

Making a Difference in Bexar County

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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TEXAS SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The economic impact of poultry and eggs is estimated at more than \$2.1 billion. (Page 2)
- State's tax code amended to include raising or keeping bees for pollination or for the production of human food (Page 3)
- About 45 percent of returning veterans are from rural areas. (Page 3)

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Help Protect Your Watershed Workshops

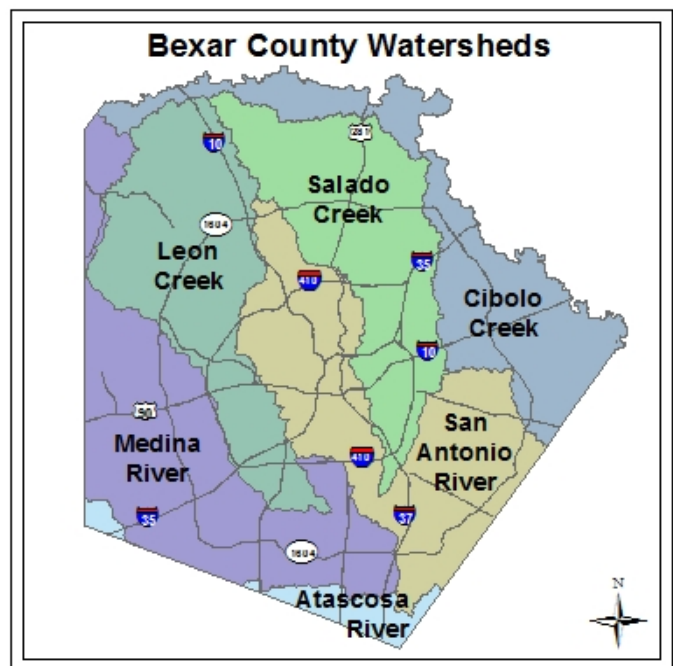
Two Texas Watershed Steward Workshops on water quality issues related to the San Antonio area were held July 10–11. The first was held at Our Lady of the Lake University and the second was held at the Antique Rose Emporium. A total of more than 70 people attended the two workshops presented by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board in coordination with the San Antonio River Authority and San Antonio Water System.

“The San Antonio River and Edwards Aquifer are critical resources for our region,” said Karen Opiela, intergovernmental relations coordinator for the San Antonio River Authority and program participant. “We rely on their waters for drinking and to support agricultural production, recreational activities and other economic assets. They are also important wildlife habitat areas.”

The Texas Watershed Steward program is implemented through a partnership between the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), explained Bryan Davis, Bexar County Extension Agent -Natural Resources. The program provides science-based, watershed education to help citizens identify and take action to address local water quality impairments.

The San Antonio trainings included discussion of watershed systems, types and sources of water pollution, and ways to improve and protect water quality. They also included group discussions on community-driven watershed protection and management, as the programs are designed for watershed residents to become involved in local watershed protection and management activities.

Thanks to a TSSWCB Clean Water Act Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Texas Watershed Steward program can provide no-cost trainings to residents interested in protecting and preserving their local water sources.



Poultry Workshop Focused on 'Clucks for Bucks'



The economic impact of poultry meat and eggs produced in Texas is estimated at more than \$2.1 billion, according to the Texas Department of Agriculture. To help those people involved in small-scale poultry production, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Bexar County and Texas A&M AgriLife Research presented a program on July 27 at the Embassy Suites San Marcos Conference Center.

The program, attended by more than 50 people, presented topics ranging from basic poultry management to breed selection, nutrition, disease and pest prevention and treatment, and marketing rules and regulations.

"It was great that AgriLife Extension put together a program for the backyard

producer," said attendee Jaci Kroupa of Wimberley. Kroupa is the Fancy Feathers 4-H Club Manager and currently has a flock of 60 to 70 chickens, but has had as many as 200. "In particular, we got a lot of clarification on state laws regarding (poultry) meat and eggs," she said. "I think everyone was pleased with the program and the information presented."

According to Dr. Craig Coufal, Assistant Professor of Poultry Science at Texas A&M University in College Station and program coordinator, the increased interest in backyard and small-scale poultry production in Texas led to the development of this program to help people successfully raise smaller quantities of poultry for home production and/or sale of their meat and eggs.

'Sweet & Sour' Aspects of Citrus Production

On June 19 and 20, a two-part program, "What Is Citrus Greening and Basic Growing Techniques of Citrus in South Texas", was presented by the Bexar County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

"Both home gardeners and the citrus industry have had concerns over confirmed

instances of citrus greening in the Lower Rio Grande Valley," said David Rodriguez, County Extension Agent- Horticulture.

According to Molly Keck, entomologist and Extension Program Specialist for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), citrus greening, which is also known as Huanglongbing, is a bacterial disease primarily spread by two species of psyllid

insects, one of which is the Asian citrus psyllid.

