigation water.

Water quality study in which collected 3 samples from across the county as part of a district effort to learn waters impact on chemical efficacy.

Quarterly newsletters and 6 e-newsletters were sent to mailing list of about 200 producers.

COLLABORATORS/COOPERATORS

Plains Cotton Growers, Texas Alliance for Water Conservation, Texas Corn Producers Board, Farm Service Agency and NRCS of Swisher County, High Plains Water District. National seed companies and irrigation companies. Also local producers, gins, livestock auction, vet services, feed and chemical dealers, irrigation companies, and crop insurance offices. Special thanks is due the Ag Committee members for their time and sincere interest in helping direct Extension efforts.

RESULTS

In the past year, six educational sessions were conducted with a total of 219 producers attending, in addition to speakers and sponsors. The Ag Committee formally evaluated the first 3 events of the year, with 100% indicating the sessions were relevant, timely, and that the information presented would have a positive economic impact for producers. Producers were individually polled on the other three events with these resulting comments:

Range/Pasture Tour- "The best ag production meeting I have ever attended".

"Exactly what I needed".

Bi-County CottonTour- "Excellent tour."

"I would like to see a result demo and dry land cotton tour".

The Swisher Ag Day evaluation was completed using Turning Point but the info was lost due to a computer issue. Results and comments were very favorable.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ag Committee and producers across the county see the need for continued education in dealing with less water while remaining profitable in both crops and livestock. Programs planned for 2013 include topics such as controlling chemical resistant weeds, renewed interest in grain sorghum production, drought tolerant varieties, pasture management following drought, and marketing/risk management.

## Country Friends and EE Council Accomplishments

- The Country Friends EE Club is continuing to work with numerous partners to provide Rural Health and Safety Education Events in Tulia. The club provided refreshments for the Swinburn Elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students when they attended the livestock show tour on Friday before the county stock show and performed a puppet show about large animal safety to the children.
- The club hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Ag Safety Day Camp at Swinburn Elementary in May for the third, fourth and fifth grade students from Tulia, Kress and Happy. There were over 350 students reached. Country Friends provided the morning snacks and helped make sure all sessions ran smoothly. Glenda Gibson and Calley Runnels served as the coordinators for the camps.
- This year we helped to host the Xeriscaping and Rainwater Harvesting community wide workshop.
- Several members attended the District TEEA meeting in Brownfield. Becky Tucker, Charlotte Fulkerson, Nancy Jones, Glenda Gibson, Glinda Dempsey and Calley Runnels.
- At the District TEEA Meeting, Jessi Stark was awarded with both the Aubrey Russell District Scholarship and the District 2/State TEEA Scholarships for a total of \$1600.
- Glenda Gibson attended the State TEEA Meeting in Beaumont in September.
- The Association sponsored the 1<sup>st</sup> Time Chef Award at the County 4-H Food Show. The award was won by Corbin Bechtold.
- Both the EE Club and Council help support the Aubrey Russell Scholarship which is awarded to a 4-H member in District 2. Club and Council also donate to the Coins for Friendship which aids in improvements to the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood.



### ***Better Living for Texans Nutrition Education Program***

#### **Relevance**

Approximately 18% of the population of Swisher County receives food stamps and 40% of the county's population lives at or below the poverty level. Research has shown that individuals who live in poverty have dietary intakes that are not congruent with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPlate). This audience, like many, also may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Stretching resources so food is available throughout the month is also a challenge.

#### **Response**

The Better Living for Texans (BLT) program is a cooperative endeavor among the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. BLT have been implemented by Extension since 1995 and today includes every county in Texas that is served by a county Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences.

As a component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, BLT provides educational programs to SNAP recipients, applicants, and other approved audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely.

BLT is delivered through a variety of teaching methods that reflect audience needs. Teaching methods include, lesson series, single education events, one to one consultations, displays and newsletters. With the presence of BLT in almost every county in the state, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is poised to reach all areas of Texas, both rural and urban, and increase the likelihood of meeting the nutrition education needs of under-served Texans.

During 2012, seventeen Swisher County adults participated in the BLT *Three Easy Bites* series. Lessons in this series included "Start with Breakfast", "Snack Right" and "Enjoy a Health Plate".

In addition, food stamp recipients receive a monthly newsletter entitled "Fun Food Facts." The newsletter contains information about nutrition, food safety, saving money on food purchases, and recipes as well as information on upcoming nutrition classes.

I have reached other low income audiences with nutrition information by teaching a lesson for Swisher County Headstart students and staff on "MyPlate" and setting up a display at the Swisher County Business Fair entitled "What's on Your Plate?" with information on the MyPlate guidelines.

