



Extension Education in Swisher County

Making a Difference

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has long been dedicated to educating Texans. Extension education evolved nationwide under the 1914 federal Smith-Lever Act, which sought to extend university knowledge and agricultural research findings directly to the people. Ever since, Extension programs have addressed the emerging issues of the day, reaching diverse rural and urban populations.

In Texas, all 254 counties are served by a well-organized network of professional Extension educators and some 100,000 trained volunteers. Extension expertise and educational outreach pertain to the food and fiber industry, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, nutrition and health, and community economic development.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Providing Solutions*

Among those served are hundreds of thousands of young people who benefit annually from Extension's 4-H and youth development programs.

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

Swisher County – Summary of 2013 Educational Contacts

2013 Educational Results

Educational Programs & Contacts:

Programs presented:	391
Contacts:	10849
Individual contacts: (Office & Site Visits, Phone calls)	21643

Mass Media Education:

News articles:	114
Newsletters distributed:	3135

Volunteer Involvement:

Volunteers trained:	133
Volunteer hours:	5407
Reached by volunteers:	1263

4-H Participation:

4-H Enrollment:	137
Curriculum Enrichment:	962

WATERWISE

Relevance:

Water quality and management is one of the top issues identified in Swisher County. Water demand in Texas is projected to increase by 22% from 2010 to 2060. As a result, protecting water resources and utilizing water-conservation practices will be essential to sustain the state's water supply-and-demand balance.

Response & Results:

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Swisher County established a Waterwise Task Force to respond to the need for educational programming. The task force planned several educational efforts across the county focusing on home water conservation, water well testing and irrigation efficiency. The target audiences for these programs were homeowners, producers and landowners.

Weekly Water Conservation Tips (January –December 2013)—274 received a Weekly Water Conservation Tip. A different tip was printed each week in the Swisher Currents which is a daily community newsletter which is both email and published on the Swisher Electric Cooperative, Inc. website.

Swisher/Briscoe Water Well Testing (March, 2013) – TWON water quality testing was offered to home and landowners in Swisher and Briscoe Counties. Testing was conducted by Extension Specialist, John Smith. 19 submitted water samples for analysis of coli form, nitrates and salinity. One sample was found with coli form and 2 samples were found with unacceptable nitrate levels. Nine people attended an educational session on results explanation and treatments.

Gardening in the Wind (April 2013)—30 attended an educational program conducted by Russ Wallace on water efficient gardens using hoops and plastic covering to protect plants from wind and reduce evapotranspiration and increase overall water efficiency.

Wheat Freeze and Drought Damage Assessment (April, May 2013)—CEA-ANR worked with 20 producers to educate them on the severity of wheat freeze and drought damage and to decide whether to continuing irrigating for forage, seed or livestock grazing. Producers were encouraged to calculate bushels needed for seed, estimate yield on the low side and then irrigate adequate acres to have seed for planting. Dead growing points on over 75% of the tillers did not warrant watering for increased hay production.

Establishment of a Raised Bed Garden at Mid Tule Village (low income senior housing) (April, May 2013)-CEA-ANR worked with Mid Tule Village staff and residents to established a raised bed garden. A committee and CEA-ANR planned the garden and made arrangements for the City of Tulia to construct the raised beds. Soil Mender provided the garden soil mix for the beds. The beds were filled by 4-H volunteers. Over 40 Mid Tule Village residents benefitted from the 4 raised beds that were constructed and filled.

Water Conservation Lesson for Youth (May 2013)—CEA's taught a water conservation lesson to 108 Tulia 5th Grade Students. The lesson focused on home water conservation and encouraged the kids to work with their families to save 40 gallons of water each day. This event was also utilized to kick of the summer 40 Gallon Challenge.

Soil Moisture Meter Test (May 2013)—CEA-ANR worked with a local commercial vegetable producer, a community garden manager, a local master gardener and 2 farmers to test the effectiveness of a soil moisture meter for use in assessing soil moisture to increase irrigation efficiency. All agreed that the meter was an effective tool and that it was indicative of soil moisture conditions.

