

# DENTON COUNTY AGRILIFE UPDATE

OCTOBER 2021

## TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

### HORTICULTURE

The Denton County Leadership Advisory Board met on October 20th with 19 members present. They discussed programs from the year as well as our end of year Commissioners Court presentation. They also heard from Mark LeMense, Disaster Assessment and Recovery Agent, who spoke about his role in supporting Texans during disasters.

Agent Laminack, along with Horticulture Agent Laura Miller from Tarrant County, hosted a program for producers interested in growing strawberries. Dr. Russ Wallace and Dr. Thayne Montague came from Lubbock to speak to our 25 attendees. Presentations were followed by a site visit to Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm in Pilot Point. Chris Demases, owner of the farm, spoke about how he started and improved his operation over the years.

Master Gardeners held their annual informational meeting on October 20th to inform and recruit new volunteers. Applications for the 2022 intern class closed on October 22nd with around 70 applicants. Those accepted into the program will begin their 14 weeks training on January 25, 2022.

Master Naturalists attended the Texas Master Naturalist State Conference. A few of our volunteers even gave presentations and led field trips for Master Naturalists from other chapters throughout the state. They also began leading field trips for Denton ISD students at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center. In October, 896 fourth grade students were able to hear about pelts, snakes, bees, and go on nature hikes during their field trip. More field trips for Denton ISD students are still taking place in November.



### FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

October was all about Food Challenge Contest. Besides planning for the Denton County Food Challenge, which was held on October 3rd, I also got to judge teams from different regions of the state while they prepared and presented their creations at the State Fair of Texas Food Challenge.

The nutrition class at Homestead Elementary was a huge success, with kids learning about My Plate and making some healthy recipes.

Denton County AgriLife Extension provided program information on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Horticulture, 4-H and Family & Community Health along with some swag to more than 2000 individuals at the Peterbilt Environmental Fair.



## 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



To kick off October, we celebrated National 4-H Week October 3-9th. During that week, we had a few activities on the county level and clubs celebrated on their own as well. Members, parents, and members of the county AgriLife team attended Commissioners Court. Our 4-H members spoke on the significance of 4-H in their lives and provided an update on recent activities. Commissioners Court issued a proclamation recognizing National 4-H Week. To top the week off, 4-H members participated in One Day 4-H. One Day 4-H is a day where all Texas 4-H members are encouraged to participate in community service. This year we participated in a seed harvesting activity and trash pickup at the Clear Creek Heritage Center led by Master Naturalists from the Elm Fork Chapter. We had a great turnout with 37 4-H members and their families in attendance.

The Denton County Food Challenge was held on October 3rd. Ten teams (composed of 36 4-H members) competed at the county level. Food Challenge gives youths the opportunity to showcase their food and nutrition knowledge they learned through their project work. Of the teams that participated at the county level, 6 teams moved onto the District Food Challenge in Sulphur Springs. A junior team (Baking Buddies) and an intermediate team (Flavor Doctors) from our Ag Leadership club received first place. Our Senior Team, the Whisking Wizards of Argyle 4-H won 1st place and will be representing Denton County 4-H at the State Food Challenge in June!

October was a busy month for our 4-H members with livestock projects. We had a great representation at various rabbit and livestock shows including the State Fair of Texas and Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo. We wrapped up the month working with our county Ag agent on validating sheep, goats and heifers for the major stock show season. We validated approximately 250 animals for 4-H and FFA members.

If you know of an adult in Denton County with an interest in outdoor education, consumerism (consumer decision making), leadership or entrepreneurship please have them contact the AgriLife Extension Office. We are looking to expand the projects we offer our 4-H members!



## AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

In October, Ag Agent Zach Davis provided a hands on animals display for students at Lake Dallas Middle School. Students used stethoscopes to measure heart rate and breathing in sheep.

This month we completed our quarterly Pesticide applicator training for landowners that wish to apply for a pesticide license. This class is required for private applicators. October was also a busy month for state validation with sheep and goats and heifers. Extension agents are responsible for coordinating and conducting validation within the county and processing all validation paperwork.

Agent Davis also spent time at the State Fair of Texas helping 4-H members who were competing in livestock events.

## BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

Hello my name is Dusty Fife. I was recently brought on as the Better Living for Texans Extension Agent to serve Denton County residents. With a name like Dusty you know I had to be born in Texas. In fact, I have spent the majority of my life right here in Denton County. In 2016, I graduated from Texas Woman's University with a degree in Health Studies. My degree aligned perfectly with my hopes of making positive impacts on the health of others within my community. I look forward to the opportunities that this position will provide.

My family and I spend most of our time on the soccer fields and watching our youngest do his thing with his high school band. In the little spare time that I get, I do enjoy riding my bike and going on hikes with my husband and two boys. As of now, I am busy with new hire trainings and onboarding tasks. I just returned from a week-long training that provided a deeper understanding of what all AgriLife Extension does for residents of Texas in the past, present, and what it hopes to do in the future. It was an invaluable opportunity that I will forever cherish and hold dear to my heart. I feel so honored to hold a position that can do so much good for my fellow neighbors. I am especially looking forward to meeting members within the community and helping to increase their nutritional knowledge and physical fitness levels.

A deeper look into the Better Living for Texans programming will show a variety of research-based lessons that help offset busy families by offering quick, healthy, and economical meal ideas. More specifically, our programs educate low income residents on ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake and access, physical activities, food safety, and food resource management. For instance, we teach the importance of nutrition and staying physically active through cooking demos and hands-on activities. Our aim is to help to build confidence in the kitchen and adopt better eating and lifestyle habits. Please reach out to me with any questions and program specifics.



## Upcoming Events

11/15 Walk Across Texas! Kick off

11/17 FCS Committee meeting

12/3 Pesticide Applicator Recertification Course

12/3 4-H PLA Meeting

12/14 Commissioners Court Interpretive Event