## **Results**

Evaluation of the Swisher County BLT program was conducted via the use of a pre and post survey. This allowed for the collection of data that reflected current behaviors, and behaviors that participants intended to adopt. For the *Three Easy Bites* series, this report represents 12 adults who participated in the program and completed the pre survey and 11 individuals who completed the post survey.

As a result of the *Three Easy Bites* series taught in 2012, the following behaviors were changed and knowledge gained:

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Before the program</b>	<b>After the program</b>
Plan breakfast ahead of time.	8%	27%
Use a shopping list which includes fruits and vegetables.	50%	55%
Plan dinner ahead of time.	42%	55%
Use a shopping list which includes breakfast items.	33%	65%

## **Collaborators**

Food and Nutrition Services of USDA provides the funding of the Better Living for Texans Program through a matching grant with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. Panhandle Community Services helped to promote the monthly nutrition programs to its clientele and assisted with teaching. Swisher County Head Start provides me with opportunities to teach nutrition principles to their students and staff.

## **Conclusions and Future Plans**

By improving dietary habits and avoiding foodborne illness, the participants will improve their lifestyles, increase longevity and decrease health risks. This will ultimately save money by eliminating unnecessary medical treatments and products and decrease the amount of missed work due to illnesses. In addition, by decreasing the consumption of "junk food" and using effective shopping strategies for purchasing food, families can save \$400-\$1000 annually on their grocery bill.

Nutrition programs will continue to be taught to energy assistance recipients and Head Start students when requested. Other possible audiences include Mid Tule Village (low income senior housing) Residents, Head Start parents, and Tulia Child Development Center children, parents and staff.

## Child Passenger Safety

### Relevance

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of accidental injury-related death for children ages 14 and under. The total annual cost of motor vehicle occupant-related death and injury \$7 billion for children ages 14 and under.
- Although safety belts and child restraints are the single-most effective tool in reducing these deaths and injuries, nationally, almost half of children killed in vehicle crashes are unrestrained. Minority children are at a great risk of being unrestrained. Misuse and non-use of child restraints remains high.
- Most parents think they are using child safety seats correctly, but studies show that an estimated 3 out of 4 seats are used incorrectly.
- Lack of access to affordable child safety seats contributes to a lower usage rate among low-income families.
- Rural areas have a higher crash incidence and death rate than urban areas.
- According to the Swisher County Justice of the Peace offices 7 citations were issued from January 2011 to November 2012 for unrestrained children under 8 years old. The fine for these citations is \$219.
- Research shows that child restraints, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury.

### Response

In 2006, I became a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician in order to help Swisher County families transport their children safely. Since becoming a technician I have conducted 3 child safety seat checkup events, assisted with several checkup events, set up displays at health fairs, Headstart and day care, written news articles and done one-on-one instruction with parents. I have kept up to date on child passenger safety issues by attending trainings and renewing my certification.

In January 2009, I applied to be a part of the Safe Riders Child Safety Seat Distribution and Education Program. This program provides child safety seats (convertible seats and booster seats) to low income families. I was accepted into the program, and my office manager and I attended the Safe Riders Training in May 2009.

I began conducting the Safe Rider Classes in August 2009. The 1 hour classes are offered twice a month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 2 p.m. in the Swisher County Annex Meeting Room. Participants are instructed on proper use of car seats and then are assisted one-on-one with installation of a seat for their child in their car. In 2012, I conducted 13 classes and instructed 30 parents and care givers about the correct installation and usage of child safety seats through the Safe Riders Child Safety Seat Distribution and Education Program.



VALUE	
Passenger Safety	<p>Participants in the Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension Service Child Passenger Safety Program learn how to properly restrain their child in an automobile child safety seat, reducing the risk of severe or fatal injury. The program creates public value by saving lives and by reducing health care costs and long-term disability care costs.</p>

**Response (cont.)**

Other Child Passenger Safety activities for 2012 included:

- Car seat check-up event in Castro County,
- Educational program for parents of Kress Pre-school students,
- Displays at Highland Elementary School, Swisher County Headstart and the Swisher County Business Fair, and
- Renewed my Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification..

**Results**

For 2012, I have distributed a total of 18 convertible seats, 8 combo seats and 1 booster seat. The proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, leading to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings, and improved quality of life. The economic benefits are an estimated \$1,988 per child age 0 to 4 and \$2,347 per child age 4 to 7 for new seats distributed, and \$558 per child for seat misuse with an assumed 75% continued use. The 27 new seats distributed through the Safe Riders program in Swisher County in 2012 have resulted in \$54035 in economic benefits to society.

In addition, the number of citations being issued for unrestrained children under 8 has decreased from 36 (Jan. 2010-Nov. 2011) to 7 (Jan. 2011-Nov. 2012).