Xeriscape & Garden Water Efficiency Tours (May, June 2013)—41 participated in two tours of area gardens. The grouped learned about converting to xeriscape, garden design, plant selection, proper watering, raised beds and use of rain water harvesting systems.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

40 Gallon Challenge (June-August, 2013) – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension partnered with the City of Tulia on the Summer 40 Gallon Challenge. The challenge was promoted through the Swisher Currents, Swisher County News, facebook, programs for civic clubs and one-on-one contacts. 36 Tulia Residents pledge to save 40 gallons of water (or more) each day and were entered into a monthly contest. Each month during the summer prizes were given to the top water savers. Water savings were determined by the City of Tulia using residents' water bills to determine if they had lowered their water usage from the summer of 2012 to the summer of 2013. Prizes included low-flow shower heads, soaker hoses, and xeriscape plants. The resident who saved the most water over the 3 months won a large rain water collection tote.

Irrigation Well Testing (June, July, August 2013)—CEA-ANR and summer Extension intern conducted irrigation well testing on 21 wells for 5 producers to help producers assess pumping efficiency. Three wells were found that were running with little or no water being pumped to the surface. Five were pumping too much air to test (highly inefficient) and 6 were pumping well below normally accepted levels. Study was not completed but the Swisher Ag Committee was involved in the study and were in the planning phase of purchasing the \$3500 unit for testing so it could be made available in the county for producers to use. Inefficient pumping greatly increases pumping costs, reduces efficiency, and significantly impacts net profit or net loss.

Resistant Weed Spray Study (June, July, August 2013)—CEA-ANR and summer Extension Intern conducted chemical spray study at 5 locations on resistant pigweed with 6 chemicals to determine simplest way for producers to combat resistant weeds and prevent entire fields from being plowed under due to weed pressure(as some were in 2013). Efficacy was tested for producers to spot spray in cotton with the best chemical controlling 94%, next two best controlling ~65%, and glyphosate in this trial showing 0% control. Weeds and in particular, chemically resistant weeds, significantly impact water use efficiency, yield, and profitability.

Rainwater Harvesting Workshop (June 2013)—10 attended a Rainwater Harvesting Workshop and learned the benefits and basics of rainwater harvesting. 8 rainwater harvesting totes were constructed.

Water Conservation Lesson for Energy Assistance Recipients (July 2013)— CEA-FCS taught a lesson on home water conservation to 8 energy assistance recipients. The participants in the program also signed-up for the Summer 40 Gallon Challenge.

One-on-One Assistance (Year Round) – Assist landowners, producers and homeowners on request, providing education on water conservation practices and water quality issues.

Summary

As a result of these educational programs, qualitative results indicate that the programs were successful in increasing the knowledge base of landowners, producers and homeowners in water conservation in the county. They should also be equipped to make better management decisions to improve their water quality through land stewardship and water well monitoring and testing.

VALUE

Water Conservation Education



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs that teach farmers, homeowners, and business administrators to conserve water are helping reduce demand on the state's limited water resources. Texans benefit from a safer, more reliable water supply at no additional cost.

Swisher County Extension Education Association

*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 3rd 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 11th Ag Safety Day 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.

* “Fast Food with Slow Cookers” and “Community Gardens” are two events that this group hosted for community wide activities .

*In March several members attended the District TEEA meeting in Synder. Becky Tucker, Charlotte Fulkerson, Nancy Jones, Glenda Gibson, and Calley Runnels.

*Glenda Gibson and Charlotte Fulkerson attended the State TEEA Meeting in San Marcos in September.

*The Association sponsored the 1st Time Chef Award at the County 4-H Food Show. The award was won by Bentlee Leatherwood of Kress.

*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.

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:
2013	88	<p>92% of the students said they had learned many techniques to say NO, and will not give into peer pressure;</p> <p>91% said they will consider the physical consequences of tobacco use whenever the topic of tobacco is discussed;</p> <p>91% of the students committed to NEVER using tobacco; and</p> <p>85% said they plan to avoid people when they are smoking, and will try to meet nonsmoking friends.</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.

Grant funds for the Tobacco Education Project through the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas are currently unavailable. However, because of this project, I have established strong relationships with all three school districts in the county which will help us to partner on other projects. Future plans include locating other sources for funds in order to continue offering the Towards No Tobacco Series in the elementary schools.

Rural Health and Safety

Tough Talk for Teens

Relevance

County Extension Agents in Swisher County having been meeting with the Swisher County Youth Board for several years in order to identify issues that concern local youth, and develop effective methods for reaching them with educational programs. Teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and bullying are issues that continue to surface in multiple discussions.