Trees infected with the disease often produce misshapen and bitter fruit, and affects both the quantity and quality of the fruit produced. There is no cure for citrus greening, and once a tree is infected, the only effective means of control is its complete removal. Keck said the bacteria poses a serious risk to the U.S. citrus industry, including South Texas.

Although there are no cases (yet) of citrus greening in Bexar County, Dr. Frank Gibbons III, a Bexar County Master Gardener with a doctorate in horticulture, addressed prevention techniques, described how to identify the Asian psyllid, and discussed various plant symptoms associated with citrus greening.



Beekeeping Workshop Abuzz with Interest

AgriLife Extension in Bexar County hosted a Beekeeping Basics program on May 18. The program, attended by more than 30 people, was presented by AgriLife Extension, and a member of the Alamo Area Beekeepers Association.

“The program was for anyone interested in learning about beekeeping and how to begin a beehive as a hobby or for environmental stewardship or enhancing plant pollination,” said Molly Keck, Extension Program Specialist—IPM.

The program targeted novice beekeepers with topics including basic bee biology, beekeeping laws and regulations, and bee viruses and diseases.

“Bees are extremely important for agriculture and horticulture due to their role in pollination,” said David Rodriguez, County Extension

Agent for Horticulture in Bexar County.

The state’s tax code was recently amended to include raising or keeping bees for pollination or for the production of human food or other tangible products having a commercial value.



From Battleground to Breaking Ground

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Bexar County, in cooperation with the Texas AgrAbility Project and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, presented a June 16 workshop for military veterans, called “From Battleground to Breaking Ground: A Transformational Journey.”

According to Dr. Cheryl Grenwelge, AgriLife Extension specialist in disability transition with the Texas AgrAbility Project located in College Station, about 45 percent of returning veterans are from rural areas.

“Our goal through this workshop is to help enable veterans, with or without disabilities, to return to the

area of production agriculture if they desire to do so,” Grenwelge said.

The program provided military veterans interested in farming or ranching the opportunity to get information on aspects of starting, developing and funding an agriculture-based business. Presentations included resource networking and the Texas AgrAbility Program of the Texas A&M University System and a panel discussion on funding resources and options, risk management and business plans.

Meet the Staff: Mike Shockey



Mike Shockey is the Youth Outreach Educator for AgriLife Extension in Bexar County, a position he has held since 2006. He oversees a portion of the Texas 4-H Program designed to serve at-risk and minority youth, as well as limited-resource youth and those in military communities.

Shockey has a master’s degree in systems management (human resources) and previously served 22 years in the U.S. Air Force, as well as teaching seven years in the Judson ISD, prior to choosing a career in nonprofit youth education.

His outreach program exposes 4-H members to an array of activities designed to build character, self esteem and life-long learning habits. The Youth Development Outreach Program currently serves more than 1,950 members of 26 chartered 4-H clubs throughout Bexar County.

A Message from the County Extension Director

With news reports bracing us for future price increases on agricultural products as a result of nationwide drought, I wanted to focus on our agency's role in helping conserve valuable water resources in Texas. Recently, the Texas Watershed Steward program held two programs in San Antonio to help increase public involvement in conserving and protecting our area water sources. In addition, AgriLife Extension actively promotes youth water education, rainwater harvesting, proper agricultural and residential irrigation, and the use of water-saving landscape materials. We also educate county residents on practical and behavioral changes to conserve water – be it at home, on the farm or ranch. Both rural and urban communities have a responsibility to preserve water quality and ensure an adequate future water supply, and many of our programs help educate and inspire Bexar County residents to protect our vital water resources.



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For more information about these and other events, please call 210-467-6575 or visit our website: <http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu>.

Calendar of Events

September 2012

- 1 Fall Vegetable Gardening Seminar
- 7 Private Applicator Training
- 13 Backyard Gardening Series: Drip Irrigation & Lawn Management
- 15 Fall School Garden Teacher Training
- 18 The History and Biology of Feral Hogs in the United States Webinar
- 19 Hands-On Jams & Jellies Workshop
- 21 Alamo Area Landowners Stewardship Program
- 22 Jams & Jellies for the Holidays Workshop
- 23 4-H Food & Nutrition Leader Training
- 25 Chef's Farm Tour
- 26 Canning Garden Produce Workshop

October 2012

- 5 Blue Ribbon Task Force Conference
- 6 Home Harvest Roll-Out
- 8-13 National 4-H Week
- 13 Texas 4-H One Day
- 16 Food Preservation Overview & Basics Workshop
- 18 Alamo Area Landowners Stewardship Program
- 20 Jams & Jellies for the Holidays Workshop
- Herb Planting Program
- 23 Control Techniques and Managing Feral Hog Populations Webinar
- 28 Botanica

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