**Collaborators**

Swisher County Headstart	Highland Elementary School
Tulia Child Development Center	Safe Riders
Kress Elementary School	
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Passenger Safety Specialists	

**Conclusions and Future Plans**

The emphasis of Child Passenger Safety is on increasing the use of child safety seats.

In order to do this I will:

- Continue to conduct the Safe Riders Child Safety Seat Distribution and Education Program
- Conduct group and one-on-one educational events with parents and care givers
- Host and assist with Child Safety Seat Checkup Events
- Continue to renew my certification as a Child Safety Seat Technician.



## **Fathers Reading Every Day**

### **Relevance**

- Learning to read and write are skills that are essential to a child's success in school and later life.
- According to many experts, the single most important activity that parents can do to help their children acquire essential literacy skills is to read aloud to them on a frequent basis.
- Reading aloud to children is simple, yet powerful, activity that has been shown to improve children's literacy development across a variety of domains, including vocabulary growth, print awareness, enjoyment of reading, and writing abilities.
- Researchers have repeatedly shown that children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in later years; those who fall behind often stay behind when it comes to academic achievement.
- Children who are reading proficiently at an early age are more likely to perform better in school, and as a result, graduate from high school and/or pursue a post-secondary education.
- According to recent statistics, 60% of 3-5 year olds have a family member who reads to them daily.
- In a random survey conducted with 894 men and women across the nation, researchers discovered that 40.2% of fathers never read to their children. Statistics like these are unfortunate given what we now know about the importance of father involvement in the lives of children.
- It is well established that fathers play a critical role in their children's development. Fathers who are consistently and positively involved in the daily routines of their children are more likely to raise children who are self-confident, get along well with their peers, and perform better academically than children who grow up without a positive father presence in their lives.
- Fathers who find time to read with their children are taking advantage of one of the best opportunities to care for, connect with, and contribute to their children's future.

### **Response**

Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) is a family literacy program designed by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to increase parental involvement in children's early literacy development, with a specific focus on fathers. During the FRED program, fathers and father figures of children enrolled in the Swisher County Head Start are presented with research-based information to help them begin daily reading activities with their children. The program is structured as follows:

- Fathers read to their children a minimum of 15 minutes a day for the first two weeks and a minimum of 30 minutes a day for the last two weeks.
- Fathers receive a participant packet that contains an introduction to the program, reading log, tips for reading aloud to their children, and recommended book lists.
- Fathers received a weekly educational newsletter with parenting and literacy tip.
- Over the course of four weeks, fathers document the amount of time spent reading to their children and the number of books read.
- At the conclusion of FRED, fathers total up the number of books and the amount of time spent reading to their children.
- Fathers and their children are then invited to attend a party to celebrate their participation in FRED. At that time, they turn in their reading logs and complete an exit survey.

## Results

Eleven fathers and father-figures and 13 Swisher County Headstart Youth participate in the FRED program. They spent 86 hours reading and read 497 books.

Nineteen attended the FRED Celebration. Swisher County Headstart provided pizza for the celebration. Each family received a certificate and books which were donated by the Swisher/Briscoe Retired Teachers Association and Swisher County 4-H Families.

Participants indicated that the FRED program

- Got them to read to their children every day
- Increased the time they spent with their children
- Helped them become more involved in their children's education
- Increased their satisfaction level as a parent
- Improved the quality of time they spent with their children
- Led to improvements in their child's vocabulary
- Led to improvements in my child's ability to count
- Helped their child learn to read
- Improved their relationship with their children



As a result of the Fathers Reading Every Day program:

	Before the FRED program	After the FRED program
Someone in the family reads to their children 5 or more times per week.	36%	50%
Participating fathers read to their children 5 or more times per week.	27%	37%
Percentage of participating fathers owning a library card.	18%	63%

Statements by FRED participants:

*“The FRED program helped me and my child get into a better bed time routine. The FRED program also helped my child to turn to reading as an activity to entertain himself.”*

*“Now, more than ever, my girls want me to read with them every night. This has been fun!”*

## Collaborators

Swisher County Headstart  
Swisher County 4-H  
Swisher/Briscoe Retired Teachers Association

## Conclusions and Future Plans

Fathers who find time to read with their children are taking advantage of one of the best opportunities to care for, connect with, and contribute to their children's future.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Swisher County will continue to partner with Swisher County Headstart to offer the FRED program with hopes of increasing participation in 2013.



Walk Across Texas! is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services. In 2012, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Education Agency partnered to offer the fourth annual TEA/ISD Walk Across Texas! Challenge. The goal of the challenge was to motivate Texas Education Agency, Independent School District (ISD) employees, students, and their families to move more and have fun!

### Relevance

- 27 percent of Texans are obese.
- Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- 29 percent of American adults are not physically active at all.
- Regular physical activity is associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalization, and medications.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of deaths and 75 percent of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- With regular physical activity, 58 percent of people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.
- Texas ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 13<sup>th</sup> as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 7<sup>th</sup> as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.