Upon researching these issues and others that affect teens, the following was discovered:

- 31% of Tulia High School students confirmed they had participated in cyber-bullying and 40% said they had been victims of cyber-bullying.
- Sexually active teens are more likely to be depressed, drop out of school, and commit suicide than those who remain abstinent.
- In 2004, Texas taxpayers spent 1 billion dollars on teen childbearing (the most of any state).
- The Texas Panhandle has some of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state.
- For ages 13-17, from 2004 to 2008, Swisher County had an average teen pregnancy rate of 34 (per 1000) which is above the state average of 26. Swisher County averaged a ranking of 69th out of 254 counties and had anywhere from 5-12 teens pregnant per year. Since that time, casual observations of Youth Board and Family Issues Committee members have indicated that the number of teens pregnant is on the increase.
- 90% of teens feel that adults should send a strong abstinence message.
- Nearly 50% of teens admit to texting and driving; an alarming statistic that now rivals drinking and driving in terms of danger and prevalence.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that distracted drivers account for almost 80% of all crashes.

A “Tough Talk for Teens” Event was held in Kress in November 2011. After hearing of the success of the event, administrators at both Tulia and Happy High Schools became interested in implementing a similar event for their students. Based on our experience of working with both a county-wide youth board and a more focused group of students for the Kress event, AgriLife Extension established a “town-based” youth board in Tulia to plan and implement youth events. We discovered that having a “town based” youth board allowed for easier scheduling of meeting and let the students really focus on were issues that needed to be addressed at their school and among their peers.

The Tulia Youth Board reviewed teen issues that were identified by previous youth board members. The board discussed which of the issues were still relevant to Tulia youth and began brainstorming on ways to address the issues.

After reviewing the issues and speakers for the Kress event, the Tulia Youth Board decided they would host a similar event in the Spring of 2013. The issues they chose to focus on were dating, consequences of teenage sex, sex and the law, alcohol and drug abuse and cyber-bullying.

Based on the topics selected by the Tulia Youth Board, speakers were recruited for each topic. Phil Zolman, assistant high school principal, worked with us to secure funding for the fees and travel expenses to bring Sgt. Bill Davis to Tulia to speak on sex and the law. We also utilized a \$500 grant from the Texas 4-H Friends and Alumni Association/Texas 4-H Foundation. Sgt. Davis agreed that he would speak to ALL of the students (Pre-K - 12th) during his time in Tulia and because of this the school district was willing to use Title 1 funds to cover the remaining costs.

Other speakers that were secured for the event were:

Dating-Sgt. Billy Garcia, HR Trainer for Walmart Distribution; Alcohol and Drugs-Kimberly Crowell, WTAMU Professor
Cyberbullying-John Gonzales, Texas Department of Public Safety;Consequences of Teenage Sex-Amy Christie, Worth the Wait, Amarillo

Youth Board members were responsible for marketing the “Tough Talk for Teens” event to their classmates. They made and distributed flyers and made announcements about the event. In addition, they were also responsible for assembling “goodie bags” that were distributed to all students the day of the event.

The Happy High School Principal expressed an interest in having his students attend the “Tough Talk for Teens” event because of some high risk behaviors that were being observed among Happy youth. We invited Happy High School students to come to the event, and we were pleased their schedule permitted them to attend.

On March 8, 2013, the Tulia Youth Board and AgriLife Extension Service collaborated together to host the “Tough Talk for Teens” Event. Three hundred nineteen Tulia and Happy High School Students and 44 adult volunteers and school staff participated in the event. Sessions included alcohol and drugs, cyber-bullying, sex and the law, dating and consequences of teenage sex.

An online post test evaluation was developed utilizing Qualtrics for the Tulia “Tough Talk for Teens” Event. The presenters for the sessions helped me develop the questions for the evaluation. Since most of the presenters had already presented at the Kress event, they were able to help me change the evaluation to make the questions more clear and accurate. Two hundred fourteen completed the online evaluation of the Tulia “Tough Talk for Teens” Event The result of teens having information about these issues should help them make better choices and hopefully reduce the number of teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, bullying incidents, and alcohol and drug abuse in Swisher County.