### Response

Walk Across Texas was implemented at Highland Elementary School in Tulia. Calley Runnels, CEA-FCS provided an in-service training for the Highland Teachers and help them set up their teams on the Walk Across Texas Website.

The theme for this year's Walk Across Texas program was "Let's Band Together and Walk!" Beginning on September 17, 2012, Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class teams were encouraged to walk 930 miles over eight weeks, which is the approximate distance from Texline to Brownsville. During the 8 weeks the students walked at school, and at home with their families to gain miles. Teams were able to earn bonus miles by turning in miles that their family members walked and completing Walk Across Texas BINGO cards as they walked.

During the WAT Kickoff for "Let's Band Together and Walk" the cheerleaders of the Tulia Hornet Rockin' Band showed the students that you can really "rock" when you eat right and exercise. However, the Highland Highsteppin' Hornet Band (members included the school principal, nurse, and P.E. teacher), were not that great of a band because all they ate was junk food and never exercised. After the Kickoff, each student received a silly band to remind them to keep walking.

At the "Don't Give Up" Pep Rally, halfway through the 8 weeks, the cheerleaders and football players from Tulia High School and Highland 1<sup>st</sup> grade students and their teacher led the students in exercise to help them earn ¼ mile for their teams. The students also learned at the rally that the Highland Highsteppin' Hornet Band had changed their exercise and eating habits and were preparing for a "battle of the bands" at the end of the 8 weeks. After the rally, each student received a colored bandage to remind them to keep walking.

The Walk Across Texas Celebration included a battle of the bands. The Tulia Hornet Rockin' Band and the Highland Highsteppin' Band showed the students that when you eat right and exercise you can really "ROCK"! The top 5 teams were recognized with prizes and each student received a Sonic Coupon and walker charm. Swisher Memorial Health Care System provided Walk Across Texas Drawstring Backpacks for the top 3 teams with the most miles. Swisher Electric Cooperative provided bouncy balls for the top 5 teams with the most miles and gifts for teachers.

## Collaborators

Highland Elementary School  
Sonic

Tulia High School Football Players  
Swisher Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Swisher Memorial Health Care System  
Tulia High School Cheerleaders

## Results

- 344 students participated in Walk Across Texas.
- Fifty students turned in a bonus miles log each week documenting their families' physical activity each week and contributing miles to their classroom teams.
- Highland Students, Staff and Families walked a total of 55459.5 miles which is enough miles to walk from Texline to Brownsville 60+ times!!

## Conclusions

Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can permanently or temporarily delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in 58% of people. If the participants completing the eight-week program continue walking at the same level as during Walk Across Texas, they have the potential to save significantly on health care costs in the future by avoiding type 2 diabetes and by reducing work absences.



First Place, Mrs. Jays  
Flying Jays, 5,876 miles



Second Place, Mrs. Ferguson  
Ferguson's Wise Owls, 5,760 miles



Third Place, Mrs. Moudy  
Moudy's Milers, 5730 miles



Fourth Place, Mrs. Turner  
Turner's Trekkers, 5538 miles



Fifth Place, Mrs. Kern  
Kern's Peddlin' Pre-K, 5113 miles

## VALUE

### Walk Across Texas



This eight-week fitness and health program challenges participants to adopt a habit of regular exercise. Research indicates that a walking routine of this duration is more likely to lead to continued moderate exercise, which improves quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease (including type 2 diabetes). This program yields public value in the forms of reduced public health care costs and a healthier, more productive workforce.

## Developing Competent, Confident Kids in Swisher County in 2012

### RELEVANCE

Families join 4-H in large part for the opportunities it offers youngsters in developing communication skills, social skills, and confidence and self-worth. Each of these is a component of leadership development for youth that can become leaders of our communities, state, and nation. John C. Maxwell states in Leadership 101, "Whatever you accomplish is restricted by your ability to lead others." The parents, volunteers whose kids have been in 4-H, and the staff feel a concentrated effort on developing leadership skills is critical for the success of our youth and our country.

### RESPONSE

Parents, club managers, volunteer leaders, and Extension agents were involved in focusing on current 4-H activities in the county, but expanding them to include more youth in leadership roles. In many cases, the effort was being done, but not reported as leadership development. This plan focuses on youth at any level of maturity or leadership to increase their self-confidence, thinking and planning ability, and to teach the value in teamwork. Below are some highlights from over 20 activities that youth participated in this year to develop leadership skills.

Ag Safety Day in May for over 375 Swisher County 4<sup>th</sup> graders was conducted with 8 youth helping lead sessions and coordinate groups. Teaching others, planning, dealing with a group were learning points.