By participating in the 2013 Tulia “Tough Talk for Teens Event”, students learned:	Percentage of students answering correctly:
It is ok for an 18 year old to have sex with a 14 year old. (Correct Answer-No)	98%
I learned that cyber-bullying can be worse for the victim that I realized and can even result in suicide attempts. (Correct Answer-Yes)	95%
Talking is the first step to a healthy relationship. (Correct Answer-Yes)	95%
You always know when you have a Sexually Transmitted Disease. (Correct Answer-False)	95%
It is ok for an 18 year old female to be sexually active with a 14 year old male. (Correct Answer-No)	94%
Once you put something on the Internet, you cannot delete it.(Correct Answer-True)	94%
A girl can become pregnant the first time she has intercourse. (Correct Answer-True)	94%
STDs can be passed to a baby at birth. (Correct Answer-True)	93%
You are more likely to live in poverty if you: Have a child before you turn 20 Drop out of high school Have a child without being married (Correct Answer-All of the above)	91%
It is ok to have sex with my 15 year old boyfriend/girlfriend if our parents give us permission. (Correct Answer-False)	89%
It is not important to get STD tested. (Correct Answer-False)	89%
A couple cannot have a REAL relationship without having sex. (Correct Answer-False)	85%
If I love my boyfriend or girlfriend enough, I can change their behavior. (Correct Answer-No)	85%
According to Texas Law, a 16 year old, who is not married, should be a virgin in every way a person can have sex. (Correct Answer-True)	79%
The average cost of raising a child from birth until 18 years old is \$200,000. (Correct Answer-True)	79%

Working with these Youth Boards was a great experience for the adult advisors. It taught us to utilize young people's strengths and how to support them in their weaknesses. We also learned that youth just need to be asked what issues they are facing and it was reinforced that youth can do great things when given the opportunity.

"Tough Talk for Teens" Collaborators/Partners

Swisher County Youth Board	Tulia Youth Board	Worth the Wait
Texas Department of Public Safety	Sgt. Bill Davis	Texas Department of Transportation
Parents Place	Tulia ISD	Tulia High School
Texas Department of State Health Services	Happy High School	Swisher County Family Issues Committee
West Texas A&M University	Sgt. Billy Garcia	Texas 4-H Friends & Alumni
Swisher County 4-H Members and Leaders		

Conclusions and Future Plans

Because of the success of these events in Kress and Tulia, my co-worker and I hope to establish a Youth Board in Happy. Happy 4-H members have already expressed to me their interest and specific issues they feel like AgriLife Extension can help them address in their community. We will continue to work with teens to identify issues affecting them.

Ag Safety Day

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. As a result of studies conducted by the West Texas A&M Division of Nursing and the Swisher County Rural Health and Safety Committee, we have become aware of the need for education to prevent injuries in our rural county. Research shows that between the ages of 9 and 11 youth become more involved in farm related tasks and chores. Because of Swisher County's agriculture based economy, all youth, whether they live on a farm or in town, are exposed to dangers related to farm equipment and livestock in addition to other safety issues.

Target Audience

The group targeted for rural health and safety educational programs in Swisher County is 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from Tulia, Kress and Happy.

Goal

The goal of the rural health and safety educational program for youth is to provide information and increase awareness of rural health and safety issues, and ultimately reduce the number of farm and ranch related injuries in our rural county.

Response

In 2002, after learning of the results of a study conducted by the WTAMU Division of Nursing, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Staff and Country Friends Extension Education Club recognized the need for rural health and safety education in Swisher County. A Rural Health and Safety Task Force was formed. Task force members include Country Friends Extension Education Club members, Tulia Elementary School Faculty, Swisher County 4-H members and leaders, RSVP volunteers and County Extension Agents for agriculture and family and consumer science.

The task force reviews safety issues affecting youth in our rural communities, and then plans a series of activities to provide rural health and safety education. These activities include an animal safety puppet show for 3rd grade students touring at our county stock show and a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. Each year the task force makes changes and adaptations to the puppet show and Ag Safety Day based on the teacher's and student's evaluations and feedback. We work to address current safety concerns regarding Swisher County Youth and then recruit the best presenters for each topic. For example, our communities have experienced loss related to both tornadoes and train wrecks so in those years we have addressed those issues through weather and railroad safety sessions at Ag Safety Day.

Swisher County has been hosting a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day for 11 years. Each year the committee selects safety topics to teach at Ag Safety Day based on local, regional and national current events. Over the years, we have learned to adapt the Ag Safety Day to what schedule and learning environment works best to help 400+ people have the best learning experience possible. For example, in order to have fewer students in each session, we recruited more volunteers to teach the safety topics.