Tulia Local Livestock Show was conducted by about 30 4-Hers in January under the direction of their 4-H club manager. Working in front of a large crowd, following instructions, public speaking, and learning to assist younger 4-Hers were all part of the experience.

Educational presentations for District Roundup in May was conducted with 5 kids writing their own presentation and being assisted by 3 older 4-Hers, parents, and agents. Critical thinking, expressing ideas, speaking to groups, and working together were part of the process for each child.

A Lamb/Goat Clinic was held in August by 2 veteran 4-Hers who planned and presented the entire clinic for 20 people. These two learned firsthand about knowing your subject matter, being prepared, planning, and communicating to a larger group.

Salvation Army Livestock Buddy Program was started this past year and included 5 youth and 6 mentors to date by providing all the funds for a livestock project. Kids complete a record form and do 2 presentations to the S.A. board members. Great teaching experience for responsibility, work ethic, record keeping, and speaking to others.

Livestock showing as a team helped 5 youngsters develop leadership skills this past summer and fall, as they helped 6 novice showmen with lamb, goat, and pig projects at 3 shows. The young leaders learned communicating isn't always easy; you must know your subject matter; and teamwork makes it more fun for all.

Community celebrations this summer in Tulia and Happy was a learning event for over 40 youth who helped plan/decorate floats, plan and manage a bouncing station that raised over \$600, as well as helping serve over 500 people food/drinks. Kids learned patience, teamwork, planning, and dealing with large crowds.

## 4-H and Youth Development

### COLLABORATORS

Swisher County Commissioner's Court, schools of Swisher County, City of Tulia, Happy, Kress, Swisher County Activities Association, Salvation Army of Tulia, and Swisher County 4-H Adult Leaders. A special word of thanks goes to all the club managers, volunteers and parents who also work so hard to support the development of our youth.

### RESULTS

Over 80 youth were offered countless leadership opportunities and through their efforts over 3500 people saw 4-Hers "under construction". Of these kids, there were about 20 youth who were directly involved in more than 3 events with specific responsibilities. These 20 were sent a poll via Survey Monkey, with 7 responding.

### RANK YOURSELF BEFORE 4-H LEADERSHIP ROLES and **AFTER**

AREA	Lacked experience	Adequate	Confident
Responsibility	43%	43%	14% <b>100%</b>
Talking 1 on 1	14%	43%	43% <b>100%</b>
Talking to a group	71% <b>0%</b>	14% <b>29%</b>	14% <b>71%</b>
Confidence in leading a group	57%	29%	14% <b>100%</b>
Working w/ others	14%	57%	29% <b>100%</b>
Maturity	29%	43%	28% <b>100%</b>

Comments from parents and volunteer leaders have been as follows:

"I am amazed at what he came up with on his own." (educational presentation)

"4-H has been the best thing we've ever done for our daughter."

"I am so glad the Salvation Army and 4-H offered this (Buddy Program) to my child. It has brought us closer together."

"I want to do some of the things for her (4-Her) but I can see it is best to let her grow on her own."

"This is just what my son needed to let him have a father figure around and learn on his own."

### CONCLUSION

Measuring youth development and especially intangibles such as leadership is extremely difficult. However, watching kids become more responsible, seeing them laughing and crying together while they work and as one learns a tough life lesson seem strong indicators they are on the right track.

Swisher County is blessed to have adults who care for their youth and back it up with hours of patience, love, and caring.

## VALUE

### Character and Leadership Development



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities.

## *Tobacco Education*

### Relevance

- Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of premature death and disability in Texas.
- It costs taxpayers nearly \$11 billion annually in medical care and health-related productivity losses.
- Every year, an estimated 24,100 Texans die from a smoking-related illness.
- For every person who dies from smoking, 20 more people suffer from at least one serious tobacco related illness, such as cancer, heart disease and stroke.
- Almost one million Texas children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Texas. Smoking is estimated to cause approximately 84% of all lung cancer deaths in men—deaths that would not have occurred in the absence of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Most people try their first cigarette and become daily smokers as adolescents. Preventing youth from initiating tobacco use can control future health and economic costs.
- The Youth Tobacco Survey conducted in 2001 showed 20% of sixth graders, 16.6% of middle school students, and 33.4% of high school students use tobacco. The rural Panhandle and West Texas area counties have youth smoking rates almost double the national average.
- Swisher County residents identified drug abuse as one of the top issues during the Issues Identification Forum in 2011, and tobacco is known as the “gateway” drug for using illegal and illicit drugs.

### Response

In 2004, Swisher County was one of three North Region counties to join the Texas Cancer Council grant program in order to respond to the issue of tobacco use in rural communities. The grant required establishing a coalition, conducting a baseline assessment of tobacco use in the county, implementing the Towards No Tobacco Curriculum and establishing a Students Winning Against Tobacco Team. Since 2004, the grant has provided more than \$8575 in educational resources, registration fees for participants to attend workshops and camps, and additional programming resources. I responded to the issue by establishing a Tobacco Education Coalition in the fall of 2004. Members of the coalition include school faculty, the county sheriff, a local doctor, a Family Issues Committee (PAC) member, a 4-H leader and a 4-H member. Coalition members completed a baseline assessment on tobacco use in our county to determine what types of programs to implement.

I have been teaching the Towards No Tobacco series for the past eight years. Yvonne Fifer, school counselor, is the team teacher with me. Over these years of teaching, we have implemented hands on activities, utilized on-line tobacco education resources, and had ex-tobacco users speak to the students to enhance the curriculum.

**Response (continued)**

The Towards No Tobacco curriculum was implemented with Swinburn Elementary 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. The curriculum is a 10-lesson series that teaches about the dangers and consequences of tobacco use as well as how to deal with peer pressure to use tobacco. The lessons were taught weekly to the students. The lessons included in the TNT curriculum are:

- Effective Listening and Tobacco Information
- The Course and Consequences of Tobacco Use
- Being True to Yourself and Changing Negative Thoughts
- Self-Esteem
- Effective Communication
- Assertiveness Training and Refusal Skills
- Assertive Refusal Skills Practice
- Advertising Images
- Social Activism: Advocating for No Tobacco Use
- Public Commitment & Videotaping KTNT News

In addition to the lessons, students completed homework activities to reinforce concepts. A parent newsletter was sent home with students after each lesson.

**Results**

A four statement commitment form was given to the students at the conclusion of the Towards No Tobacco series.

Year	Number of Students Reached	Results of the TNT curriculum:
2012	90	<p><b>95%</b> of the students committed to NEVER using tobacco;  <b>80%</b> said they plan to avoid people when they are smoking, and will try to meet nonsmoking friends;  <b>86%</b> of the students said they had learned many techniques to say NO, and will not give into peer pressure; and  <b>77%</b> said they will consider the physical consequences of tobacco use whenever the topic of tobacco is discussed.</p>

**Collaborators**

Tulia ISD  
 Cory Edwards, Extension Program Specialist  
 Prevention Resource Center, Region 1

Swisher County Family Issues Committee  
 Cheryl Brewer, Extension Program Specialist  
 Texas Department of Health & Human Services

**Conclusions and Future Plans**

Over the past 8 years, through the comprehensive community education approach, the tobacco education project has reached many adults and all school age youth, in Swisher County with an anti-tobacco message. By encouraging and preventing our youth from ever smoking, the Tobacco Education Project in Swisher County has improved the overall health of the community, ultimately saving money for families, taxpayers, and employers by eliminating unnecessary medical treatments and decreasing the amount of missed work due to illnesses.

## Traditional 4-H

## 4-H and Youth Development

Swisher County has 4 community 4-H clubs involving an annual average of 130 youth and 60 leaders.

4-H'ers participate in a wide variety of projects including photography, livestock, consumer education, clothing, rabbit, citizenship, public speaking, horse, safety, food and nutrition, rifle, leadership and many more. 52 4-H'ers participated in the food project groups. 32 4-H'ers participated in the Swisher County Food Show with 10 advancing to the District 2 Food Show. 10 4-H members participated in the 4-H Clothing Project held this summer. During the workshop 4-H members sewed neck tie necklaces, headbands and neck coolers. They donated the neck coolers to the Postal Carriers and Happy Volunteer Fire Department. Eight 4-H'ers participated in the County Fashion Show and all of those qualified for the District Fashion Show. The Photography Project resulted in 95 pictures being entered in the County Contest and 12 pictures advancing to District and 8 senior level pictures advancing to State competition. Decision making skills and an eye for detail were enhanced as 4-H'ers participated in Consumer Decision Making, Horse Judging and Shooting Sports. Competing in Swisher County 4-H Roundup educational presentations, share-the-fun and entomology identification contests were 19 youth. All of these youth advanced to District competition. 6 4-H members participated in the District Horse Show. The county hosted a 2 day horsemanship clinic with local horse leaders leading the classes. 5 4-H members participated at the State Horse Show. 25 Swisher County 4-H'ers participated in State 4-H Roundup in Lubbock.

Other Workshops and Tours participated in by Swisher County youth were the Housing Tour and Wildlife and Nature Workshop and Leadership Workshop. 3 4-H'ers participated in State 4-H Congress, 10 attended North Region Leadership Lab and 3 attended Power Camp.

The Swisher County Livestock Show is a big event each year. In 2012 93 4-H youth and 26 FFA youth participated in the county show. Three local shows were also held in the county.

During the 2012 Major Livestock Show season 32 Swisher County 4-H members exhibited their livestock projects at shows in Fort Worth, San Antonio, San Angelo, Houston, and Star of Texas in Austin. These 4-H'ers exhibited animals in the market steer, heifer, swine, lamb, and meat goat shows.