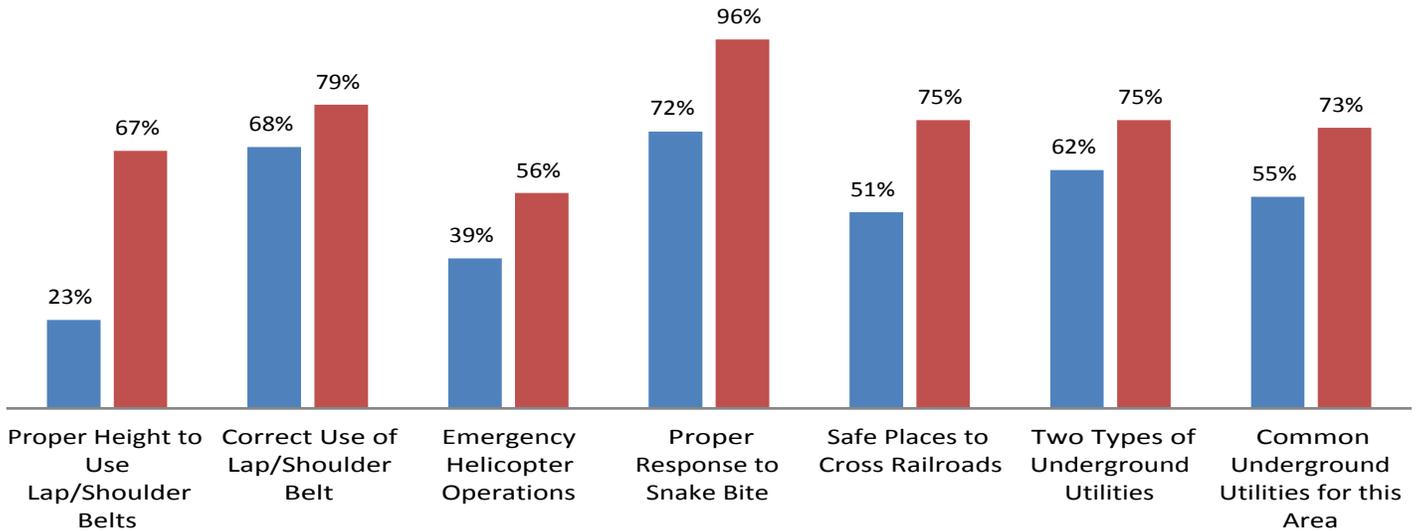
On April 30, 2013, we hosted the 11th Progressive Agriculture Safety Day for all 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from Tulia, Kress and Happy. 374 youth and 135 volunteers participated in the event at Swinburn Elementary in Tulia. Students attended two general sessions: railroad safety and PTO/tractor safety, and rotated through 10 additional educational sessions: emergency helicopter operations, bb/airsoft gun safety, underground utilities safety, passenger safety/seatbelt usage, handwashing, poisons/look-a-likes, lawnmower safety, hearing loss, fire safety and snakes and spiders.

One change to Ag Safety Day from 2012 to 2013 was having the helicopter session changed from a general session to a rotating session. This change was made a result of the teachers' evaluations from 2012. Having the helicopter as one of the rotating sessions allowed the students to get a more close-up look at the helicopter and learn how vital this service is to our rural area. The results of this change were positively reflected in the pre/post evaluation which showed that the students' knowledge of the helicopter service greatly increase from before and after the 2013 Ag Safety Day.

A pre/post-test online evaluation was utilized for the 2013 Ag Safety Day. Of those students completing the pre and post-tests the largest areas of knowledge gained and attitudes positively changed were in seatbelt usage, snakes and spiders, railroad safety, underground utilities safety and emergency helicopter operations.

2013 Ag Safety Day at Swinburn Elementary

■ Pre Test ■ Post Test



Collaborators

Groups and organizations assisting with the organization of the Progressive Agriculture Safety Days included WTAMU Division of Nursing, Country Friends Extension Education Club Members, County Extension Agents, RSVP volunteers, and Swinburn Elementary School Faculty.