Jessi Stark received a total of \$11,000.00 in 4-H Foundation Scholarships.

4-H is a family affair and total family involvement is encouraged with each event that is held.

### **Community Service:**

43 4-H Members and Leaders participated in one day 4-H community service activities. The Happy 4-H Club cleaned the city park and rodeo arena. The Kress 4-H Club cleaned the school grounds and along the main roads in Kress. The Town & Country 4-H Club cleaned the Tulia Child Development Center. The Swisher County 4-H Horse Club held a bake sale and donated the profits to Heifer International.

## Rural Health and Safety

### Relevance

- Each year, 33,000 children who visit, live, or work on U.S. farms and ranches are injured. It is estimated that as many as 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented. From studies conducted by the West Texas A&M Division of Nursing, Swisher County Rural Health and Safety Committee became aware of the need for education to prevent injuries in our rural county
- In 2012, the group targeted for rural health and safety educational programs in Swisher County was 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Tulia, Kress and Happy. This group is between the ages of 9 and 11 where research shows that they are becoming more involved in farm related tasks and chores.

### Response

With the help of many partners Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service hosted two educational events to address rural health and safety issues. The first event was held in conjunction with the stock show tour in January. The Country Friends Extension Education Club performed the puppet show “Watch-Its Farm Adventure” for Tulia 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. The puppet show teaches the students how to be safe around farm animals.

On May 1, 2012, we hosted the 10 Progressive Agriculture Safety Day for all 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from Tulia, Kress and Happy. 368 youth and 115 volunteers participated in the event at Swinburn Elementary in Tulia. Students attended two general sessions: severe weather preparedness and emergency services awareness. They rotated through 10 additional educational sessions: food safety, bicycle safety, electrical safety, grain safety, first aid, roadway safety, disability awareness, water safety, sun safety, and fire safety.

Groups and organizations assisting with the organization of the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day included Country Friends Extension Education Club Members, County Extension Agents, RSVP, Swisher County 4-H Members and Leaders and Swinburn Elementary School Faculty.

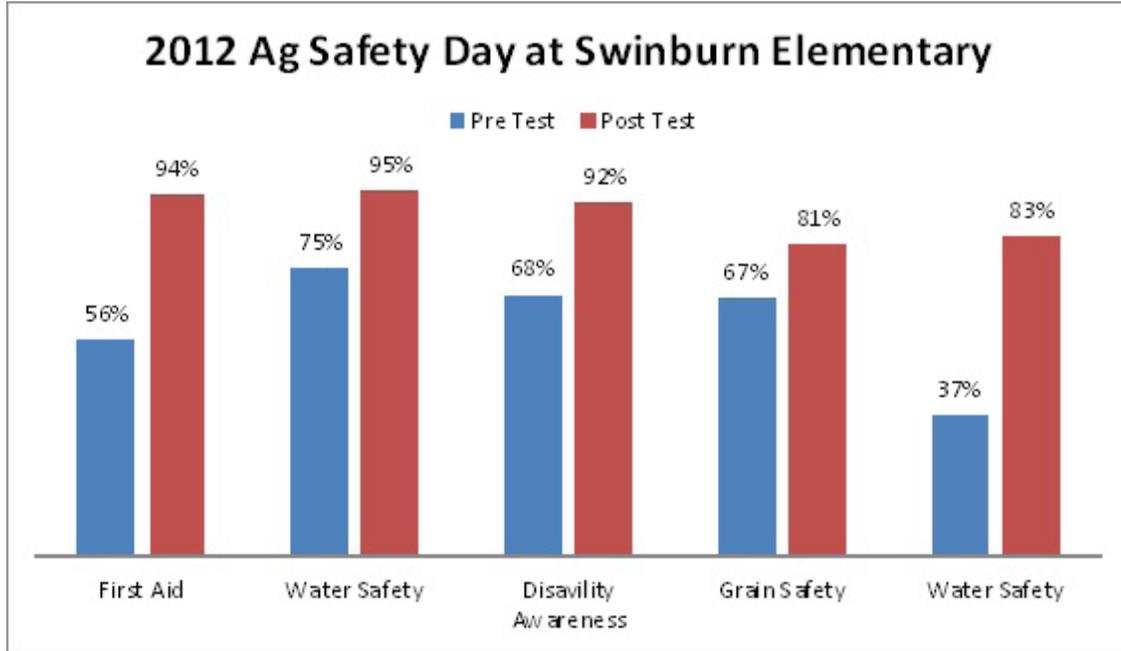
Sessions at the safety day were taught by West Texas Panhandle Emergency Nurses Association members, Tulia, Kress and Happy Volunteer Fire Departments, Tule Creek EMS, News Channel 10 Meteorologist: Dave Oliver, Swisher Electric Cooperative Staff, Texas Corn Producers Board Staff, WTAMU Master’s Students, Texas Department of Public Safety Staff, County Extension Agents, Tulia Police Officers, Texas Department of Transportation Staff and Swisher County 4-H Leaders and Members.

Tulia, Kress and Happy Elementary School Teachers led the students through the sessions. The teachers also provided lunch for all volunteers, and presenters. County Friends Extension Education Club helped to decide topics for the sessions, contacted speakers, provided morning snacks and desserts for lunch. RSVP volunteers, Tulia FFA and Swisher County 4-H members helped the presenters set-up, and put together goodie bags.



**Results**

A pre/post-test online evaluation was utilized for the 2012 Ag Safety Day. Of those students completing the pre and post-tests the largest areas of knowledge gained and attitudes positively changed were in water safety, first aid, disability awareness, and grain safety.



In addition, each child received a bicycle helmet during the 2012 Ag Safety Day. The direct costs of bicycle-related injuries and deaths (for all ages) are estimated to be \$81 million each year. The indirect costs are estimated to be \$2.3 billion each year. Since injuries can endure through a person’s lifetime, every dollar spent on a bike helmet can save society \$30 in direct medical costs and other costs. This would equal \$93,840 in potential healthcare cost savings for the helmets distributed in Swisher County. (Source: American College of Emergency Physicians Website)

**Conclusions and Future Plans**

If rural health and safety educational efforts can prevent at least one accident, it can mean savings of several thousand dollars for one family. Based on the statistic that an injury cost approximately \$8,000, more than **\$2,944,000** can be saved if each Safety Day participant prevents one accident in his or her lifetime.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service staff in Swisher County will continue to attend trainings in order to implement the Progressive Ag Safety Day Program. To build on the program, we plan to encourage teachers to utilize the online lessons plans provided by the Progressive Agriculture Foundation to reinforce the safety concepts taught at the event. Since students participate in the Ag Safety Day for 3 years, it allows us to reinforce safety messages and to address safety concerns that are current in our community.



**2012 Progressive Agriculture Safety Day  
 Swisher County, Texas**

**VALUE**

Safety Education



Youth who participate in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service safety education programs learn to avoid risks associated with rural and farm life. More than half of the deaths of young Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 are due to accidents. Reducing accidents saves lives and also reduces long-term health care and insurance costs for taxpayers.

## Community Economic Development

The Extension Leadership Advisory Board has partnered with the Ogallala Commons Red River Regional cluster to implement a series of Community Development activities in 2012. The purpose of these activities is to encourage youth to consider returning to their hometowns to start businesses and raise families and to promote and support our local businesses.

Six Summer Community Interns were hosted by the county. The interns were Bradley Benavidez, Tristan Huseman, Reina Lewis, Kara Lacey, Seth Kiker and Alyssa Irlbeck. Activities for the interns were planned and coordinated by the Leadership Advisory Board and the Extension Agents. The interns worked at Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Swisher Memorial Hospital, Swisher County Head Start, Swisher County Library, Kress Senior Citizens, City of Tulia and helped with all aspects of the annual Swisher County Picnic celebration.

The Swisher County Leadership Advisory board hosted its fifth Swisher County Business Fair in October of 2012. 145 attended the event with 53 businesses setting up displays.

15 youth from Tulia High School entered 5 business ideas in the Ogallala Commons Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Fair. Calley Runnels assisted with the event by serving as a timer in the judging rooms and securing donations for the cash prizes.

The following youth entrepreneurs were awarded prizes in the “Ready-to-Go business category: 1st place (\$1000) Jordan Smoot and Jessica Walker, Tulia, *Kupcake Kuties*.

In the “Still-in-the-Future” business category: 1<sup>st</sup> place (\$1,000) Adrie Lopez, Estephania Saldana, and Emarie Marten, Friona, *Remember When*; 2<sup>nd</sup> place (\$750) Courtney Thornton, Criselda Olivarez, Trace Johnson, Mariah Powell, and Saragosa Rodriguez, Tulia, *Puzzles*.

Prize money donors for the Fair were from Swisher County were City of Tulia EDC and Swisher Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Swisher County

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## Staff



David Graf - County Extension Agent AG/NR  
Calley Runnels - County Extension Agent FCS  
Ethel Edwards - Part Time Secretary  
Glenda Gibson - Office Manager

## Contact Us

**Texas AgriLife Extension Service**  
**Swisher County**  
310 W. Broadway  
Tulia, Texas 79088

**Phone:** 806-995-3726

**Fax:** 806-995-2364

**Email:** [swisher-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:swisher-tx@tamu.edu)

**Facebook:** Swisher County-Texas AgriLife Extension