Sessions at the safety days were taught by :

Tulia Volunteer Fire Department
 Swisher Electric Cooperative Staff
 Texas Department of State Health Services
 Texas Department of Transportation
 Tule Creek EMS Staff
 Atmos Energy Staff
 Mid Plains Rural Electric Cooperative Staff
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Staff
 Kress Volunteer Fire Department
 Happy Volunteer Fire Department
 AeroCare

Tulia Police Department
 City of Tulia Staff
 Xcel Energy Staff
 Operation Life Saver Presenters
 Tulia ISD Staff
 Swisher County Sheriff's Department
 Local Farmers
 Swisher County 4-H Leaders and Members
 Swisher County Extension Ag Committee
 Panhandle Emergency Nurses Association Members

Conclusions

The result of students having information and increased awareness of rural health and safety issues and knowing the safety precautions to take whether it be at home, on the farm or in town, should ultimately reduce the number of farm and ranch related accidents in Swisher County. 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 **\$10,232,000** can be saved if each Safety Day participant prevents one accident in his or her lifetime.



VALUE	
Safety Education	 <p>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.</p>

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

Twenty-three fathers and father-figures and 24 Swisher County Headstart Youth participate in the FRED program in 2013. They spent 92 hours reading and read 606 books. This was an increase of 10 fathers/father figures that participated in the program from 2012.

AgriLife Extension and Swisher County Headstart hosted a FRED celebration. Each family received a certificate and books. Those attending the celebration enjoyed having a story read to them by a local father.

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
Participating fathers read to their children 5 or more times per week.	13%	41%
Someone in the family reads to their children 5 or more times per week.	34%	58%
More than 5 books read to their children during an average week.	13%	66%
Fathers ranking their involvement in their child’s education as “very involved”.	60%	75%
Fathers ranking the amount of time they spend with their children as “a great deal”.	78%	83%
Fathers ranking the quality of time they spend with their children as “very high quality”.	82%	91%
Fathers ranking their relationship satisfaction with their children as “very satisfied”.	86%	91%

Statements by FRED participants:

“It helped my child recognize more letters, colors and shapes”

“Motivated me to be more involved in my children’s education”

“I was able to spend time with my kids with no TV, radio, or toys.”

“Gave me time to read with my son.”

Collaborators

- Swisher County Headstart
- Swisher County 4-H
- Swisher/Briscoe Retired Teachers Association
- Highland Elementary
- Scott Burrow

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 2014.

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 10 citations were issued from January 2012 to December 2013 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 4 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 3rd and 4th 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 2013, I conducted 10 classes and instructed 25 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.

Other Child Passenger Safety activities for 2013 included:

- Car seat check-up event in May
- Educational program for parents of Kress Pre-school students.



Results

Through the Safe Riders program in 2013, I have distributed a total of 13 convertible seats, 2 combo seats and 4 booster seats. 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 19 new seats distributed through the Safe Riders program in Swisher County in 2013 have resulted in \$38849 in economic benefits to society.

A car set check-up event was held in Tulia on May 15, 2013. The event was a great partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Passenger Safety, Swisher County Extension Service, the Tulia Volunteer Fire Department, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). We had excellent technician support from TxDOT's Amarillo District Office, Lamb County Extension, Deaf Smith County Extension, Texas Municipal Police Association, Covenant Medical Center, University Medical Center and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Together with volunteers from Swisher County Extension, Tulia Volunteer Fire Department, TxDOT, and the Swisher County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, all made sure the event ran smoothly and that every child left the event riding safely. It was evident that all the parents were thankful for the education they received at the event and the peace of mind in knowing that their children were safe and secure.

At the check-up event, 15 child safety seat inspections were conducted; 11 new seats were issued; and 6 old/unsafe seats were collected. The total economic impact for the event on May 15th was \$19,457. In addition, I distributed 5 convertible seats, 3 combo seats provided by the Extension Passenger Safety Unit which resulted in an additional \$15904 in economic benefit.

A total 36 car seats were distributed in 2013 resulting in a total of \$74,210 in economic benefit.

Collaborators

Swisher County Headstart
Tulia Child Development Center
Kress Elementary School

Highland Elementary School
Safe Riders
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.



VALUE

Passenger Safety



Participants in the Texas A&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.

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.

In 2013, twelve Swisher County adults participated in the revised BLT Get the Facts series. This program focused on using the Nutrition Facts label to control portion size as well as fat and sodium intake. It also included information on the new MyPlate and using the plate method for portion control.

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.

Results

For the *Get the Facts* series taught in 2013, this report represents 12 adults who participated in the program and completed the pre-survey, and 7 individuals who completed the post-survey. As a result of the *Get the Facts* series, the following behaviors were changed and knowledge gained:

Behavior	Before the program	After the program
75% of dietary sodium comes from processed foods. (percent who answered correctly)	0%	71%
Americans get most of their sodium from processed foods. (percent who answered correctly)	17%	71%
1 in 3 people in America have high blood pressure. (percent who answered correctly)	17%	57%
Always or almost always use the information about fat on the food label when shopping for food.	8%	57%
Always or almost always use the information about serving size on the food label to determine the amount of food you will eat.	25%	43%
Always or almost always use the information about sodium on the food label when shopping for food.	33%	43%
When shopping for margarine, it is important to check the trans fat. (percent who answered correctly)	33%	43%

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.

Traditional 4-H

4-H and Youth Development

Swisher County has 4 community 4-H clubs involving 137 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, shooting sports, leadership and many more. 280 contacts were made through the 4-H food project groups. 42 4-H'ers participated in the Swisher County Food Show with 11 advancing to the District 2 Food Show. 14 4-H members participated in the 4-H Clothing Project held this summer. During the workshop 4-H members sewed t-shirt aprons and screen printed on t-shirts. Hygiene kits were made and distributed to the residents of the Driskill Halway House. Eight 4-H'ers participated in the County Fashion Show and all of those qualified for the District Fashion Show with 1 Swisher County youth advancing to State. The Photography Project resulted in 105 pictures being entered in the County Contest and 16 pictures advancing to District and 10 senior level pictures advancing to State competition. Decision making skills were enhanced as 48 4-H'ers participated in Consumer Decision Making, Livestock Judging, Horse Judging and Shooting Sports. Competing in Swisher County 4-H Roundup educational presentations, share-the-fun and entomology identification contests were 9 youth. All of these youth advanced to District competition. 8 4-H members participated in the District Horse Show. The county hosted a 2 day horsemanship clinic with local horse leaders teaching the classes. 7 4-H members participated at the State Horse Show. 11 Swisher County 4-H'ers participated in State 4-H Roundup in College Station.

Other Workshops and Tours participated in by Swisher County youth were the District 2 Clothing Tour, D2 4H20 Day at Caprock Canyon and the Leadership and Officer Training. 10 4-H'ers attended North Region Leadership Lab and 2 attended Power Camp.

The Swisher County Livestock Show is a big event each year. In 2013 105 4-H youth and 20 FFA youth participated in the county show. Three local shows were also held in the county.

During the 2013 Major Livestock Show season 57 Swisher County 4-H members exhibited their livestock projects at shows in Odessa, Fort Worth, San Antonio, San Angelo, Houston, and Star of Texas in Austin. These 4-H'ers exhibited animals in the market steer, commercial steer, heifer, swine, lamb, and meat goat shows.

Landry Setliff, Shana Lashmet and Bradley Benavidez received \$48,000.00 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:

73 4-H Members and Leaders participated in One Day 4-H Community Service Projects in Swisher County. Town & Country 4-H Members collect over 1000 lbs of recyclable trash; Happy 4-H Club cleaned the volunteer fire station; Kress 4-H Club cleaned over 2 miles of highway and city streets.

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 2013. 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.

Five Summer Community Interns were hosted by the county. The interns were Raylynn Bowers, Shae Bilbrey, Estefania Saldana, Adrie Lopez and Seth Bryan. Activities for the interns were planned and coordinated by the Leadership Advisory Board and the Extension Agents. The interns worked at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Swisher Memorial Hospital, Swisher County Head Start, Swisher County Library, Tulia Chamber of Commerce, Rose Hill Cemetery, Tulia ISD, City of Tulia and helped with all aspects of the annual Swisher County Picnic celebration.

8 youth from Tulia and Kress High Schools entered 4 business ideas in the Ogallala Commons Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Fair. Calley Runnels assisted with the event securing donations for the cash prizes.

The following youth entrepreneurs were awarded prizes in the “Ready-to-Go” business category: 4th place (\$400) Victoria Jennings, Emarie Marten, Sydney Keim, Estefania Saldana.

In the “Still-in-the-Future” business category: 2nd place (\$750) Tye Adams, *Tyeton Aviation*; 3rd Place (\$500) Courtney Thornton and Trace Johnson, *The Spot*.

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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